Lund University
Department of Political Science

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Tutor: Agustín Goenaga

Democratisation Ignited from Below

Explaining Patterns of Democratisation from the Arab Spring

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Stina Gottfredsson

Abstract

Since the mass protests erupted in early 2011 has the Arab Spring been the central focus for studies from various approaches. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the Arab Spring from the perspective of democratisation theory. More specifically, the study analyses the case of the Arab Spring as a set of paths determined by the interplay of class actors. In doing so, the study follows the strategy of comparative historical analysis. The case of comparison is the so-called Third wave of democratisation. Further, the analysis partly offers an empirical understanding of a set of cases representative of the Arab Spring which acts as the base of the comparison. Next, it also presents a theoretical discussion of the identified differences.

Based on the analysis, the study argues that the interplay of working-class actors and elites continues to offer an explanation to paths towards democracy. More, it also highlights, compared to the historical wave, that the democratisation paths of the Arab Spring all ignited from a public demand from below.

Key words: the Arab Spring, democratisation, democratic actors, labour movement, comparative historical analysis
Words: 9 102

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1. Introduction

The extensive mass demonstrations that swept the MENA-region in late 2010 and early 2011 and resulted in the overthrow of several autocratic leaders have fallen into the focus of interest for many. How did it happen, why did it happen and what happened next, are questions many continue to seek answers to. What we do know is that the happenings of the so-called 'Arab Spring' shed new light on how we understand and study democratisation.

Looking back at previous processes of democratisation across the globe, the question of its main actors has been the central focus point from various approaches. A class-divide can be noted in the earlier approaches, where some scholars argue for the elite player's importance and others direct attention to the working class. However, it has been brought to attention that one is not superior to the other. Though studies of the wave of democratisation which reached large parts of South America and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s has shown that the power of an organised working class played a more crucial role in the democratisation process than earlier assumed (Collier, 1999). This issue of a organised working class as a pro-democratic actor has also come to be the focus of scholars when studying the Arab Spring. It has been shown that the notion of a strong organised working class also played a significant role in bringing about democratisation in cases within the Arab Spring (Allinson, 2015; Beinin, 2016).

Furthermore, a comparison of the two cases of democratisation, the wave of democratisation during the 1970s and 1980s also known as the third wave of democratisation, and the Arab Spring has witnessed an increasing scientific interest. Scholars have compared the two on a broader scale to investigate whether the Arab Spring can be argued to be a continuation of the third wave of democratisation, or whether it started a fourth wave (Abushouk, 2016; Sarihan, 2012). However, no comparison has been found which focus solely on the involvement of different actors. This is what this thesis intends to do.

1.1 Purpose and research question

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the Arab Spring. More specifically, the study seeks to find an explanation for different patterns of democratisation for cases within the Arab Spring. In order to do so, the study will adopt the strategy of a comparative historical analysis. This will enable the study to first engage in an empirical analysis of the Arab Spring, which will track different countries paths towards democratic change. These paths will be based on a three-dimensional framework of analysis regarding class actors, their political status and their arena of action. Secondly, the Arab Spring with its identified characteristics will be compared to the third wave of democratisation.

Further, the scientific value of comparing the Arab Spring to a set of cases from the popular third wave of democratisation adhere to the purpose of the study. The aim of the comparison is to provide possible similarities and differences which will contribute to the understanding of the Arab Spring as a historical case. In addition, it will also contribute to the scientific debate of whether the Arab Spring possibly started a fourth wave of democratisation (see for example, Abushouk, 2016; Sarihan, 2012).

In order to follow the purpose set out by the study as well as to reach a distinct conclusion, one main research question, as well as one sub-question, has been drawn up:

How can the different paths that countries followed during the Arab Spring be explained?

- *How have the characteristics of these paths changed compared to the Third wave of democratisation?*

2. Theoretical Framework

Democratisation studies is a flourishing field of study with different approaches arguably being superior to one another. One of the many debates within the study has been centred around the actors of democratisation and whether it is a notion that should be viewed from 'above or below'. This section will present the two main theoretical approaches regarding actors and the notion of 'above and below' as an introduction of the main approach to this study which combines the two perspectives as a way of understanding democratisation by the identification of different paths. Continuously, the set of paths which constitutes the mean of comparison for the study will be presented along with the factors of analysis. Firstly, however, a brief definition of how the concept of democratisation is understood throughout the study is presented.

2.1 Defining democratisation

Democratisation studies set among the broader field of democracy is a well-researched field of study, but it is also a heavily debated concept of what it actually entails. For this reason, it is necessary to present the definition understood as democratisation for this study.

The definition of democratisation has evolved through time, especially starting from the beginning of the so-called third wave of democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s. During these times, democratisation was most often simply understood as the transition from "single party, personal or dynasty rule to accountable and representative government" (Grugel & Bishop, 2014:5). As the interest of the field spread across the social sciences the definition reached from the most minimal understanding of an introduction of basic norms which facilitates regular holdings of clean and free elections, to the more broad definitions which compete in being most inclusive of political and social rights. Grugel and Bishop (2014:7) favour a

maximalist definition of democratisation with a focus on extension and introduction of various citizenship rights, as well as a requirement of the creation of a democratic state. However, the Arab Spring is a fairly complex case when it comes to democracy as many of the Arab states did not form a fully democratic state following the uprisings. For this matter, the definition accounted for when studying the Arab Spring needs to rely on lesser inclusive parameters with no requirement of a democratic state, as "the definition of democracy one chooses determines the choice of episodes to be analysed" (Collier, 1999:24).

Following Collier (1999), democratisation for the matter of this study will be understood as the events and politics which entails the introduction of democratic institutions. More importantly, it does not require the establishment nor the consolidation of these institutions composing a democratic state. Rather, Collier (1999:25) emphasises the process towards democracy, being the politics behind the introduction of democratic institutions and not the quality or durability of them. Additionally, this is an important distinction within the broader field of democracy which has also been given attention by Linz and Stepan (1996) who differentiates democratisation and democratic consolidation as the processes before and after a democratic introduction. This is, as mentioned above, a crucial aspect for the legitimation of studying the Arab Spring from a democratisation perspective. Thus, the different outcomes of the uprisings as well as their survival is irrelevant for the study as this research do not seek an explanation to variations of democratic consolidation and backsliding. On the contrary, the interest of the study lays in the variations of patterns noticed leading up to some degree of democratic change.

2.2 Democratisation from 'Above and Below'

Democratisation studies has historically been viewed from the perspectives of above or below, a game of elites or a class struggle. To fully grasp the advantages of combining the two, the key features of each opposing approach will be presented.

2.2.1 The structuralist approach

The structuralist approach, often interchangeably termed ‘historical sociology’, has its main focus on class conflict through the interest of the relationship between classes and the state. Key authors among the structuralist approach include Rueschmeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) which put special emphasis on social power or relative class power. In other words, structuralists acknowledge the working class as the main driving class for democracy. The class conflict comes into play when the pro-democracy classes, arguably the working class, demand for democratisation is stronger than the democracy-resisting class, which is often understood as the upper- and middle classes (or the bourgeoisie) (Collier, 1999:10). Notably, the structuralist approach views democratisation from below by emphasising the social power of the working class, simultaneously acknowledging the important role of collective actors.

2.2.2 The transition approach

The transition approach, also called ‘the agency approach’, centres around the agency and interaction of elites (Grugel & Bishop, 2014:87). O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986) contributed to the school with their set of literature examining and emphasising the interaction, negotiation and bargaining among authoritarian and oppositional leaders. Compared to the structuralist approach, the transition approach emphasises individual actors, in the form of elites, rather than collective actors, and state actors rather than societal actors. Further, actors seem to be defined in a strategic manner instead of class, focusing on the differential of the ruling elite and the oppositional elite compared to structuralists distinction of the democracy-demanding class and the democracy-resisting class (Collier, 1999: 7-8). In this sense, by focusing on the interaction and negotiation of various elites, the transition approach is argued to view democratisation from above.

2.3 Combining two approaches

The two approaches presented above both contribute to the study of democratisation as both have offered explanations to historical democratic transitions. However, in an attempt to offer an even broader and more generalisable explanation to different democratisation patterns, the two approaches can be viewed as complementary to each other. Ruth Berins Collier (1999) took a standpoint from both the structuralist and the transition approach when developing a framework of analysis which identified different paths of democratisation both from above and below. Collier (1999:20, 193) argues that the one does not fit certain cases of democratisation better than the other, but that the two approaches, in fact, are complementary in the way that each capture a significant aspect of democratisation. Further, each approach offer advantages as well as limitations, alike most theoretical frameworks, and therefore each approach benefits from the complementarity of the other. The framework developed by Collier (1999) seeks to identify various patterns, or paths, of democratisation distinguished by the role of actors. In that sense, Collier (1999) distinguish these different paths of democratisation by finding out which actor pushed for democratic change as well as their role in the politics of democratisation. The framework is centred around three factors of analysis; *class*, *prior inclusion* and *arena of action*. Before presenting the core of Collier's study, being the contribution of viewing events of democratisation as paths which changes of time, a brief explanation of each factor of analysis formulating the paths is presented.

2.3.1 Factors of analysis

Collier (1999:194) argues that democratisation "should be seen as a class-based process". In line with the structuralists, the emphasis is put on the notion of class. However, Collier explains it as a "class-based process" meaning that democratisation should not be viewed as a process of a single class. Instead, social class is here situated as a dimension of analysis,

where it differentiates between the actions of the working class as well as the upper- and middle-classes.

Further, the second factor regards the level of inclusion or exclusion under the prior autocratic regime for both classes, which can also be understood as political status. Collier (1999) addresses this level of inclusion/exclusion as 'ins' versus 'outs'. Political parties are an example of the 'ins' which is often seen as a key strategic actor in democratisation processes. Establishing the political status of the main actor pushing for regime change enables the framework to gain a deeper understanding of the patterns of democratisation as well as identifying more possible paths (Collier, 1999:195).

Lastly, the third factor of analysis concerns the arena of action. This dimension distinguishes an arena of collective action from the arena of deliberation and/or negotiation. Here, the analysis differentiates between mobilisation and protests in the streets by collective actors and closed activities of negotiation and deliberation between individual leaders. Compared to the other two dimensions, a given actor may be located at both ends of the arena of actions. Leaders of mass protests might potentially be invited to also participate in the political negotiation arena (Collier, 1999:29).

2.3.2 Democratisation as paths

Building on this framework centred around the three presented dimensions of analysis (class, prior inclusion, arena of action), Collier (1999) identifies different patterns of democratisation among different time periods. The units of analysis consist of historical episodes of democratic reform. Historical cases from the first wave of democratisation are set in comparison with cases gathered from the third wave during the 1970s and 1980s. By investigating the involvement and position of the working class contra the upper and middle classes during these times of democratisation, Collier (1999) identifies a set of different paths among both episodes, which in turn differ from each other. Her study respectively suggests that quite different paths of democratic change occur within historical periods.

Moreover, the study shows that the character of the paths changes over time but the three dimensions of interest, class, prior inclusion and arena of action, remains the building blocks of which determines the character of the paths. Collier's findings do neither confirm nor contradict implications from the two previous approaches. Instead, her developed comprehensive framework shows that the processes of democratisation are not solely a game of class struggle or elite interactions. By characterising an episode of democratisation as consistent of a variety of paths captures both explanations. Collier (1999:167) argues: "these different paths should be located in a theoretical space that combines both elite and mass action".

The unit of analysis in this study will, as mentioned, be the Arab Spring. The mean of comparison will be the latter of the two episodes studied by Collier, the third wave of democratisation. Firstly, there has been a scientific interest if whether the Arab Spring situates itself as a continuation of what can be called the third wave of democratisation. Or whether the uprisings in 2011 potentially started what can be called the fourth wave of democratisation. By adopting the case of the third wave as the comparison, this study will alongside offer an answer to the posed research questions also potentially contribute to this scientific debate. With that, the focus will partly be centred around Collier's identified paths for the 1970s and 80s cases. Hence, to investigate whether these specific paths continued on and can explain the different patterns of the Arab Spring or whether characteristics changed drastically and new paths can be identified. For this sake, a brief explanation of the key characteristics of the different paths is needed.

Collier (1999) identified four different paths which a variation of South American and European cases are argued to have followed. A composed overview of the different paths and the cases which they represent can be found in table 2.1.

The four paths reach from the one where the working class had the most impact, to the last which characterises as an elite game. In the first path, *Destabilisation/Extrication*, the labour movement was the most important oppositional actor. They were engaged in the transition from the start, opened space for protest, played a leading role in mobilising protestors to the

streets, and eventually destabilised the prior regime. This path had no significant involvement of an elite actor and the transition can best be explained as a forced retreat.

The second path, *Transition game*, started with the implementation of a regime legitimation project. In this sense, the democratisation process proceeded mostly as an elite strategic game between the authoritarian incumbents and oppositional leaders. However, the working class did not have an insignificant role. Here, labour movement played a highly varying role from less important, though not insignificant, to the central protagonist which pushed for democratic change, hence advancing the timing of the transition.

The third path, *Parallel tracks*, as its name, were carried out as two parallel tracks between the elites and the working class with no interaction. This entails, compared to the previous path, that the labour movement had no immediate effect on the transition process. Instead, the transition in itself was carried out by elites, following a laid-out transition project by the government. The democratisation process, however, did involve labour movement to some extent as they came to be the most important pro-democracy force.

Lastly, the fourth path, *Interelite game*, had no involvement of the working class at all. This transition was solely triggered by interacting elites.

Table 2.1 Summary of Collier's (1999) Paths of democratisation

Path	**Role of the Working Class**	**Role of Elites**	**Cases**
Destabilisation / Extrication	Most important oppositional actor Opened space for protests Triggered transition Destabilised authoritarian regime	None Defensive exit	Spain 1977 Peru 1980 Argentina 1983
Transition Game	Variation in level of involvement among cases	Introduced legitimation project	Bolivia 1982 Brazil 1985 Uruguay 1985

	Advanced transition, through protest, regime negotiation or both	Informal/formal negotiation	
Parallel Tracks	Most important pro-democracy force However, no interaction/influence over the transition	Explicit transitional project Planned transition Minimal oppositional negotiation	Chile 1990
Interelite Game	None	Facilitated transition Interaction/negotiation	Greece 1974 Ecuador 1979

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

The study will follow the strategy of a comparative historical analysis which is characterised by its focus on macro-oriented fields making it a suitable approach for the study of democratisation. As the name also implies, comparative historical analysis seeks to produce knowledge about historical cases. Most often this knowledge is gathered from particular cases from a set of parameters, rather than trying to produce universal knowledge about all instances of a wider population of cases. Yet, this aspect of a lacking ability to create universal knowledge is often lifted as a limitation towards the comparative historical analysis strategy (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003). Thus, this aspect seems crucial to bring to attention. Following the purpose of the study, the focus is on gathering deeper and centred knowledge about the Arab Spring and its key actors. Hence, the study does not intend to produce universal knowledge in the sense that it would be applicable to any other case besides the Arab Spring. Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003:9) flips the coin of the criticism and argue that detailed knowledge of historical instances can yield meaningful insights and advice for contemporary studies. Which this very study is an example of, making use out of Collier's historical analysis and its findings and implementing them on a more contemporary case.

Moreover, the research is qualitative in nature as it allows for greater attention to description and detail for the analysis, compared to the quantitative approach (Bryman, 2012:401). In addition, the qualitative approach also enables for a comprehensive dialogue between theory and evidence which will facilitate a more grounded conclusion and a theoretical discussion regarding the findings (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003:13). This is of special advantage for the study as Collier highlights the importance of situating the paths in a theoretical space.

Further, the adopted comparative method offers a better understanding of the social phenomenon by the means of comparing it to other meaningful cases (Bryman, 2012:72). Applying a comparative method entails that one is interested in identifying the similarities and differences among the units of analysis (Ragin, 2014:6). Additionally, the knowledge generated by the act of comparison provides the main tools to fully understand, explain and interpret various historical outcomes and processes (Ragin, 2014:6). By comparing the set of cases constituting the Arab Spring with earlier meaningful waves of democratisation, the study tends to meet the aims of the research of contributing to the understanding and explanation of the different patterns of the Arab Spring.

3.2 Data and data collection

The data which will be collected for the analysis will, in accordance with the research design, be qualitative in nature. More specifically, the data will be derived from various academic article. Research solely based on secondary sources has been argued to be of limited scope and at risk of produce biased findings. However, comparative historical analysis is a research strategy were the selective use of secondary data is a common phenomenon (Mahoney & Rueschmeyer, 2003:18). This can in part be explained by its focus on macro-oriented fields, compared to other research approaches which have its focus on the micro-level and are hence more dependent on experiences and interpretations of individuals. Though, with the aim of strengthening the validity of the secondary data, articles with different approaches yet similar statements will be of interest.

Further, the collection of data will be guided by the three-dimensional set of factors, class, prior inclusion and arena of action, to allow for a continued thorough analysis and an answer to the posed questions.

3.3 Data analysis

The data will be analysed following two stages. First, the chosen set of cases representative of the main events during the Arab Spring will be analysed based of Collier's (1999) framework of analysis discussed in section 2.3. The analysis will thus be centred around the factors of class, prior inclusion and arena of action. This first stage will allow for the individual cases to be compared and potentially matched with Collier's different paths of democratisation. As well as, potential identification of differences and new unique characteristics.

The cases chosen to be representable of the Arab Spring is Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Yemen. The cases were selected following three aspects. First, the cases of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are argued to be of representative value as the uprisings in each case were given broad attention in media. Further, the overthrow of the autocratic leaders has each been known as significant events for the Arab Spring. Second, the cases of Yemen and Morocco were chosen of scientific interest as each case represent a working class, respectively, an elite path. Third, all cases experienced some level of democratic change through regime change or regime reform, hence a theory of democratisation is legitimate.

Moreover, the analysis will, as mentioned, build on the three factors of class, prior inclusion and arena of action. The categorisation of each factor will follow in line with the study by Collier (1999). *Class* is here measured by differentiating between the working class and the upper- and middle-classes. In the analysis, the working-class will be understood as labour unions and organisations or labour affiliated parties. Whereas the upper - and middle-classes will be understood as the elite opposition in terms of oppositional parties or organisations. *Prior inclusion* measures whether the actors were 'ins' or 'outs' under the autocratic regime, meaning identification of political status, acknowledgement and rights. Lastly, the *arena of action* entails how the actors were engaged in the democratisation process. Here, the measurement is the protest/mobilisation arena, the negotiation arena, both or none. An overview of how the interplay of these factors characterises each historical path can be seen in

table 3.1, as well as a more descriptive outline in table 2.1 which the analysis will make the most use of.

Table 3.1 Simplified overview of analysis

Destabilisation/Extrication	**Working class** → outs, mobilised (negotiation to some extent) **Elites** → ins & outs, negotiation (insignificant)
Transition game	**Working class** → outs, mobilised **Elites** → ins & outs, negotiation (mobilised to some extent)
Parallel tracks	**Working class** → outs, mobilised **Elites** → ins, negotiation & outs, mobilised
Interelite game	**Working class** → none **Elites** → ins & outs, negotiation

The second stage of the data analysis will set the composed case of the Arab Spring in comparison to the third wave of democratisation which Collier partly builds her study on. The results formulated from the first stage will offer the means of comparison, meaning that the possible similarities and differences will be the building blocks for a theoretical discussion which, in turn, will generate an answer to the posed research questions: *How can the different paths that countries followed during the Arab Uprisings be explained?*; H*ow have the characteristics of these paths changed compared to the third wave of democratisation?*

4. Analysis

The analysis was, as mentioned, carried out in two stages. First, the empirical context of the Arab Spring will be presented following each country. Next, the empirical findings will be mapped on Collier's set of paths to reveal similarities and differences. Lastly, this section will present a discussion of the main findings as well as a potential explanation.

4.1 Empirical analysis

4.1.1 Tunisia

Tunisia has come to be known as the starting spark for the many uprisings during the so-called Arab Spring. What started with demonstrations in the city of Sidi Bouzid as a response to the self-immolation of a young vendor ended with the retreat of the prior authoritarian leader and eventually the establishment of a new more representative government. It is evident with the case of Tunisia that the process of democratisation started as a force from below. Even though the first set of demonstrations originated in discontent over socioeconomic conditions, lack of jobs and anger over unfair treatment from local administrators and police, they quickly changed motives as the demonstrations spread across the country. Soon, the masses protesting in the streets were demanding a new government along with President Ben Ali's resignation (Schraeder & Redissi, 2011). Many agree upon that the key actor in Tunisian transition who opened space for demonstrations to spread across the nation were the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT, *Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail*) (Angrist, 2013; Schraeder & Redissi, 2011; Bishara, 2014, Feltrin, 2019).

Before the start of the uprisings, it can be argued that Tunisia had the strongest and most highly organised labour movement in the Arab world (Schraeder & Redissi, 2011; Allinson,

2015; Bishara, 2014). Furthermore, represented by the UGTT who were also acknowledged by the prior regime, the working class had the resources to open space for, trigger and lead protests. In his study of the mass protests in Tunisia during the uprisings, Angrist (2013) also points out the fact in which the UGTT also had the civilians on their side. This made it possible for the labour union to mobilise a great number of protestors to take part in their demand for democratic change. President Ben Ali made several attempts to negotiate a settlement with the opposition to end the uprisings, with no luck. Instead, the protests intensified and now with the military on the opposition's side, Ben Ali found himself forced to leave the country (Schraeder & Redissi, 2011).

Though, the key role played by the UGTT does not end with the overthrow of President Ben Ali. Following the fall of the former president, the UGTT emerged as a central broker of the political negotiations over the new political system and the establishment of the new government (Feltrin, 2019; Bishara, 2014).

4.1.2 Egypt

Similarly to Tunisia, Egypt did have a well established and recognised labour union, the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF). However, the ETUF on the contrary to the UGTT was created as a tool for the regime to control workers and their discontent upon which workers were forced to join (Lesch, 2011). Thus, independent labour organisations were banned and the ETUF was given the monopoly over labour representation. Accordingly, when anti-regime demonstrations hit Egypt, the ETUF actively discouraged workers to participate (Bishara, 2014). Hence, it is hard to argue that the working class introduced the beginning of a transition project. What is evident, however, is that the demand for such a project started from rising civic protests from below.

Despite the absence of the working class, in terms of labour unions or parties, at the beginning of the upsurge, they would turn out to play a significant role in pushing for a transition. In fact, labour activists came to take advantage of the ongoing revolution as an opportunity to also push for the freedom of organisation. In the heat of protests, a new independent

organisation emerged, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITUF), which announced their establishment at the end of January 2011 and came to play a leading role for the mobilised opposition (Bishara, 2014, Allinson, 2015). Demonstrations continued and accelerated for the weeks to come, however, unlike the mass protests in Tunisia, Egyptian mobilisation with the new independent labour union in the driver seat did not manage to destabilise the regime to the same extend. Instead, the force which in the end removed President Mubarak from power was at the hands of the armed forces which had sided with the opposition (Allinson, 2015; Lesch, 2011). This is also where the role of the EFITUF loses significance as the transition after the displacement of Mubarak evolves into a game of upper and elite interactions amongst actors as the military itself (Allinson, 2015).

4.1.3 Morocco

The Moroccan revolution was, much like the other cases, influenced by the successful Tunisian mass demonstrations. However, in accordance with the Tunisian case, Morocco also had a fairly strong and organised working class in the form of several larger trade unions. In fact, before protest burst out in Tunisia, labour strikes evolved nationwide in Morocco demanding new democratic social policies. As of, when the Tunisian revolution erupted, Morocco was already facing a wave of social mobilisation, with the organised working class as one of the driving actors (Buehler, 2015; Feltrin, 2019). Thus, the Moroccan labour unions took advantage of the anti-regime atmosphere that was sweeping the Maghreb region and fired upped the pressure towards the administration. On this note, scholars agree on the leading role of the larger trade unions as endorsing the protests and mobilising participants (Hoffmann & Köning, 2013; Buehler, 2015; Feltrin, 2019).

Consequential of the extensive protests of the 20 Feb Movement, the prime minister and his administration announced that state-labour negotiations would be opened. What came to be known as ‘the social dialogues’ were held between regime representatives and the four leading labour unions. These negotiations ended with a list of generous concessions, meeting many of the workers demands (Buehler, 2015; Feltrin, 2019). Compared to the other cases, the monarch of Morocco did not experience regime change, yet the emphasis is here put on

regime reform. Moroccan protests did not reach the same intensity of protest in other cases. Instead, the sitting administration wanted to mitigate protestors and take back control before it went too far. Hence, the administrator opened up the space for negotiation, part as a mean of taking back control and staying in power.

4.1.4 Libya

The two following cases of Libya and Yemen will set themselves apart from the other as there was no participation of any organised labour unions nor parties, hence no involvement of the working class. Despite, the transition project was in fact introduced and triggered by popular unrests and demand. The Libyan population lived under severe repression of former leader Qadhafi. Civil and political societies and organisations were all exclusively formed and run by the family of Qadhafi (Sadiki, 2012). In other words, there was no organisational freedom for an independent labour union to exist. Yet, people took to the streets to express their discontent of socioeconomic conditions and resentment against the repressive autocratic rule (Lesch, 2014; Boduszynski & Pickard, 2013). Sadiki (2012) argues that without this agential element of civilians putting their lives at risk by taking to the streets, Libya would not have managed to put an end to the singular authoritarian rule.

On the other end, the Libyan transition was much an act of elites. The self-appointed oppositional body of the National Transitional Council (NTC) was formed during the uprisings and later declared itself as the new formal government. The NTC consisted of former Qadhafi officials who defected against the leader and joined the opposition, along with military commanders (Lesch, 2014; Boduszynski & Pickard, 2013). The NTC was, along with the many civil protestors, the main actor in the overthrow of Qadhafi's rule. However, there was no negotiation with the prior regime. Instead, the NTC to some level joined the protest and self-established themselves as the new government by taking over the power city by city (Lesch, 2014; Boduszynski & Pickard, 2013; Sadiki;2012).

4.1.5 Yemen

The Yemeni case is similar to the Libyan in some instances. Like Libya, Yemen did not have an active or organised working class. Consequently, the working class were absent from their paths of transition. However, compared to Libya, the Yemeni regime was much less repressive and more broadly inclusive (International Crisis Group, 2011a). This made possible the existence of a formal opposition block from early on. The opposition bloc consisted of a combination of tribal leaders, political parties and military officers. At first, the opposition was argued to have stood on the sidelines of the protests, opposing the regime in theory but coopting with the system in practice (Juneau, 2013; International Crisis Group, 2011a).

Likewise in the other cases, the demand for democratic change emerged from civic mobilisation. Information about the success of the Tunisian uprising along with the overthrow of President Mubarak in Egypt reached the Yemeni public whereas Yemeni youths and civil society activists took to the streets (Alley, 2013). As protests continued to intensify and more people mobilised to join, the regime took offence and the security forces resorted to violence. In response, the formal opposition amplified their position and tried to catch-up to the public demands (International Crisis Group, 2011a). Further, as the protests and uprising started to transform into a serious conflict both sides recognised the cost of victory and decided to open space for negotiation. This last stage was fully characterised by elite interactions. The negotiated settlement placed the newly formed umbrella group of former opposition parties, the Joint Meeting Parties, in government and elite compromises gave the former president and his supporters domestic immunity (Alley, 2013).

4.2 Case mapping

Now, each case presented will be mapped on the set of Collier's paths explained in section 2.3.2. The cases will be matched with the path argued most fitting of its characteristics along

with an indication of the potential differences. Lastly, table 4.1 offer an overview of the case mapping as well as the main differences identified.

4.2.1 Destabilisation/Extrication

Firstly, the only path which will be argued to have been present during the Arab Spring is the *Destabilisation/Extrication path*. Here, the most crucial characteristic is the key role played by the working class. In the Tunisian case, it is shown that the UGTT indeed pushed for democratic change and can be argued to have played a central role in the overthrow of President Ben Ali. Additionally, it is also presented how the resources of the UGTT enabled them to open space for protest as well as mobilise its members and workers all over Tunisia. Even though it can be argued that the final call which resulted in Ben Ali's retreat were the threats of military officers, it is also fair to argue that the working class had already destabilised the regime.

Moreover, another aspect of this path which Collier (1999) emphasises was present in all of the third wave cases is the working class's involvement after the extrication decision (115). In the Tunisian case, both Feltrin (2019) and Bishara (2014) acknowledge the significant role played by the UGTT in the preceding negotiations of the new government.

4.2.2 Transition game

Next, the *Transition Game path* includes a broad variety of previous cases in terms of working-class involvement. The cases studied by Collier reaches from a less important to central protagonist role of the labour movements. In some cases, the labour movement led the anti-regime protests and pushed the process forward, in others it took a central role in the wider negotiations. These two roles were all evident in the cases of Egypt and Morocco.

The Egyptian transition might not have started or ended with the working class in the driver's seat. Yet, they did come to play the role as the most important anti-regime actor as protests erupted. Once the independent trade union were formed it contributed to the process by

opening up further space for protests as well as mobilising participants. The Moroccan case, on the other hand, experienced a steady role played by its labour unions. Starting with labour affiliated social protests and ending with state-labour negotiations to finally reach regime reform. Yet, the Moroccan case can not be argued to have destabilised its regime to the same extent as Tunisia and thus can not be argued to have followed the destabilisation path. As the Moroccan regime quickly met the protesters will by opening up space for negotiations the character of the transition also switched to the negotiation arena.

Yet, the Transition Game path does not succeed in offering a truthful description of the democratisation patterns notable in Egypt and Morocco in one important aspect. Collier (1999, 132) points out that each historical case which followed the path of a transition game began with "an incumbent project of legitimation". In these cases, the transition was introduced by a regime trying to gain legitimation for its rule by opening up a restricted electoral arena for oppositional political parties to enter. Notable, the Egyptian and Moroccan cases did more so follow the first path in the sense that a transition project rather emerged from below. A more suitable path of a transition game is hence better explained by public demand for democratic change which pushed the process forwards into the hands of negotiating elites.

4.2.3 Interelite game

Moving on to the *Interelite Game path*, the only crucial characteristic that cases from the Arab Spring share with this path is the non-existing role of any labour groups. The transition process in both Libya and Yemen were solely an elite game in that sense. Neither cases had an organised working class who could take part in the process. Likewise, such did not emerge during the process. However, this is as far as the resemblance reach. Collier explains the transitions in the third wave cases as projects starting with political parties pressuring the military regimes. Not with popular pressure from below, which both Libya and Yemen faced.

The pattern of change which both Libya and Yemen followed will though be partly characterised by elite interactions. Both cases had a strong oppositional body consisting of

various former military and political incumbents. However, this opposition did on some level act in the arena of protest as well. Even if the leaders of the opposition were not directly on the streets themselves they had a close interaction with the mobilised masses and did, in fact, represent some of their demands in later negotiations.

Moreover, another characteristic which has come to be of descriptive value now after the uprisings is the use of violence. Libya and Yemen are the two out of the set of cases with the highest rates of deaths and injuries due to the uprisings. Reported by the International Crisis Group (2011b) in the early stages of the uprisings, the Libyan case followed the lines of civil war rather than those of a democratisation process. The potential benefit of introducing violence as a dimension of the arena of action will be further discussed in section 4.3.3.

4.2.4 Parallel tracks

The one path which are not evident in any of the Arab Spring cases is the *Parallel tracks*. This paths, more than any of the others, follow a transition which had been planned and addressed for by authoritarian incumbents. Though, the labour movement is evident in this path it is highlighted that the two forces of action do not interact with each other. In other words, the working class were unable to alter or influence the direction of the government transition project.

The Arab cases where labour movement did play a role, it also managed to affect the transition process. In some cases more than the others, but the important aspect is that neither of the cases can be characterised by a parallel track of action.

Table 4.1 Summary of case mapping and identified differences

Path	**Case**	**Differences**
Destalisation / Extrication	Tunisia	No significant
Transition Game	Egypt Morocco	Transition introduced by demands from below rather than a governmental project from above

Interelite Game	Libya Yemen	Transition invoked by popular pressure rather than incumbent pressure
Parallel Tracks	None	No examples of parallel actions with no interconnectedness

4.3 Theoretical discussion

Building on the findings of section 4.2, a more thorough discussion of the identified characteristics will be offered. Special attention will be given to the noted differences. Lastly, a potential explanation for the identified differences will be discussed.

4.3.1 Labour vs. Elite participation

The involvement of the working class in various patterns of democratisation has continued to be an important aspect of the 21st century. The Arab Spring cases show that the matter of class is still relevant when understanding the processes of democratisation. Thus, the variation of labour movement involvement can partly offer an explanation of the different paths the Arab countries followed in early 2011.

Moreover, the role played by the working class has not seemed to increase nor decrease since the 1970s and 1980s. However, it is notable that in cases were the working class was a part of the transition it appeared to always have had a crucial role. Presented in section 4.2.4, the parallel character of both actors were not notable in the case of the Arab Spring. Where an organised working class existed it showed to have some level of influence over the transition project. For example, the Egyptian working class did not play a central role from start, as in Tunisia, nor did it manage to take part in the finalising negotiation stage, as in Morocco. Yet, it developed to have a central role during protests, arguable pushing the agenda forward and affecting the timing of the transition.

On the contrary, as shown in the empirical analysis, not all Arab Spring cases experienced an organised working class. Though, Collier's interelite path have been proved not to be a fitting description. Elite negotiations in Libya and Yemen were by no means only an elite interest. However, the oppositional elite participating in negotiations in both Libya and Yemen did to some extent represent the interest of the civilians protesting in the streets as well.

Another aspect of the overall role played by the elites during the Arab Spring is how its importance developed and increased over time. None of the cases started with a high interest in democratic change amongst the elite classes. Instead, it is notable that the oppositional elite came into play once a force for democratisation already were put in place by the working class or the public. Hence, it is interesting to note that compared to the historical cases, the elites featuring in the Arab Spring might have played a less essential role in the introduction of a possible transition. At the same time, they continued to play a crucial role in the final stages of a democratic transition.

4.3.2 Demand from below

The most prominent difference of the Arab Spring in comparison to the third wave of democratisation is how the transition agenda was introduced. In all of the Arab cases, the demand for change erupted from below. None of the cases experienced that the sitting regime introduced a legitimation or liberation project. Contradictory to the transition game path and the interelite game path. Instead, the Arab Spring experienced a rising popular demand acting in the protest arena, which in turn pushed the government to introduce these kinds of projects against their will. Alternately, the prior leader was forced to retreat.

Interestingly, this was also the case for Libya and Yemen where the role of the working class where nonexisting. Hence, although it can be argued that a path of solely the involvement of elites was present during the Arab Spring, the demand from below still existed as an important feature. One can, thus, make the statement that all cases share common features of the beginning of each path. What then is shown to determine what paths the case continued to

follow is then whether an organised working class existed or not. Additionally, the case of Tunisia also demonstrates that the preceding power and influence of the labour movement, in turn, impact a further distinctive path.

It is worth mentioning that Collier (1999) do account for the limitation of her analysis in the sense that it does not consider all non-working-class groups. However, it is evidential in her empirical analysis of the third wave cases that other civil society organisations among the civic public did not play an as crucial role as they did during the Arab Spring. This is, for instance, noticeable, again, at the beginning of the transition processes. Hence, in identifying new paths representable for the Arab Spring, the introduction of a project in the form of demand from below is the most important finding to take into account. As shown, even in cases where the involvement of the working class was nonexistent, it will be of importance to acknowledge the fact that transition grew from popular mobilisation from below rather than incumbent projects from above.

4.3.3 Third arena of action?

A notable characteristic of the Arab Spring which differentiates it quite a bit from the case of the third wave is the use of violence. It can be argued that for a truthful and thorough description of the different path countries followed during the Arab Spring, a third measure of the dimension of the *arena of action* needs to be taken into consideration. The two cases of Libya and Yemen did indeed experience more violent reforms than the other cases. As mentioned above, the International Crisis Group (2011b) acknowledged the civil war-like atmosphere which Libya experienced during the protests. It is also of descriptive value to pay recognition to the use of violence like this, especially in the cases of Libya and Yemen, as it indicates the mass losses of civilian protesters that lost their lives in the fight for regime change.

Further, the use of violence has also shown to influence the cause of action in some cases. The regime's continued use of violence in Libya and Yemen indeed fired up the opposition and made the push for change even more prominent. It is argued that the 'tipping point' for

protests in Yemen came when supporters of the former president fired on unarmed protestors in the streets (Alley, 2013).

4.3.4 What can explain the differences?

In the search for a possible explanation as to why some of the characteristics of the paths evidently has changed from the third wave of democratisation to the Arab Spring, there is one feature hard to ignore. The widespread use of social and digital media has arguably shown to have had a critical impact of the turnouts of the uprisings (see for example Howard & Hussain, 2013). Further, I will present a discussion of how the use of this new technology can offer an explanation as to why the Arab Spring's paths towards democracy all started along with the characteristics from below.

First, it is a popular argument that the major protests in Tunisia ignited the spark that turned out to be known as the Arab Springs. Many scholars point to the fact that the major protests in Tunisia influenced the latter protests in the region. With this in mind, it is no surprise that the feature of the majority of Collier's paths, a governmental introduction of a transition project, is non-existing in all Arab Spring cases. One may speculate that even if such a project were in the minds of the regimes, they simply did not have time to implement one before the wave of protest had already reached their nation. This is where both digital and social media have shown to have played a crucial part. News reports and social media updates about each step of the uprising in Tunisia, and later Egypt, spread rapidly across the region (Howard & Hussain, 2013). Accordingly, as shown, as the information spread across the region the civic masses took advantage of the already revolutionary atmosphere and mobilised in the streets. It is fair to argue that the live-update ability of social media contributed to spreading the wave of protests in such a rapid manner. The information infrastructure had indeed changed considerably since the third wave of democratisation until 2011 and the Arab Spring.

Next, the use of social media has also been acknowledged as a resource for mobilisation (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Breuer et al, 2015). Social media have proved to been used as a tool by the opposition to mobilise participants at a broader extent. Narratives by civil society

leaders, including labour affiliated organisations, during the uprisings has witnessed that the use of various social medias played a major role in reaching the extensive turnout of protesters (Howards & Hussain, 2013:18). In comparison to the experience of the mobilised opposition during the 1970s and 1980s, one may conclude that the opposition leaders in 2011 certainly had an essential advantage in new technology media. Geographical issues were easily overcome by the use of social media, making it possible to mobilise participants across a nation.

Moreover, Breuer et al. (2015) also show with their study of the uprising in Tunisia that social media, also offered an extended arena of mobilisation. Simultaneously and before the massive protests erupted in the streets, a large number of people were already engaged in a mobilised opposition online. This, in turn, can also explain as to how protests spread at such a quick manner from country to country. Organised protests had already started to take form on social media as civil society leaders, including organised labour groups, planned and mobilised participants for major demonstrations on the streets.

5. Summary of findings

To clarify the results of the conducted study, a brief summary of the main findings will be presented. Each finding adheres to the posed research questions.

Firstly, the study has shown that the interplay of the working class respectively the upper- and middle classes at different levels of involvement continues to offer an understanding of democratisation processes into the 21st century. Though, it is worth mentioning that this study does not argue that this is the only explanation but one significant amongst many worth taking into account. Continuing, it can be argued that the role played by each class has not changed drastically since the third wave of democratisation. However, it is evident that labour movements have experienced an increase in significance. Compared to historical cases of democratisation, regardless of where an organised working class existed during the Arab Spring it showed to have had some level of influence. In other words, the Arab Spring did not experience a parallel like pattern of transition between the two actors.

Secondly, the most significant difference between the two cases is how the democratisation process was introduced. All potential paths explaining the Arab Spring shares the experience of a pressuring demand from below. Compared to the third wave, there were no governmental or incumbent projects that started a process of democratic change. Rather, the Arab Spring experienced major civic mobilisation which either destabilised the authoritarian regime or pushed the process into the negotiation room.

Thirdly, it is proposed that the inclusion of a third arena of action, violence, for the analysis will offer a more truthful picture of the different paths during the Arab Spring. Violence is noted to have had a greater impact on the cause of action in some of the Arab cases, compared to the cases representing the third wave of democratisation.

In addition, the remarkable use of social and digital media during the Arab Spring has been posed as a potential explanation for the identified differences. The new technology favoured oppositional leaders in terms of mobilising a broader population of protesters across the nation. Further, the changed infrastructure of information inspired neighbouring countries to start a transitional agenda.

6. Conclusion

This study has sought to contribute to the understanding of the Arab Spring. Through the adoption of a comparative historical analysis strategy, patterns of democratisation have been analysed in comparison to cases originated from the third wave of democratisation. These patterns have been analysed and identified using a framework combining two approaches to the study of democratisation, making an analysis from 'above and below' possible. This theoretical framework is adopted and based on the study by Ruth Berins Collier (1999) who claims that different paths of transition can be found in different time periods. These paths, in turn, are based on the interplay of class actors, their political status and their arena of action.

Further, the analysis was conducted and presented in two stages. First, an empirical analysis engaged in the involvement of the different actors across a set of cases (Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Yemen). These cases were then mapped in comparison to Collier's established paths noticeable during the third wave of democratisation. Second, the identified differences enabled a theoretical discussion which addressed new significant characteristics of the Arab Spring. Lastly, a potential explanation for the noted differences was highlighted with a discussion about the oppositional use of social media during the uprisings.

The findings concluded that the interplay of class actors continues to offer a deeper explanation of the different patterns of democratisation. It thus identified three significant differences which offer unique characteristics of the Arab Spring. First, it is argued that the role of the working class has increased its significance in the sense that all cases with an organised working class had some sort of influence over the transition process. Second, all paths are argued to have started from public demand for democratic change, originating from below. Third, special attention has been given to the arena of violence when constructing a truthful explanation of some paths.

With the second finding in mind, future research is welcomed to go beyond the notion of class when analysing democratic actors. Other civil society organisations evidently had a crucial role during the Arab Spring, hence research including both the working class and the larger part of civil society will offer an even more in-depth understanding of the Arab Spring and its key actors. Moreover, further research within the field is also encouraged to shift the direction of focus to democratic consolidation. An interesting observation is how the case of Tunisia experienced the strongest and most organised working class among the Arab Spring cases along with the arguably best endurance of democracy up to date. Future comparative research of the third wave and the Arab Spring could potentially contribute to the understanding of variation in democratic consolidation in relation to class actors.

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