



TYOLOGY OF POLITICAL REGIMES IN NORTH AFRICA BEFORE ARAB SPRING CASE STUDY OF EGYPT, TUNISIA AND LIBYA

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to have an analysis on state structure at the North of Africa including Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The being internally dynamic of these states is historically different with what has previously happened in the West, because the essence of relation between state and society has been a suppressive one; and in the environment which state has control over all aspects of the society, the social forces wouldn't be formed or will be formed weakly. The unique feature of these states is the personal ruler ship which is highlighted with corruption, dependent capitalism economics and suppression of social forces; and it lies upon army and bureaucracy. Due to the lack of legitimacy, these types of states are vulnerable against mass revolution.

Keywords: Personal ruler ship, Patrimonialism, authoritarianism, North Africa, Middle east, Mass revolution

INTRODUCTION

Political thought and social movements in contemporary Middle East and North Africa is formed under the effect of Ottoman emperor collapse and the appearance of colonialism. "When colonial rule was rapidly coming to an end in the 1950s and 1960s, it was hoped that independent African countries would adopt some form of democracy, be it liberal-democratic or socialist or some indigenous variant. Instead of democracy, however, various forms of autocracy appeared" (Jackson and Rosberg, 1984). According to Lisa Anderson in Middle East, bureaucratic administration and military force are important for state formation. Historically the capacity of state in Middle East is restricted. Taxation, participation, and legitimacy is absent in the Middle East and North Africa. In the Western society popular participation is expanded because of citizen right, but in the Middle East and North Africa there is no limitation on state power and political regimes (Anderson, 1987). The main feature of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa is personal ruler ship. According to a definition:

“ Personal rule is a dynamic world of political will and activity that is shaped less by institutions or impersonal social forces than by personal authorities and power; it is a world, therefore, of uncertainty, suspicion, rumour, agitation, intrigue, and sometimes fear, as well as of stratagem, diplomacy, conspiracy, dependency, reward, and threat. In other words, personal rule is a distinctive type of political system in which the rivalries and struggles of powerful and wilful men, rather than impersonal institutions, ideologies, public policies, or class interests, are fundamental in shaping political life”(Jackson and Rosberg, 1984).

This article aims to describe and compare type of political regimes in North Africa through personal ruler ship theory because the root of political behaviours in the Middle East and North Africa is related to patrimonial political culture. These kinds of political culture shape the typology of political regimes in North Africa and the Middle East.

The Typology of State in Middle East and North Africa (A Theoretical Review)

In sociological and historical view Oriental societies have had especial features in compare with Occidental societies. For example Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) in 16th century in his famous book, *The Prince*, explains about two kinds of governments: the Turk and King of France. The entire monarchy of the Turk is governed by one lord, and the others are his servants. But the King of France is placed in the midst of an ancient body of lords, acknowledged by their own subjects, and beloved by them; they have their own prerogatives, and the king can't take these away except at his peril (Machiavelli, 1515).

For Montesquieu (1689-1755) in Eastern political system there is no limitation against rulers and kings. In this political system the main reason of govern is fear. In Eastern political system according to Montesquieu, especially in large empires, there is no law and hierarchy of institutions and everyone is a slave (Montesquieu, 1989). for Hegel (1770-1831) the Eastern world, in contrast to the German world, produced no classes with their own independent rights because it was at a lower historical stage in the 'consciousness of Freedom': The East knew and to the present day knows only that One is Free; in the Greek and the Roman world some are free; and the German world knows that All are Free (Abrahamian, 1974). According to Hegel, East is not soil of freedom because the despot has absolute power. The despot brings about what his caprice directs, including certainly what is good, not as law, but as arbitrary will (Hegel, 2008).

“Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895), (in 1853) claimed that the absence of private property, particularly private ownership of land, in Asiatic society was the basic cause of social stagnation. Periodic changes in the political organization of Asiatic society from dynastic struggles and military conquest had not brought about radical changes in economic organization, because ownership of the land and organization of agricultural activities remained with the state as the real landlord”. Furthermore, “the static nature of Asiatic society also depended on the coherence of the

ancient village community which, combining agriculture and handicrafts, was economically self-sufficient. These communities were, for geographical and climatic reasons, dependent on irrigation which required a centralized administrative apparatus to coordinate and develop large-scale hydraulic works. Despotism and stagnation were thus explained by the dominant role of the state in public works and the self-sufficiency and isolation of the village community” (Bottomore, 1983).

Karl Wittfogel reviewed theory of Marx about societies in Asia in his book “*Oriental Despotism*”. According to Wittfogel, Oriental societies depended on massive irrigation which had to be centrally planned (McLean, 1996). He emphasized in hydraulic agriculture, societies needed organizers and planners so leadership and his aides had decisive role in accomplishing the major works of hydraulic economy. For managing this type of organization, those who controlled this network are uniquely prepared to wield supreme political power (Wittfogel, 1967). Thus in these societies state is stronger than society, because state as a manager of hydraulic society wants to control all the body of society and it never lets nongovernmental forces to become independent from this body (Wittfogel, 1967).

Max Weber (1864-1920) another sociologist had a study on antiquity and modern societies. At the first step he separated feudal societies in the West and patrimonial society in the East. He believed there are different kinds of political and social domination. He detached feudal society with property rights from patrimonial society in the Middle East and Asia which are featured with maximized arbitrariness law, absence of towns (as an independent zone against state) and state interference in trade (Anbarani and Modarresi, 2013).

Max Weber for analyzing legitimate orders paid attention to “the sociological point of view” by purely internal factors (Kalberg, 1994). Weber tried to analyze typology of legitimate domination in three types: legal-rational, Charismatic and traditional. Legal-rational type of domination, according to Weber handwritings, is related to Western modern societies. The current type of domination in political system was traditional one. Weber conceptualized traditional society as a continuum in which feudalism and Patrimonialism represent extreme poles. The most primitive form of traditional authority is Patriarchalism which is the characteristic of a lord authority over his own household. The administrative staffs of such an association are recruited directly from the extended family of the patriarch, but wherever it is necessary to enlarge and develop administrative staff, patriarchalism is transformed into Patrimonialism. In fact, Patriarchalism is divided to feudal and patrimonial; one of them emerged in western society and another one emerged in the East. However there was differentiation between these systems: Reinhard Bendix usefully summarized this distinction in the following terms:

“Feudalism is domination by the few who are skilled in war; Patrimonialism is domination by one who requires officials for the exercise of his authority. A patrimonial ruler is in some measure dependent upon the good will of his subjectsPatrimonialism appeals to the masses against the privileged status groups; not

the warrior-hero but 'the good king', the 'father of his people', are its prevailing ideal" (Turner, 1998).

At initial paragraphs of this paper some ideas about differences between Western societies and Eastern societies were explained. The type of legitimate domination in North Africa in pre-modern era was Patrimonialism. Features of patrimonial order according to Weber and his followers are:

1. Political and official system as a private tool was in the hand of patrimonial ruler;
2. There was no separation between public and private space contrary to western modern rational bureaucracy;
3. (In such a society everybody faces with) the growth of dependent capitalism instead of national capitalism;
4. Decision making in this system is related to patrimonial ruler not official institutions;
5. In this political system, personal relationship can determine better political and social situation;
6. Emphasis on Military forces as a personal privacy of patrimonial ruler;
7. There is a deep relationship between religion and government for justifying patrimonial domination (Weber, 1978) and (Turner, 1998).

According to this features in this type of domination patrimonial ruler is on the head of political power and there is no limitation on his arbitrary power. This kind of legitimacy was dominated over centuries in North Africa and Asia.

Comparing to Western societies with rational- legal legitimacy, in other countries traditional legitimacy is disintegrated, but legal-rational systems didn't emerged. Therefore for better analyzing the type of domination in Eastern countries some scholars pay attention to a new kind of domination which is called Neo Patrimonialism. This type of domination is different with traditional legitimacy in the idea of Weber. For example Roth (1968) made a separation between traditional Patrimonialism and personal ruler ship. According to Roth "The basis of loyalties in this type of domination does not require any belief in the ruler's unique personal qualification, but is inextricably linked to material incentives and rewards" (Roth, 1968). As a brief, Roth believed pre-modern forms of social organization may survive into the modern era even in Western industrial societies (Theobald, 1982). According to Weber's followers neo patrimonial type of domination has some features:

- The weakness of traditional and legal -rational legitimation.
- Appearance of arbitrary rule according to personal ruler ship; favouritism and penetrating clan of ruler and his dynasty and lack of meritocracy.
- The prominent role of police and army for using violence for survival of the regime.

In these regimes, right of sovereignty belongs to a person not to the law or official status.

In the case of traditional and modern North African reality, it seems that patrimonialism and modern personal patrimonialism are closer to this paper analysis about typology of political

regimes in North Africa. However, the traditional patrimonialism and patrimonial behaviour is strong as well (Vine, 1980).

Political regimes in North Africa: a synopsis survey on the Case Study of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya

However the structures of Middle Eastern and North African states in appearance are different (for example monarchy or Republic) but they had similar functions (Non-Democratic) (Kamrava, 1998). For better understanding and investigating the typology of state in the case of Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, the researcher concentrates on the functions of the state in this study.

Tunisia

Tunisia was the first country that faced with social protest in 2011. The downfall of political regime in Tunisia showed that this regime had no social base. Tunisia enjoyed the Arab world's best educational system, largest middle class, and strongest organized labour movement for a long time. However behind those achievements, Ben Ali's government tightly restricted free expression and political parties. The main feature of this regime was corruption. Like any personal ruler ship system, Ben Ali's family was also unusually personalist and predatory in its corruption. As the whistleblower Wiki Leaks Web site recently revealed that the U.S. ambassador in Tunisia reported in 2006 that more than half of Tunisia's commercial elites were personally related to Ben Ali through his three adult children, seven siblings, and second wife's ten brothers and sisters. This network became known in Tunisia as "the Family" (Anderson, 2011).

Economic policies and secularism were two reasons that Islamic groups made challenges against government (Dalacoura, 2007). Islamists' claim that the government was prostituting the country for foreign exchange, resonated in Tunisia (Anderson, 2011). Military forces in Tunisian regimes existed in the shadow of the country's domestic security services from which Ben Ali, a former military Police officer, hailed (Anderson, 2011). Modernization helps Tunisia to liberalization economy but the political system was authoritarian with personal rule of Bin Ali (King, 2003). In fact the lower class in society especially peasants in rural era and workers in urban era were deprive of all the advantages of this modernization.

Egypt

Egypt is the most powerful, populous, and influential Arab state. In Egypt, like Tunisia, the regime under Mubarak ruler ship imposed modernization and secularization to Egyptian society by authority, but similar to Tunisia couldn't provide basic services for millions of people who were suffering from unemployment and poverty, whereas a lot of business elite connected to Mubarak's son, Gamal (Anderson, 2011). However Egypt experienced multiparty legislative elections after 1976, but always authoritarian rule was dominating the society. "Economic liberalization characterized by the distribution of patronage to economic elites and robust single-party institutional structures provided autocrats with resources to sustain authoritarianism in the North

Africa and Middle East Republics” especially Egypt (King, 2009). Egypt showed tremendous ability in repressing the social groups and stifling the social movements. The army in Egypt was dominating society in subtle and less blatant ways, so when regimes faced with economic and political crisis their impulse was to resort to greater repression rather than to liberalize (Kamrava, 1998). Often that repression was utilized against both religious and secular oppositions, and against Islamists who renounce violence (King, 2009). So the political regime in Egypt was a blend of oppression, repression and corruption in which there was no place for popular legitimacy and democratic rule.

Libya

Between the three case studies this paper is investigating about, Lybia has especial feature. This feature exists due to natural resources that have affected the society, economy and politics. Some writers like Sandbakken (2006) discusses about Libya as a rentier state that receives substantial rents from foreign individuals or governments. He explains “the idea of the rentier state further as a state in which the economy is dominated by rents; the rents come from abroad and the government is the principal recipient of these rents” (Sandbakken, 2006). So, “rentier state has certain features that make them unlikely to become consolidated democracies. The first feature is that large oil revenues make the oil rentier states free from relying on taxation of their population for income. The second is that the oil rents accrue directly to the state, enabling it to buy off or repress political opposition. Third, oil wealth creates a social structure that is not favourable to democracy. Taken together, these features present severe obstacles to democratization” (Sandbakken, 2006).

Oil exploration in Libya began in 1955. After 1965 Libya turned quickly into an extreme of a rentier state, with government income composed almost entirely of petroleum rents (Sandbakken, 2006). After a military coup by Colonel Muhammad Qaddafi in 1969 the rentier feature of state in Libya reinforced. After the coup, Qaddafi set about changing the country according to his own ideology. This ideology was a mix of socialism, Arab nationalism and Islam. Petroleum rent was an indispensable element of his plans (Sandbakken, 2006). Qaddafi couldn’t make a strong and firm national identity by emphasizing on Islam and his revolutionary ideology and the dilemmas of Libyan national identity is remained up to now. However Islam is historically significant in Libya yet (Anderson, 1986). The main goal of Qaddafi was uprooting of any sign of class or other political grouping that might become a source of opposition, democratic or non-democratic. In this case the revolutionary committees have been purged periodically to prevent any group or individual from gaining enough power to become a threat to Qaddafi (Sandbakken, 2006).

Why Revolution?

Deep social and political evolution that occurred in North Africa and lead them to downfall of old authoritarian regimes surprised social scientists, because usually this kind of authoritarian regimes showed high range capacity of insolubility and perpetuity. North African revolutions were popular and mass ones. This kind of revolutions is not predictable, because the success of revolutionary

movement depends on the reaction of army (who their duty is suppressing revolutions) and governmental structures. In Tunisia and Egypt, military didn't support the government so they abandoned dictators (Goodwin, 2011). The crisis environment existed in all the North African and Middle Eastern states so deep social and economical crisis corrupted dictators and persistent protest eroded discipline of military. Ultimately "social scientist can talk fairly intelligently about possible historical trajectories of particular societies But the highly contingent nature of human behaviour makes it impossible to predict accurately the actual or even likely trajectory of societies"(Goodwin, 2011).

CONCLUSION

In typology of political regime in North Africa it was concluded that these states, because of historical and social reasons, are among personal ruler ships and the patrimonial ones. According to Max Weber points of view the main pattern of political domination in Middle East and Eastern society is patrimonialism. However, patrimonial model of domination is not adequate for analysing North African state in 20th century. Weber's followers such as Roth made the theory of personal rulership for authoritarian states after World War II. According to this theory, the basis of loyalties in new patrimonial states does not require any belief in the ruler's unique personal qualification, but are inextricably linked to material incentives and rewards. These types of states lack the social-political legitimacy; and the corruption and suppression of social groups is their unique feature. Besides, about Lybia, lying upon oil revenue had made the state an outsider toward the society, and the oil revenue had provided more facilities for Gaddafi to suppress the society and opponent political groups. Finally, the political corruption and the deep economical crisis along with widespread mass protests in Egypt and Tunisia lead to the erosion of army power for standing against revolutions. However, it is finally difficult to predict the future of these types of states because of the unpredictable essence of human.

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