

## **TIDAL PHASE OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN TUNISIA, A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH TAIWANESE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

For long back, Middle East and North African communities suffered from tyrannical authoritarianism; Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan until early 1990s was not exceptional, as they encountered serious political turmoil and crisis lasted for decades under dominant overarching power of one party system (i.e. Kuomintang). Similarly, Sub-Saharan Africa, South, and Southeast Asian nations were under military regimes for dozens of years too. This ailment has been afflicting countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan for some reasonable period. In the past, virtually, democratic investments, political freedom, liberty and social well-being were absent in these areas. This study investigates democratization process in Taiwanese and North African societies. Nevertheless, I propose to analyze that both of religious and secular societies entitled, to some extent, certain level of democracy. Global societies, regardless with their languages, races, gender, beliefs or places of living; from east to west, Morocco to Taiwan speak and understand the language of democracy.

**KEYWORDS:** Democratization, North African Crises, Taiwan's Political System, The Post-2000 Miraculous Transition, State of Democratic Transition in North Africa

### **INTRODUCTION**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the forces of political expansionism and revolutionary democracy converted large numbers of undemocratic countries to democracy. In contrast, democracy is opposite to authoritarian or dictatorial government. Samuel Huntington (1991) classified nondemocratic authoritarian regimes into various types. Authoritarian viewed in form of monarchy. The line of kinship always determines this system.

Regime can be one party system like Taiwan in the late 1950s through the early 1990s. Such regimes in most of the cases come through various reasons: revolution, foreign influence and external imposing. The military regimes come to power by toppling the existent regimes to replace them with military dictatorships. Personal dictatorship is a leader who centralizes authority and power very limited to his person. Countries such as India, Portugal, and Romania have undergone similar leaderships somewhere in their histories (Huntington, 1991: 110-111).

Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe did not largely welcome democracy until 1989. In the 1991, the total number of new democracies rose to twenty-one countries. This move followed by the fall of Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of the United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR). From the early 1990s to 2000s, several countries in Africa shifted to democratic style. Benin Republic and South Africa for instance, transformed system of their governments in 1991 and 1994 respectively. On 29 May 1999, Nigerians elected Olusegun Obasanjo as new civilian president. This election followed the sudden prospect of Nigerian transition by the death of the then military leader, General Sani Abacha

in June 1998. Perhaps, this has finally ended the prolongation of military interruption in the country for the first time in nearly thirty years interval. Separately, this wave has promptly moved to the Arab world: Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco from North Africa, Lebanon, Jordan and state of Kuwait in the Western corner of Asia showing up their readiness and acceptance toward democracy.

This study will bring about new phase of political transformations in North Africa region in comparative analysis with Taiwanese analogue of democratization. However, the causes and implications of these transformations will be part of the major consideration of this article. Nevertheless, the study will try to capture a picture of the current political scenario in North Africa as well as in Taiwan. Outcomes and expected results of the political transitions and democratizations in both of N/Africa and Taiwan would be at the concluding remarks of this study.

There is no or very little literature on comparative study that seeks to investigate democratization process between North Africa and Taiwan. Perhaps, peoples have less concern on such analysis simply because many theories hypothesize that Islam is by nature, anti-liberalism, and democracy, and it comprises principles that depress economic growth. Secondly, in terms of religion and life style, Taiwanese and North African peoples are very much dissimilar. In fact, people see no point of making comparison between secularism and Islamism as longer as differences are clear. In turn, I argue that in spite of having very less to compare between the two societies, quest for democracy and economic prosperity those go side by side with Islamic values bring them together seeking common ground, which is the central core of this study.

Nevertheless, this article will test the above hypothesis, which says Islam is anti-democracy, the system that claims advocating justice, equality and free and fair elections which allows people to chose representatives whom they see appropriate and qualified enough to administer their affairs. However, the article seeks to portray that apart from religion, other social values and norms are always available to unite people from different backgrounds and lifestyles.

## **DEMOCRATIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION**

The terminological word '*Democracy*' that signifies absolute free will of the peoples to govern, elect and decides for them is non-English origin neither a modern concept. Rather, it gets its fertile ground in the primordial time. Like many '*cracy*' ending-words, such as aristocracy, bureaucracy, and so forth, 'democracy' is a product of Ancient Greece. For Greek lingua franca of Indo-European language family (Hellenic language), '*demos*' stands for 'peoples' or 'many', while '*kratos*' and/or '*cracy*' in modern English letters, means 'power' or 'rule'. Therefore, the literal meaning of democracy is but the rule of many as coincidentally adduced by Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) where everyone has an equal share and opportunity alike. Again, the ideological term "democracy" and freedom however, seem to have their genetic roots alongside the beginning of the human civilization. Nevertheless, partially, the principles of governance based on democracy became popular and universal norms only in the twentieth century.

Paradoxically, more than one definition speculates to review the limit of democracy. Albeit there could hardly be a sentence that contains meanings of what democracy is all about rhetorically. The word according to David Held came into English vernacular somewhere in the sixteenth century from the French *democratie*, while its origins were Greek. Democracy means a form of government, in contradistinction to monarchies and aristocracies, of the people's rule.

Democracy entails a political community in which there is some form of political equality among them. The history of the idea of democracy is complex, and is marked by conflicting conceptions with plenty scopes for disagreements (Held, 2006: 01). Democracy is seen as a system in which both rulers and ruled govern, share and involve in

general policymaking decision with equal power. Democracy has also been recognized and chiefly treated as the best form of government by majority.

In other words, the concept is just opposite to autocracy, monarchy, dictatorship, authoritarianism, absolutism, oligarchy, hierarchy tyranny, or any kind of arbitrary ruling. Out of the above different forms of government, no single form prolongs to serve the cause of the people directly. Therefore, the exponents of democracy get popularity in advocating the suitability of the democratic form for the global setting of today simply because it seems to work side by side with good governance and humanitarian considerations.

Prominent scholars, such as John Austin (1790-1859), A.V Dicey (1835-1922), and A.L Lowell (1856-1943) and others were some of the exponents of the democratic system of government. Putatively, democracy appears to be the most accredited system that has developed an apparatus to balance between the two classes: rulers or governing body and masses. For this, the system passively claims to be the system of all. Since it is emerging as universalistic norm, and good governance are always expected in its platform R. M. Dworkin highlights that, democracy means government by the people. Nevertheless, what does that mean? Among political theories or in the dictionary, no explicit definition of democracy is settled.

On the contrary, it is a matter of deep controversy of what democracy really means. Even though people disagree on which techniques of representation and which level: local, state and national governments allocate power, and which other institutional arrangements provide the best available version of democracy (Dworkin, 1999: 15). As a governing style, numerous scholars define democracy as a source of authority for government, purposes served by government, and for constituting government (Huntington, 1991).

Parenthetically, many experts believe that democracy should be the best system to administer people compared to non-democratic regimes, which many however, adduce to be incapable ideal form of leadership. Arguably, democracy is more qualified and qualitative configuration ever run by more educative class with less aggressive and violent basis, and highly caring for the people, conscious to deliver up their duties based on equality, liberty, and welfare to the people individual and group. Yet the idea that identifies democracy as government formed by the people and, for the people, as suggested by more than exponent, and if the statement is to upgrade greater participation of the entire citizens, it never review the limit of democracy.

Over the past two decades or so, the study of democratization has become a branch and the most important area in the field of political science and other related disciplines. Democracy requires strong local government, multiparty system, equal participation, and political rights of citizens, civil liberties and the multitude of nongovernmental organizations. A stable democracy needs a certain level of both social and economic well-being, which includes widespread literacy, urbanization, and high per capita incomes. The process of democratization is rooted in the political struggle. Scholars like Dankwart Rustow (1973) believe that the process should contain well-entrenched forces of precisely typical social classes.

This struggle is likely to start because of the appearance of the new elite, which would unite diverse public groups into a combine battle. Each country has a different type of leadership, supporters, as well as various peculiarities in the nature of this struggle. Therefore, the reasons and timeframes for this action are different too (Rustow, 1973). The increase of popular expectation of periodic and competitive elections together with poor economic performances, led to legitimate loss of authoritarian regime. Economic modernization through global economic output, that helped most of the least

developed economies to address many changes in their structures, such as increase rates of urbanization, education, and rising of the middle class, are other causative factors, which expand breakthrough of democratization in many countries of undemocratic regimes (Huntington, 1991).

Scholars like Diamond and even Huntington have unanimously tried to distinguish the limit of democracy with nondemocratic societies, which are very much helpful in discerning the political and democratic situations of both Taiwan and North Africa. Before transforming to democratically elected government, Taiwan for example, has been the powerhouse of KMT, which fall apart/lost the control of government to the DPP party in 2000 presidential elections. This happened for the first time after tens of years. That was not the end because various unexpected situations including corruption, economic devaluation and other malfeasances in government come clear during the DPP reign of eight years. Democratization process was in fact bit disturbed but not interrupted as peaceful transition of power has been taking place in a sequence manner and in piecemeal.

Many studies on the process of democratization pay much attention on the concept of civil society and its ability to encourage democratization process and highlight its positive roles in transition from authoritarianism to sustainable democratic system of government. Hence, building an athletic civil society is perhaps precondition when consolidation for democracy more often in third world nations. The suitable examples are recent democratic revolts in the Arab world, from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, to the state of Bahrain and so forth.

According to Huntington, individual agents are very important in democratic transition. Democracies created not by causes but by causers. To him, transition bases on elite choice, participation, beliefs, and actions while backbone of the subsequent consolidation is elite pacts and consensus. Until recently, the roles that civil society plays in the Arab world are contrary to their counterparts in the other parts of the world where opposition political parties for example, take a position in attempting to extract democratic reforms from the authoritarian regime.

Political parties in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region seem feebly weak. Far away from being weak and passive, civil society organizations have become inevitable and primary instigators of change and marginalizing official political parties. In MENA region, the uprisings of January 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt are the recent paradigmatic instances. Experts estimated the rapid expansion of these movements that include civil society groups to have an impact on the political system setting in the whole region in the short period to come.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE NORTH AFRICAN POLITICAL CRISES**

African countries have been witnessing democratic transitions since early 1990s. The transitions are always open a window for popular agitations and struggles for political reformation, which have deposed authoritarian regimes in northern part of the region (UNECA, 2013). This social networking or e-revolution (if you like) is one of the various titles given to the recent political upheavals in North Africa and Middle Eastern nations. Many political analysts and observers believe that these revolutions were merely outcomes of the poor performances in the structure of leadership in the region. In response, the waves have so far, toppled down from the grass roots, three of the strongest longest reigns in North Africa. They forced Zain al-Abideen of Tunisia into exile, conviction to Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and extermination to Muhammad Ghaddafi of Libya. As for the time of writing this study, the fate of Syria's Bashar al-Assad is obscure although genocide is already committed.

North Africa sub-region contains majority Arabic speaking Muslim countries namely: Algeria, Egypt, Libya,

Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and some extent Mauritania. North Africa has nearly 200,000,000 populations with \$1.189 trillion total GDP and 5,974 per capita (CIA World FactBook, 2014). The region borders Mediterranean Sea from the north, Sub-Saharan Africa in the south, North Atlantic Ocean (toward Morocco) from the west, and Suez Canal (toward Egypt) in the east. All of these countries are members of the United Nations and African Union except Morocco, which withdrawn her membership from African Union over the course of unresolved Western Sahara issue.

In the eighteenth century, quotation from Jean-Jacques Rousseau read “man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains” (Rousseau 1712-1778). Men are free by nature; therefore, denying them freedom can at any given time, generate negative outcomes. Regarding the Arab and Muslim world, the story is paradoxical and complex. Early 2011, the Arab-young men altered the entire history, and opened a new historic chapter for Middle East and North Africa when the youth came out walked streets devoting all they had in order to transform and change their governmental icons who run the systems in their countries with iron fist for dozens of years.

In nutshell, these political revolts have very much compelled Moroccan leadership just like other countries in the region to embrace many reformations including widening chances for democracy and political opening. For instance, the parliamentary polls of the kingdom according to Ghosh, were the first one since King Muhammad VI ordered constitutional reforms in July 2011, devolving significant powers to the elected Prime Minister and his government, the provision which was absent in practice in the pre-protests time. Already Morocco’s politicians have for long, been accused of corruption and nepotism as well as vices that have become more unpalatable in the wake of the Arab Springs pushes for greater accountability (Ghosh, 2011).

After conducting credible elections, the most significant step was the regime’s support to the reviewed constitution by appointing a PJD leader as new prime minister after winning the majority seats in the parliament. Generally, the spring strives to change political direction of long-term military and authoritarian control to absolute or quasi-absolute Islamism throughout the region. Souad Mekhennet and Maïa de la Baume argue that the so-called ‘Jasmine revolution’ brought voters across the region to choose Islamists in elections: al-Nahdha party in Tunisia, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and Justice and Development Party (PJD) in Morocco. Like any society in the world, Arab and North African communities were thirsty of liberty, freedom, and political rights.

They need good governance, transparency and peaceful transition of power, tired with one-man one party or one system of government, abhorred too little too late. They need no less than basic human needs. Tunisia, a small country with ten million populations led a change that gone beyond North Africa region. Caused by mistreating twenty-six year old person “by woman police officer who also fined him for illegal vending and confiscated his merchandise” (Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel, 2011: 238) over his vegetable cart in the course of earning livelihood for himself and his family in Sidi Bouzid province of Tunisia. This incidence led to the wide range of revolutions and resulted in terminating the powerful regimes with an iron fist in the region. Similarly, the wave proceeded to exterminate the forty years-old regime, and get new title for Libya rather than Muammar Gaddafi.

From the very beginning, this tidal wave, apart from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen where the game is already over, and Syria, where open revolts will more or less break down the stick of tyrannical government; the process has extended to Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Sudan. However, the protest does not do much in these areas, but it has been able to send a special message of its elemental force of change to those regimes.

The Global Issue (Online Magazine) narrated that “throughout Middle East and North Africa, civilians’ protests and revolts have erupted as people’s frustrations with their conditions appear to have boiled over...”, “decades of authoritarianism have no doubt suppressed thoughts and opinions which are perhaps now bubbling to the surface when combined with other issues” (Global Issues, 2011).

In the case of Tunisia, Ben Ali was very good example. He was to bring about positive changes in democratic setting of Tunisia. He found himself replacing the then and first President after political independence of Tunisia from France in 1956, Habib Bourguiba, and the very president forced to surrender the power in 1987. Lord Acton (1834-1902) once wrote that “power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely”. Ben Ali was one of the leaders who tried to put the quotation into practice. Due to the concurrence of Habib’s regime, Ben Ali was from the beginning able to influence changes that seemed to pave the way for the highly bright future of Tunisia. He freed political prisoners and initiated political dialogue; peoples were clapping for the new regime of Ben Ali. One year later, the ministers who served with old regime replaced with the new capable figures that remained supporting tools to Ben Ali to process better Tunisia (Global Issue, 2011).

It was less than one decade when two elections held in 1989 and 1994 and Ben Ali declared winner in both of the elections. Instead of installing subservient leadership and good governance so to not repeat the previous mistake (i.e. the one of Habib), Ben Ali dominated all of the state apparatus with iron fist. He meanwhile managed to drive Tunisians tyrannically for longer than two good decades. Needless to mention, apart from language, religion, tradition or regional similarities between Tunisia and Egypt, the types of government alone could embolden Egyptians to be the second in joining the historic revolution of North Africa. They stood and finally toppled down the top positions in their countries. Like Zain al Abiden Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak was second only to the 1975 Egyptian President; Anwar El-Sadaat in 1981 followed by cruel assassination targeted Sadaat.

Mubarak became one of the longest presidents known in the history of modern Egypt since Muhammad Ali Pasha. He remained friend and ally to the United States of America throughout his reign, and specifically during the Gulf War of 1991. He allied George Bush Sr. against Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait. Anup Sha mentioned in the Global Issues that generally some of the protesters focus on jobs creation, corruption and other malpractices, while others focus on historical divisions (such as how Bahrain’s Shi’a majority has been ruled by a Sunnis minority, and royal family for decades). Therefore, all of these local, regional and global issues were combined together in various and potent ways especially in the hands of the large population of unemployed but well-educated youth.

Some protests have been non-violent, while others have had varying degrees of violence, either by protestors or by security forces. To avoid terrible demonstration, Saudi Arabia’s government has banned protests, marches, and masses assembly. BBC reported that such sort of demonstrations and sit-ins, according to Saudi government, contradict Islamic Law, jurisprudence and the values and traditions of Saudi society. The ingredients of change that hit large part of the Middle East and North Africa calls for further democratic expansionism, and behind those incidences, the fourth wave of democratization is perhaps, perceived in these areas.

The catastrophe of the 9/11, which targeted tower block of the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States, has drastically changed the political direction of the globe specifically between western world and Islam. The then President of the United States, George Bush’s speech identified that, democratizing the Middle East and Islamic world is a pivotal issue in the American foreign policy. There is need to replace the military dictatorship, which dominated regional

politics, with democratically elected government. In his address, Bush encouraged the governments in the region to mind modernization in their government styles, and that has nothing to do with westernization. It will work side by side along their cultures, and simultaneously, serve much in reducing down the acts of terrorism, which threaten the rights of others to live their lives, to make their religions with freedom or to say what is in their rights to say (Craner, Middle East Quarterly, 2006).

## TAIWAN'S POLITICAL SYSTEM: AN OVERVIEW

Republic of China (ROC) was one of the founding members of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War in 1945. Nearly three decades later due to the lack of international recognition, the (ROC) lost her seat as Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council (P-5), which has gone to the People Republic of China (PRC) following her expelling from the United Nations by Resolution 2758. Subsequently, Taiwan, under the KMT led-government started suffering from the international diplomatic isolation, which lasted until today.

This sporadic intermittence indeed paralyzes Taiwan, and polarizes its internal politics into two wings: Pan-Blue Coalition political groups<sup>1</sup> comprise those support unification with mainland China, and choice Chinese identity rather than separate Taiwanese. The second is Pan-Green Coalition group<sup>2</sup> of who favour independence with new Taiwanese national identity. The current incumbent Taiwanese president set out democracy, economic development, and equitable wealth distribution as conditions to achieve the goal of unification. However, this alliance rejects the immediate unification until if PRC can entertain these together with other conditions including permission to return the body of Chiang Kai-Shek to his ancestral place in the mainland China.

Romer Cornejo (2008: 207) argues that the expel was one of the first heavy blows that hit Taiwan only to serve as an extraordinary force toward democratic transitional exercise overtaking the old authoritarian system, which has been embolden by the Kuomintang nationalist party. Since then, Taiwan manages democratization and transformation gradually until 1996 when it gone for her first historic presidential polls ever happened in modern day Taiwan.

This election served as first incremental test of democratization process in the island. Though holding regular elections or multiplying party organizations alone does not necessary, grant stable state of democracy; democratic institutions must get support from the various interest groups only they can operate appropriately. North African nations have individually undergone this kind of political therapy one after another, but lacking stronger political institutions affects their efforts.

Cumulatively, the human race settles down in Taiwan for the last 15, 000 years back coincident with the age of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic. There are heat debates over the people who populated Taiwan as a place inhabited by humankind for the first time. Some scholars say that the pioneer people to populate the area were the people of Malayo-Polynesians origin who specifically influx from modern day Indonesia. Others believe that they were northerners,

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<sup>1</sup> Pan-Blue Coalition is a political alliance of three political groups in the Republic of China. It consist Kuomintang (KMT) party, which is the current ruling party in Taiwan, the People First Party (PFP), and the New Party (CNP). The name comes from the blue colour emblem of the Kuomintang Party.

<sup>2</sup> Pan-Green alliance is a combination of four different political groups organized themselves to oppose unification with mainland China and favour independence Taiwan. The political parties in this alliance include the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP) and Taiwan Constitutional Association (TCA). The coalition takes its name of the green colour of Democratic Progressive Party emblem, which gets the fertile ground due to the party's extensive relation with environmental movement.

the people who were from south-eastern side of mainland China. Henceforth, Taiwan always have been but part of China (Library of Congress, 2005).

Taiwan, officially Republic of China (ROC) is an island situated in East Asia, bordering People Republic of China to the west, Japan to the northeast and Philippines in the south; Taipei is the capital city and centre of administration. Ma Ying-jeou is the incumbent president. The Taiwanese president elected directly by Taiwanese people for the duration of four-year term (renewable) with a unitary semi-presidential type of government. Five government branches administer Taiwan namely: Executive Yuan (composes of Cabinet), Legislative Yuan, Judiciary Yuan, Control Yuan (covers finance and audit department) and Examination Yuan (controls civil service examination). Taiwan has 23, 373, 790 (2015 estimate) population.

Ethnic groups such as Han Chinese, Hokkien, Hakka, Mainlanders, and Aboriginal altogether shape the Taiwanese population. People in Taiwan consider themselves as Taiwanese or Chinese (Wikipedia online, 2015). Over the past four decades or so, multiple vicissitudes try to shape the Taiwanese democratization agenda. This transformation has drastically started somewhere in the late 1970s and early 1980s; just like many other countries in the world to coincide what Samuel Huntington themed “*third wave*” when dozens of nondemocratic nations across the world have fully or partially converted to democratic political system.

This move has particularly increased the numbers of democracies especially in Western Europe, Africa, and Asia. However, this could not aggregately end the authoritarian regimes, but was able to undermine their prolonging influences in many parts of the world compared to the 1950s and 1960s or even earlier. During those days, Taiwan was struggling for self-government, and determination, denied by the government of People Republic of China (PRC), the communist government that was also in support of North Korea’s intention to invade the South in June 1950. This was an alert that made United States to resume direct military ties with the Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan immediately. Subsequently, in 1954 U.S. signed mutual military defence treaty with ROC (Dumbaugh, 2006). This ratification remained in force for three decades serving as one of the longest mutual agreement between U.S. and ROC.

As for Taiwan, the period covered between 1950s and early 1980s the turmoil was not just internal political imbalance, but it was also threat by nearby neighbouring China. PRC was bidding for one and the only China. This policy aimed at thwarting political legitimacy and self-determination of Taiwan. North African political system has been favouring dictatorial regimes with special privileges until yesteryear, when the protests interrupted the grand plans of more than one leadership in North Africa region, Egypt and Morocco have been enjoying regular elections participated by multiple political parties for many years.

This nature remained impotent to bring significant change in power-holding pattern in these countries. As for Morocco, neither regular elections nor multiparty system were able to make the country “protest-free zone” as thousands of young Moroccans walked streets demanding what their counterparts in other Arab nations demanded except for toppling down the regime. Whereupon, in Egypt, protesters remain the main reason that make Mubarak regime a historic tale of reference. In the recent contemporarily time, Taiwan’s democratization process appears to be one of the most successful democratic stories in the world.

Despite the transition had, from the very beginning, been launched through what could be seen as a soft pressure, it was also aptly incremental. Initially, the process was a transition from within the authoritarian nationalist single party, the



KMT. The party's move was doorway for the future presidential elections of 1996; transformed its manifesto to accommodate and pave the way for future ambition of Taiwanese people. This was not less than true liberalism and democratic leadership within their territorial boundaries. Four years later, another smoother transition took place by electing president from the long opposition party DPP in the year 2000.

Throughout this gentle process of liberalization, with the exception of the 1947 massacre in which thousands of peoples were murdered by Chiang Kai-shek's troops (Schafferer, 2009); the step-by-step moving toward stable state of democracy in Taiwan is said to be quite peaceful. Although, the process, according to Shelley Rigger, consolidation of democratic atmosphere in Taiwanese environment was not that easy, because it was such kind of series of pressures and counter-pressures, compromises, negotiations and pacts between the authoritarian regime led by KMT and other opponent groups, which managed to consume many lives whose belonged to the membership of both parties. Nevertheless, at the end it had brought about smoother political change in Taiwan more than ever before, and placed the country ahead of many other nations in the third world in terms of peaceful political transition (Rigger, 1999: 03).

Some writers such as Christian Schafferer, argue that the deep legacies that had been left behind by the authoritarian government together with prolonging martial law (1949-1987) have become undeniable challenges to newly democratic consolidation especially after electing DPP into office in 2000 (Schafferer, 2009).

The sentimental attachment of political domination in the postwar Taiwan, have of course changed the mainland Chinese nationalism to more specifically and narrowly Taiwan patriotism ideology in the 1990s. This has created political frontier between the two places, People/Republic of China (mainland China and Taiwan), and marked more political opening and wider democratization in Taiwan (Cheung, 2012).

The KMT, which happened to serve political desire in mainland China for long time, 70 percent of its members during the 1980s were of Taiwan nationals. Despite the fact that the party's 2.4 million members were Taiwanese, mainland Chinese members occupied the important key positions of the party. Apart from this, second blow that hit the party was internal fragile over the contents of proposed reformation exercise. The moderate KMT members whose were composed of both mainlanders Chinese and Taiwanese have come clearly in supporting the proposed demand of political reform in Taiwan giving the special emphasis on reformation of the internal structure of the KMT political platform itself (Wachman, 1994: 18-19). Rigger (1999) considers this as one of the unique factors that try to shape the political development in Taiwan over a long period.

## **THE POST-2000 MIRACULOUS TRANSITION, POLITICAL SCANDALS REPLACED AUTHORITARIAN ONE-PARTY SYSTEM**

On March 10, 2000, Taiwan held presidential elections. Results of the elections were in favour of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate. Thus, the official winning declaration of these elections opened a new historic page in Taiwanese politics. Previously, the DPP party played the role of opposition for decades gathering its political experience only on local government matters. In the first half of its first tenure of office, Taiwan seemed to experience hard economic recession along with record of high growth of unemployment for the first time in many years.

Nevertheless, the palpable division in mainly governmental branches, which stood as challenge to the ruling DPP was also observed. The presidency and executive were on the control of DPP, whereupon KMT was even then, able to secure the majority seats in the parliament: dove versus hawk (Aktuell, 2010: 188-189). Four years later, on the eve of the

2004 presidential polls, Chen Shui-bian the DPP presidential candidate, was targeted in a failed assassination attempt. This together with other related political crises followed the elections, which took place during the two terms of office served by the DPP, sent a signal that the DPP political tactics and ideal strategies are feebly insufficient.

These incidences have precisely undermined the democratic confidence of domestic and international stances. The subsequent disputes of the 2004 elections won by the DPP, once again forced the KMT supporters to use political violence showing their dissatisfaction toward the future leadership of the winning party not only because of their political affiliation with the opposition party KMT but also because the country witnessed certain amount of economic stresses ever for many years. As a new ruling party, DPP had has to readjust its internal structures and platforms so to be able to face the challenge of leading a country that experienced one-party governing style for several decades in which even after the transition to democracy in 1996 the same party managed to transform its manifesto so to fit democracy mandates.

This indeed, makes DPP the first opposition party to secure the highest political office in Taiwan throughout this wave of democratization process. Subsequently, the challenge has been establishing a loose alliance between different groups as noticed by Hermann Halbeisen. According to him, the party has to develop such kind of structural design, which could make it powerful to accommodate as many factions as possible with conflicting opinions and views so to keep aloof from centralizing power within the frame of party leadership. Lack of sufficient coordination of the activities of the president and executive, created a wide gap in the quality of DPP led administration (Halbeisen, 2003).

During this period of two terms of DPP led administration, many records of serious political scandals observed in the government offices and parastatals specifically in the first half of the second term. The unexpected poor performance of the DPP was 'grist to the mills' for KMT as it has been able to occupy presidency after the 2008 presidential polls. This because many Taiwanese including DPP members, lost their faithful confidence in the party commitment to tackle out many social and economic matters, and couldn't strongly fight corruption and clean government from KMT's long-term aberrant ruling. The DPP claimed that KMT-reappearing is automatic return of tyranny, but the vocalization seems very much inactive and forceless just like its poor performance while in control (Aktuell, 2010: 190).

Despite the nature and structural features of KMT, and in spite of being the only party to run the government, which was all-powerful, it took her fifty years or so to surrender to corruption, whereupon DPP lost the battle to the same corruption in less than eight years of time (Hsueh, 2007: 20).

## **STATE OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN NORTH AFRICA DURING PRE-PROTESTS ERA**

Political transition is not new phenomenon in North Africa as always the question that many keep asking has gone beyond just democratic transition or even elections and party system, to the typical nature and purported implications of the transition itself. It is for very long time, known that lack of the rule of law, which leads to absolute overarching powerful authoritarian regimes in North Africa and Middle Eastern states has deeply based on the power invested on their hands. They overtake the power of articulation of judiciary, which in turn make this very institution weaker. It depended and guided on and by the lust of the regime.

Clearly, parliaments under normal circumstance, are not strengthened enough to make any decision not in favour of the interest of the regime. In Morocco for example, before the protests, three questions are not anyway entertained: the inviolable person of the king, religion of the state and the issue of Western Sahara. The greater question that remains in both pre-and post-protests North Africa and Middle East as well is what is the Islamic perspective toward modern

Western/secular democracy? That also focuses on the viewpoint of the teaching of the Qur'an in relation to the modern day democracy.

Many scholars in and outside the region are trying to find out the answers that fit the current political situation. In Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, Islamists secured majority seats in their respective parliaments by which some of them have been able to form a stable government like Morocco for example. Whereupon in Egypt, Muhammad Morsi, a presidential candidate under platform of Muslim Brotherhood won the election but was able to remain in power for a very short period following the abrupt military interruption. In Tunisia, al-Nahdha party secured majority seats in the parliament during the first elections since revolts.

Democratic values are more or less attracting the concerns of the Arab majority especially after some prominent scholars like *Qaradawi* sided with Egyptian youth protesters against Mubarak regime. *Qaradawi* argued that the Mubarak regime was not Islamic one therefore taking appropriate possible action to change such kind of leadership has automatic legality in Islam. This was for Egypt, but as for a country like Saudi Arabia, the clergies and priests observed illegality of taking any serious action such as demonstrations against *ulul-amr* or 'governing body'.

Brown and Hamzawy adduce that Middle East and North African regimes are in three democratic considerations: failing states, these states are weak in terms of democratic investments, strict authoritarian countries, and quasi-authoritarian countries (Brown and Hamzawy, 2007: 46). Most of the countries in the South of the Mediterranean are in these ranges. Authoritarianism centralized in Egypt and quasi-authoritarian system perhaps in Morocco, the only country with constitutional monarchy in the area.

## THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE POST-WORLD WAR II TAIWAN

From the very essence, the dawn of Taiwan's democratization linked with the incidences of the post-World War II directly. The most important one started with the fall of Japan to the allied forces. Many experts assumed that in the time to come, democratization process would get a 'head start' within the Taiwan's society.

To understand the contextual implications of this process, we need to reconsider the capitulation of Japan during the 1945, the year that marked the end of the World War II. The victory of the allied nations against Nazism and Fascism of Germany and Italy under Hitler and Mussolini respectively, and their associates, had automatically terminated Japanese control on Taiwan and set the island within the brackets of freedom and autonomy. Perhaps, this was (if not the first), among the most important events marked the first step toward liberalization in *Formosa* (latterly Taiwan). Japan was able to expand their control on Taiwan after the evacuation of Chinese Qing rulers that ended their thirteen years control (from 1887 to 1895).

The Taiwan Communiqué published by the International Committee for Human Rights (1996) penned down that before the influx of the imperial China, the island did not experience domination by any external conqueror. After coming across a lot of political seizures and turmoil somewhere in the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Taiwan's democratization and political transformation keep taking place in piecemeal with gradual changes in government and society as well. Although amid this gradual motion, many issues were raised especially those focused against KMT. Interestingly, in spite of the political disorder, the Taiwan's political process was not stagnant.

In the post-World War II Taiwan witnessed different realities such as party decamping especially from the then all-

powerful ruling party, the KMT, merging with other parties or forming a new political group and independent. Indeed this factor plays role in creating multiple political organizations in Taiwan. It nevertheless, paved the way for stronger opposition in Taiwanese political life. Right from the start, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) participated in the elections of 1970. In 1994 and 2000 dozens of KMT mainstream members branched out due to the internal wrangling of KMT as a result, Chinese New Party (CNP), People First Party (PFP) of James Soong, and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) created by the afterthought of former president elected under the platform of KMT Lee Teng-hui (Tsai and Chao, 2008: 617-618).

The internal disintegration that seemed to be fruits of asymmetric ideologies and logical interferences among the KMT's memberships, the party which remained in power for so many years, have with the aid of other different factors, automatically enhanced the chance for political democratization in Taiwan. Apart from this, KMT faced similar challenge on the hand of DPP and other oppositions and independent candidates too. The party managed to hold power standstill, until the 2000 presidential elections. This means it was not that effete to accept destruction by such oppositions because the then internal crisis and disunity of the party were not strong enough to split it into pieces as it does in 1994 and 2000. Hence, the challenge of the post-2000 elections was much more catastrophe especially after its former chairperson, Mr. Lee withdrawn his membership from the party.

Thanks to these differences as they led to multiple perceptions in the views and perspectives of the members for it to leave the KMT party handicap. Many scholars consider this as a freeway for more democratization and political development in Taiwan. Although succeeded DPP also could not fulfilled the people's expectations as number of devaluations and irregularities appeared during the party's reign. KMT regain control of power after a two-tenure of hiatus.

## **DOES RELIGION MATTER? DEMOCRACY AND RELIGIOUS TENET**

Scholars like Esposito and Dalia Mogahed (2009), Norris and Inglehart (2002), Charles Cohen and Ronald (2013) and more others have been taking extensive studies, which enable them to find out that democratic system of government is never disdainful style in Islam. Though other scholars like Huntington (1991, [1996]), Fukuyama (1992) and Diamond found no accommodation is provided for democracy system in Islam. As for the first groups, supposed it debate, look at the features claims by liberal democracy such as equality, liberty, freedom and justice based on which they standardize Islam as a mirror through which one can understand the message of democracy better. The group who see no relation between Islam and democracy depend on the fact that sovereignty belong to God alone, which is also one of the central focus on Islamic legislation.

Comparatively, these afterthoughts are very much controversial and unresolved yet. But the connections between the two ideologies intellectually chance academic disputes and scholarship writings across the world (Mehregan, 2014: 3-4). Even though, participation of Islamist parties and winning the elections in Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco is clear message that the precise relations between Islam and democracy do exist for number of reasons: first, Islamists come to power in these three countries through electoral democracy. Secondly, they participate in forming new governments in their respective countries without anarchist tendency against democratization. Addition to that, the empirical evidence, which always proves the existing connection between Islam and democracy practically, is that Muslim Brotherhood stepped forward to implementing Islamic *shari'a* law as does by al-Nahdha in Tunisia without prejudice against liberal democracy.

In contrast, Taiwan officially is a secular country and therefore, its democratization agenda is not anyway, linked

to religion. The Taiwanese legal documents fully derived from secular point of view by this, religious interference has no room in framing or amending the constitution of the country (BTI, 2012: 10). It is very difficult to identify religion of Taiwan as argues by Robert Hamburg of course some famous religions are there like Buddhist, Confucianism and Taoism in mainland China (Hamburg, 2009: 12), which may not be applicable in Taiwan directly. However, a reasonable number of Taiwanese practice different faiths with some around 14-18 percent who are categorically non-religious ones. Simultaneously, the constitution of the country reserves freedom of religion. In North Africa, Islam is the religion of the state, but one has the right to practice his/her religion freely; Moroccan authorities illegalize proselytizing within its peripheral borders.

Since political opening started in Taiwan, there have been many transitions of government, constitutional amendments, but there was neither transition nor amendment ever instigated by religious force. In North Africa, the initial stage of the revolts that caused greater and historic political transition to democracy was not at all religious; it appeared religious later on after widespread of the protests. On the first round, the revolts were but people's signals against tyranny, which is irreligious and anti-humanity. That is what unites North African society with the people of Taiwan in several occasions.

## COMPARATIVE EXPANDING

Optimistic expectation drove out millions of Taiwanese to cast their votes in favour of Mr. Chen Shui-bian on March 10, 2000 presidential polls hoping the level of malpractices would turn down. Perhaps, the temptation that Taiwanese have generated by many reasons such as, from the very beginning, DPP is a party that gets its essences from democratic roots, unlike KMT, which in contrast has adjusted its internal structure so to be able to fit the current political setting of the world.

Parenthetically, KMT subjugated people for a long time. Hence, Taiwanese of course were groping for transformation and effective change in government as well as administration. Secondly, DPP come to power for the first time in its historical existence after more than fifty years of the KMT rule. Thus, people were expecting many positives from its contributions, and waiting for the role that it might play specifically in the critical and strategic areas including political and socioeconomic development. Thirdly, the attributes of Mr. Chen was another advantage, which dynamically attracted Taiwanese people. Apart from that, this candidate is a lawyer and university professor, who also holds strong academic career, jailed in 1985 over his pro-democracy sentiment, and after release he had become one of the founding fathers of the Democracy Progressive Party (DPP). Chen was the first Taiwanese-born president ever ruled the Island.

Apart from the Tunisian incidence of 1987, other silent backgrounds differentiate Ben Ali of Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, or Gaddafi of Libya, and Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan or even the KMT regime. Ben Ali of Tunisia come to power in a bloodless coup against Habib Bourguiba on the ground of the doctor's report, which declared Habib Bourguiba with insufficient capability to rule the country. The assassination of al-Sadaat in 1981 brought Mubarak to the presidency. Mu'ammar Gaddafi seized power from King Idris in a successful coup attempt of 1969 for him to take control of Libya until 2011. Mr. Chen was declared the president of Taiwan through general political, free, and fair elections in a peaceful transition of power with KMT.

Just like KMT, Gaddafi lasted on power for good four decades same with Mubarak who was there also for nearly three decades. The National Democratic Party (NDP), the Mubarak party whose members were the top key figures in the

Mubarak government. As president, Mubarak alleged to win presidential elections several times.

Taiwan's political situation in pre-1996 presidential elections resembled that of many North African nations. Again, considering the recent uprisings we see that the youth across the region took up the grand responsibility of changing their government. It was such kind of movement that ensued young Arabs to represent their fathers, mothers, sisters and elder brothers cheering with boisterous voices against aberrance, through which rampant corruption, mismanagement, embezzlement and other kind of inhumanity that have automatically affected political, social and economic prosperity were observed.

This time the change of government is not merely via the aid of elections, but prior to the political participation, the revolts try to set a force and mechanism that can identify who would be eligible to participate and hold public office through electoral manner. These revolts first, toppled down the most powerfully longest regimes, which seems serving a signal to those who could succeed the ousted ruler that special emphasis and priority been given to the people but not personal ego and lust. Similarly, in 2006, six years after Chen come to power, people were demonstrating against the direction and performances of the DPP which was about to repeat the 2011 North African story (Wei-chi, 2010). Even before that, ethnicity contributed a lot to ensure the launched out democratization process is reasonably achieved. Mobilizing people to demand change and transformation in government was part of the roles played by ethnicity during the first-round KMT administration (Hsieh, 2010: 29-30).

Are electoral politics alone able to bring about a just government? Is ballot papers accredited enough to predict or choose a good leadership in developing economic countries? To which extent the elected government can remain accountable to the people in such areas. Answering these questions is not an easy task. I argue that in developing and least-developed nations, elections or even democratic transitions alone is seldom fruitful. Simply because theories that say electoral democracy stabilize nations as general, phenomena fail. Many examples keep rotating from global south to east. In Nigeria for instance, number of peoples who lost their lives due to the insecurity, lack of health facilities or starvation during democracy and civilian rule, especially between 2009 and 2015 doubled that of military regime.

Practically, during the military government, freedom of speech, political gathering and practicing other social entitlements normally limited, but people enjoy certain amount of security to their lives and properties. Secondly, when the causes of revolution put into consideration it is easy to notice that representative government cannot resolve the prolonging malpractices. In such a case, alternative must put into action. This alternative substitution could be anything including revolutionary branches.

As far as the theories are concerned, James C. Davies (1962) maintained that the prolonging period of objective economic and reverse in social development, revolution is more likely to take place. When people of all the levels of social classes start feeling restless and held down by restrictions: societal, religious, economic and government, and their hope about future is turn down and forced to accept what they think they did not deserve, there is potential of hostility and bitter ties between the social classes. When government ignore the needs of the peoples, and fail to have fit economic policy, bankruptcy, heavy and mischievous taxes, the chances for revolution in such a society are very much high (Barrington Moore, 1966).

This attitude more or less shapes the leadership in the South of the Mediterranean. In Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, elections are taking place regularly, but until the revolts, the condition of the governments in terms of democracy

are extremely poor and below standard compared to many countries in other parts of the world. It is beyond doubt that democracy is a nice and appropriate system to govern, but according to Chao-Yung Hsueh, democratization, apart from positive side it has another unfortunate colour of promoting corruption, but not itself does anyway uplift act of corruption. Perhaps people who control power can easily use the means of the process to privilege agenda that can serve corruption indirectly. This unfortunate side, as for Hsueh, find its way more vulnerable in the countries that moving toward economic and political transitions (Hsueh, 2007: 12).

Firstly, political campaigns are becoming highly expensive. Politicians in countries such as Taiwan and North African nations or in any other third world country need a lot of money during political exercises. That compels politicians to expect generosity from different sources and depends on businesspersons and bourgeoisies. This epidemic shared among various countries including Taiwan and North Africans. Secondly, during the 1990s, Taiwan launched a huge infrastructure program that enhanced broad opportunities for those with political connectivity with the power and political offices holders. Thirdly, small politicians are granted legislative power control to bestow favour (Hsueh, 2007: 12-13).

## CONCLUSIONS

History proves no record that deeply shows direct connectivity between North African communities and Republic of China (ROC). Despite being the two societies that represent widely different traditions and religious ideologies and cultures, Taiwanese and North African peoples apparently seem to play imperative roles in shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> century's global democracy alike. They stand for justice, freedom, and liberty. They demand what they deserve. They are looking for equal participation in forming governments that administer their affairs. Thwarting corruptions together with its branches, invalidating malpractices and embezzlements; free markets and economic growth have been the forefront and central concerns of men and women of these nations.

Actually, Republic of China, for the past fifteen years on, wins what seen as 'earth-shattering' democratic consolidation. Again, if one accepts the 'article of faith' with double transition of power between the two opposition parties, which political doyenette altogether appear to have no objection or doubt that now onward, democracy wins our sentiments, and therefore deserves to accredit our leadership (O'Donnell, 1996).

Simultaneously, in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century-democratic Taiwan, many issues including cross-strait ties; antagonism and reconciliation between the parties in domestic confrontation; multiple ups and downs in Taiwan-U.S. relations; economic growth and stagnation, etc. have been under consideration (Lee, 2010: 13). Nevertheless, the double experiences that the KMT party developed, serve a guideline in making conducive atmosphere for political democratization in the island after coming back to the office.

The first was the pre-1996 presidential elections era. That was the time of authoritarianism. Many believe that the tyrannical behaviour swept the party away and chanced DPP to replace it in 2000 after serving one-term (from 1996-2000). The second was learning from previous experience. KMT has the assurance that among the main causative factors led DPP to loss the elections in 2008 was lack of central focus while in office.

Pro-democratic sentiment, reformation exercises of politics and judicial system and achieving high economic growth bring two atypically disparate societies (North Africa and Taiwan) to seek a common ground. Though rhetorically the actions they use are different depending on the type of the societal background they have, which are not anyway similar.

With exception of Egypt and Libya, almost all of the North African nations enjoying a certain amount of political participation and democratic freedom as popular revolts cool down. Compared to the Taiwanese type of democratic process, North Africa undergone severe experience in trying to achieve democratic society. It is beyond doubt that social movements and protests across the region bring about new democratic phase in North Africa, as it also remains trigger-happy where hundreds of innocent young men lost their lives amid demanding their political and democratic freedom. Materially, these countries brought down, thousands of houses collapsed, economic and other social activities are drastically disturbed. Countries in the region still have long way to go if to achieve the current political level of Taiwan.

To the economic level, the two sides are widely dissimilar. In recent years, Taiwan experiences rapid economic growth. The island certainly entertains huge GDP per-capita income of \$39, 600 (2013 estimate). This makes her 17<sup>th</sup> in the world ranking. (CIA, 2013 IMF, 2013). In contrast, North African nations; with exception of the recent political turmoil, have lower GDP per-capita income compared to Taiwan.

Nevertheless, Taiwan has become a democracy with regular, free, and fair elections shaped by political pluralism. People who exercise the government power today are those who won the majority votes of the Taiwan citizens. The historic dictatorship and monopoly feature of the KMT has gone forever. The phase of new political environment guarantees freedom of press (Diamond, 2001). Whereupon in North Africa, in Egypt for example, for the last one year, there is stable government, and freedom of speech seldom enjoys level of tolerance, many examples indicate the factual reality of this. In the very recent past, Egyptian government detained four Aljazeera journalists, and some six journalists have been killed since Jul 2013 (Mullins, 2014). Nevertheless, since 2013 coup, people demonstrating, but the military interim government ignore, and deny installing the people's demand.

Freedom of speech is further eroding in the country as judges by Freedom House. The 2014 Freedom House report on the freedom of the press indicates that each of the North African nations scores more than 50 percent out of 100 (the lower the score the better the press freedom status): Algeria 59/100; Egypt 62/100; Libya 62/100; Morocco 66/100 and Tunisia 53/100 (Freedom House, 2014). This result is concretely proving the extreme poor performance of these countries in the freedom of the press compared to Taiwan, which scores 26 percent in the same report.

Taiwan's status on the freedom of speech and press did not start today; the country maintains this figure for years. Diamond pointed out that Taiwan is rated digit 1 on political rights and 2 on civil liberties. This makes the island scoring 1.5 on combined scale, which simultaneously means Taiwan is liberal democracy. However, this also includes Taiwan to be one of the only three liberal democracies (after Japan and South Korea) in the entire 25 states in Asia: Northeast, Southeast, and South (Diamond, 2001).

The above clarification is all about positive side of the coin, while the other side contains some drawback of it. Although Taiwan quite or right enjoys the peak level of democracy, but other sectors are in need with urgent reformation that gives them full strength in the rescue process rather than ignoring their importance, which is very possible to diminish the quality of the process especially when comparing with other countries in North Africa.

The democratic consolidation is a collective responsibility carried out by all of political actors. This consolidation needs not only with the commitments of the political actors, but constitutionalism and lawfulness in electoral behaviour are also among the prime concern of the consolidation process. Generally, public must feel as a matter of consensus, that democracy is the best system of government to govern. They must also dedicate their unconditional efforts to the formation



of such of constitutional government in their territory (Diamond, 2001).

I agree with Diamond's argument in which he cited that some core-issues disturbing democratic consolidation in Taiwan, though the pressure of those issues is getting reduce steadily, but the impact and legacy of it might last for long while. First, of it is the issue of "black and gold politics", this wing easies the way of organizing crime and percolate it down through the political related links: party and representative bodies. Virtually, all of the parties suffer from political maneuvering, malfeasance and votes influence through the means of money that comes from the wealthy loyalists to particular party. Secondly, judicial system is feebly insufficient in performing its duties. In modern Taiwan system, judges are civil servant. They normally secure their jobs through the state-sponsored civil service examinations not based on legal experience. Hence, sometimes they made poor performances including corrupt decisions. Thirdly, public endorsement for democracy: large numbers of Taiwanese population endorse democracy as system to govern, but other numbers view authoritarianism the best style (Diamond, 2001: 20).

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