Regime Change in North Africa: Possible Implications for 21st Century Governance in Africa

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Abstract

For most of 2011, several North African countries experienced sweeping changes in their political structures. During this period, North Africa drew world attention to itself in a profound way. Popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt forced long serving and clout wielding Presidents out of power. Most interestingly, these mass protests seemed to have a domino-effect not only in North Africa but also throughout the Middle East; thereby earning themselves the famous tag- "Arab Spring". These events in North Africa have since become the subject of debate and investigation in academic, social media and political and/or political circles. At the centre of these debates is the question of "Implications of the Arab Spring on Governance in Africa in the 21st Century". This Article raises pertinent questions. It revisits the social and economic causes of these regime changes in North Africa; the role of ICT and its social media networks and; the future of repressive regimes on the continent. Central to this discussion is the question: are these regime changes cosmetic? Is this wind of change transforming Africa in form but not necessarily in content? In this light the following discussion makes a critical analysis of the implications of these changes on 21st century governance in Africa. The authors revisit these issues from an informed premise of theoretical perspectives on African politics and governance.

Key words: *Regime change, Africa, rebellion, governance.*

Introduction

During late 2010 and early 2011 North Africa drew world attention to itself in a profound way. A popular uprising in Tunisia in December 2010 and January 2011 toppled President Zine el Abedine Ben Ali from power. He had ruled Tunisia for 23 years. Soon

thereafter in January and February 2011, mass protests in Egypt forced President Hosni Mubarak to resign after 30 years in power (Vandewalle 2011). The outstanding feature of the two events was that the happenings in Egypt seemed to have been inspired by those in Tunisia. In both countries, several hundred thousand protesters took to the streets to conduct mass action rallies against their long-serving rulers. The protests were overwhelmingly organized and potent while at the same time, equally peaceable and non-violent. Most interestingly, these mass protests seemed to have a domino-effect not only in North Africa but also throughout the Middle East; thereby earning themselves the famous tag- "Arab Spring". True enough, a wave of mass protests swept across North Africa and the Middle East; from Libya, Algeria and Bahrain to Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Syria (*The Economist* 2011).

Yet none of these uprisings turned controversial, brutal, dramatic and massively violent as that in Libya. From the beginning of the uprising in February 2011 to the time of Col. Muammar Gaddafi's capture and subsequent killing in October 2011; 25,000 people had lost their lives. The Libya experience was quite controversial due to disagreement as to whether it was truly a Libyan affair or a Western-led invasion aimed at making spoils from Libyan vast oil riches; though shrouded in "helping defeat Gaddafi's authoritarian regime" that was out to exterminate its own people. Nonetheless, the Libyan people, led by the National Transition Council (NTC) buttressed with heavy support form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and with the blessings of the United Nations Security Council; finally had their way despite these reservations. Indeed, the capture and killing of Col. Gaddafi, his sons and close aides represented the indomitable spirit of the people and their sheer hunger for change.

These events in North Africa have since become the subject of debate and investigation in academic, social media and political and/or political circles. At the centre of these debates is the question of 'Implications of the Arab Spring on governance in Africa in the 21st Century'. Perhaps it would be too early to make a clear judgment as far as the long-term implications of these events are concerned. Nonetheless, pertinent questions and their ramifications inform the discussions in this article. It revisits the political, social and economic causes of these changes in North Africa; the role of ICT and its social media networks and; the future of repressive regimes on the continent.

A Conceptual Framework

According to Chazan N. et al (2000: 3-24), in broad terms, the conceptual framework for understanding African politics and development has revolved around several well-defined approaches. The first approach is centered on the concept of modernization that emerged in the 1960s. The second approach- dependency- came to the fore in the 1970s. As economic conditions in Africa reached crisis proportions especially in the 1980s, a third approach-statist- gained currency. Lately, an integrative tendency is taking shape that seeks to bring together within a broader societal framework what has been proven to be useful in the modernization, dependency and statist conceptual frameworks.

The basic premise behind the modernization approach was that African societies were in the process of becoming 'modern' rational entities in which efficacy and scientific logic replaced traditional values and belief systems. In economic terms, modernization meant rapid industrialization and growth (Rostow 1971). From the modernization perspective, the task of politics was to create the conditions for equitable growth by ensuring social quiescence and stable government. If African countries faltered on this path, then these

shortcomings could be attributed either to poor judgments, mistaken ideologies, conflict between competing goals, or an inability to overcome cultural impediments deeply rooted in African societies. To this approach, which is Western in origin; the task of the African political leader is to guide his country diligently in this path. A scholar adopting this perspective in examining the Arab Spring phenomenon would probably argue that countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have only lacked proper vision and follow in the steps of their former colonizers Britain, France and Italy respectively, countries that are part of the world's leading democracies.

In contrast to the modernization approach, the dependency and underdevelopment schools focused not on the process of development but on the roots of underdevelopment in Africa. They shunned what they claimed to be empty objectivity and seeming benevolence that underlay the idea of modernization. They asserted that Africa remained impoverished- a condition that was as a result of circumstances that enabled other countries to benefit at her expense (Frank 1972). To them, the beginnings of Africa's systematic impoverishment were linked historically to European imperialism which, not only brought Africa into the global economy but did so in a structurally unequal manner (Rodney 1979). Colonial economic policies perpetuated this institutionalized vulnerability to external economic forces and constrained the political latitude of new African leaders on the eve of independence. In contrast, with the modernization approach, the dependency and underdevelopment theorists present politics in terms of resources and control rather than management (Amin 1977). In other words most African leaders are puppets of the Western powers because they act as conduits for extraction and impoverishment of their own peoples. In the thinking of the dependency and

underdevelopment theorists, there is no way African countries can develop along the modernization path; one proposed by countries that impoverished historically her through slavery, imperialism and modern neo-imperialism. The only solution was that offered by neo-Marxist tradition, the adoption of Socialism (Wilber 1973:65-114). In this direction, one can easily view the US and NATO involvement in Libya as a disguised move to put in power a puppet regime for purposes of economic extraction. After all Gaddafi had for many years "failed to cooperate" after nationalizing Libya's oil industry. A neo-Marxist would probably see Col Gaddafi as an object of hatred from the West. He sold Libyan oil for money that can benefit the African as opposed to the other export economies in Africa where the average native is poor and wretched.

However, as observed earlier, unlike in the case of the other cases caught up in the Arab Spring, it is only in the case of Libya that Western forces became actively involved as interventionists against the regime of Gaddafi. Can their involvement be explained by economic interests, in particular the mining of oil that had been nationalized by Gaddafi when he came to power in 1969? If the answer to this question is in the affirmative, then, power theory could be useful in explaining the Libyan case. Being part of the Realist approach to international relations, Power theory is guided by the tenets that states are the only actors in international relations and that they act to secure and defend their national interests. International relations is therefore, equated to power politics. To that extent, therefore, power theory offers a plausible explanation of the involvement of Western powers in Libya.

As for the statist approach, the African state is viewed as a primary force behind social and economic occurrences on the continent and the African leadership is held responsible

for the political and economic deterioration in their countries. Unlike its predecessors, the modernization and dependency/underdevelopment schools; it parted radically with earlier models and placed intra-African political factors at the centre of investigation and analysis. For scholars working within this framework, state structures are vital in coming to grips with contemporary African political processes (Sandbrook 1999). They presumed that the state is more than a descriptive entity: that it is an actor with interests, capacities, and achievements and of course, frailties. These analysts see the Africa post-independence state as autonomous, at least to some extent, and hence as a separate entity in its own right.

The concept of politics that emerges from the statist argument is perhaps extremely instrumental to understanding the wind of change taking place in Northern Africa today, and its implications on African governance debate in the 21st century. Power holders, it is claimed, created structures of domination that have enabled them to misuse their offices to reap personal gains at the expense of the pressing needs of the bulk of the population. If Africa is undergoing a process of impoverishment, then the leaders of the new states bear much of the blame for this state of affairs. The food crises of 1980s; the debt crisis of the mid- 1980s and 1990s; the civil wars of the 1990s and the ensuing crises of governance in the 2000s are the outcome of an extractive approach to politics that guided African ruling classes for over a generation (Nzau 2007). This is because; half a century of political independence is long enough to hold them accountable for their conduct as far as the economic development of their countries is concerned.

According to Mazrui and Tidy (1984); the Westminster style of democratic leadership is based on open debate and electoral processes. Although there is nothing that can be said

to be democratic about colonialism, this style of leadership is supposedly what the African leaders inherited from the more developed political systems of their colonial masters at independence. Nevertheless, this style of leadership seemed to have disappeared almost everywhere in Africa in the first decade of political independence, giving way to different and often less democratic patterns of leadership. The political leaders of Africa's new nations over the years displayed various patterns of leadership which appeared to be revolutionary or at least radical. It is notable that these leadership patterns in Africa were not necessarily new and in a way, they followed the ways of leadership traditions of Africa's pre-colonial past. Further, Mazrui and Tidy identified and discussed three such patterns: the elder, sage and warrior leadership traditions.

The 'elder' tradition is heavily paternalistic (fatherly). It is particularly strong where there still is the original first president of an African state. It goes with the notion of 'the founding father' that had prerogatives not only in politics but also in opinion formation. This kind of figure may, prefer to withdraw from involvement in the "nitty-gritty" affairs of the nation but instead, dominate the scene from a God-like position in the background. He does not act as a participating politician but would delegate duties to lesser colleagues. These patriarchal leaders can be profoundly African especially when it combines with the African reverence for age and wisdom. A good example is Mzee Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Houphet o of Cote d'Ivoire and most recently, Nelson Mandela of South Africa who is fondly called *Madiba* (Tordoff 2003).

The other tradition is the "Sage". The president here is the ultimate teacher of the nation. Under this tradition, ideology becomes a monopoly of the centre and an effort is made to ensure substantive responsiveness to the ideas that emanate from the centre takes place.

Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt in his work "*The Philosophy of Revolution*" attempted to show how Egypt was the centre of the world; centre of the 'three circles' which Egypt must lead-the Arab world, the Muslim world and Africa. Kwame Nkrumah wrote several books to educate not only Ghanaians but also other Africans in his vision of the new African society. *Mwalimu* Julius K. Nyerere is perhaps the example per excellence of the sage ruler and foremost exponent of the use of ideological radicalism to impact a leader's teaching on his people of Tanzania (Nyerere 1970).

Finally there is the Warrior Tradition. To Mazrui and Tidy; it is historically linked to the 'primary resistance' to colonial intrusion such as the *Nandi* Revolt in Kenya of 1903 and the 1906 *Maji Maji* Rebellion in Tanzania. However the warrior tradition declined sharply due to the forces of colonialism- the colonial administrator's gunfire and the Christian priest's hellfire. Yet the warrior tradition revived just before the colonial period was over. For example the 1948-1963 *Mau Mau* Rebellion of Kenya and the Algerian War for Independence overcame the conditioning of "turning the other cheek" and "terror of external damnation" to marshal armed force against the British and French colonialism (Birmingham 1995:41-47).

In essence, the seemingly revolutionary military regimes of the late 1960s through to the 1980s perhaps carried the mantle of pre-colonial warriorhood- marking the beginning of a new warrior tradition of African leadership. The struggles against dependency and also a reaction to misrule in the hands of Founding Fathers as exemplified by certain military regimes in post-independence Africa represented a reactivation of the ancestral assertiveness of warrior culture. A good example is Samora Machel's Mozambique, Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt, Jerry Rawlings's Ghana, Mengistu Haille Mariam's

Ethiopia, Thomas Sankara's Burkina Faso, Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe and Muammar Gadaffi's Libya (Keith and Agbese 2004:1-17).

In conclusion to this section, we observe that a number of these theories may be used in different doses and combinations to explain the Arab Spring. Not any one theory may be exactly adequate to capture the recent occurrences in the Arab world. Consequently, this article adopts a conceptual framework as its guiding model. The rationale for this conceptual framework is that it logically traces back the nature and dynamics of African leadership with the view of demonstrating its background. True enough, it is the "liberators" and "warriors of old" -Mubarak, Gadaffi, Mugabe among others- who are now at the very receiving end. While they were hailed of ridding their countries of the dictatorial demagogues of the early post-independence period; today they are viewed as villains and dictators who would understand no other language other than that of the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring: "Home Grown Democracy" or Imported Cosmetic Change?

A most outstanding factor associated with the Arab Spring is that it marked a new age of political leadership in Africa and beyond. It truly demystified the invincibility of Africa's warriors of the late 1970s and 80s, later turned despots and "king(s) of kings". Egyptians were very proud of Gamal Abdel Nasser who championed the Arab course. Following Nasser demise, Anwar Sadat, a great an ardent General seemed to keep alive the Nasserist Philosophy. However, his seeming collaboration with the West and Israel made him unpopular especially among radical Islamist groups such as Muslim Brotherhood. He was assassinated in June 1981 while presiding over a military parade (*Diplomat East Africa* 2011).

His successor, President Hosni Mubarak (a former Air Force General who survived the assassination attack) seemed to take advantage of the circumstances under which he rose to power. The "assassination of a sitting president in a military regime" was truly a grave matter. Mubarak ruled by decree and declared a state of emergency in Egypt that lasted throughout his 30 year rule. His resignation in early 2011 was later followed by public trial in which he was charged with ordering the shooting of protestors, abuse of office and gross economic crimes. Mubarak was taken to court in cage- a state of affairs that incensed and irritated many an African Presidents, who observed this turn of events in owe, shock and dismay (Lukyanov 2012).

But perhaps the brutal capture and death of Muammar Gaddafi was the hallmark of the death of the warrior age. The powerful and most revered 'warrior of old' ruled Libya for 42 years. Col. Gaddafi of Libya rose to power in 1969 as part of a popular reaction to the amassing of national wealth by the then absolute monarch and founding father of Libya, King Idris, who had led Libya since independence in 1951. Gaddafi adopted a purely socialist political-economy for his country (Gawdat 2005). Although his style of leadership rid Libya's oil industry of foreign multinationals before declaring the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Great Jamahiriya; he sure had autocratic tendencies and detested any form of opposition. For these reasons, Libya was considered a de-facto dictatorship by several international definitions and analogies (Blanchard 2006).

The World Bank defines Libya as an 'Upper Middle Income Economy', along with only seven other African countries. In the early 1980s, Libya was one of the wealthiest countries in the world; its GNP per capita was higher than that of countries such as Italy, Singapore, South Korea, Spain and New Zealand. Today, high oil revenues and a small

population give Libya one of the highest GDPs per person in Africa and have allowed the Libyan state to provide an extensive level of social security, particularly in the fields of health, housing and education (World Bank 2010).

Although Gaddafi had ruled Libya as a personal dictatorship: to say that Gaddafi was a totally irresponsible leader would be a product of poor judgment shrouded in subjectivity Seierstad (2011) quoted a Libyan Teacher to have said "I see now Gaddafi made mistakes…but he gave our people everything; Modern houses, jobs, a new hospital, a nice school…I was fortunate enough when he visited [us] just before the revolution". Indeed during the 1970s, through to the 1990s, Col Gaddafi was a true representation of the warrior tradition- a liberator and nation-builder. However, his latter years in power, Gaddafi appeared to lose grips with reality and to accept change. He had lost favor among Arab leaders and the West alike. Worse still he underrated the effects of the Tunisia and Egypt uprisings (Vandewalle 2011:11-21).

At this juncture, it is crucial to examine issues that precipitated and/or catalyzed the Arab Spring Phenomenon in North Africa. First and foremost, it would be misleading for one to think that the whole issue was a matter of spontaneity especially in Tunisia and Egypt. In Tunisia for instance, mass protests were sparked by an incident in which a youth committed suicide by setting himself ablaze to protest hard economic times characterized by mass unemployment, poverty and destitution amid immense wealth on the part of the ruling elite. Similarly in Egypt, apart from hard economic experiences characterized by unemployment, crime and high food prices; the people decried decades of military regime under the Hosni Mubarak regime- one that seemingly went unnoticed due to its disposition as a 'darling of the West' during and after the Cold War. However, one factor

that was responsible for the success of these revolutions was that of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and social media tools and networks; which simply made communication among mass action plotters quite an easy task. In Tunisia, for instance, it was kick-started by a Facebook campaign by the opposition. The digital age has made it easy for many people to communicate in a very short span and execute their plans with great precision and confidence (Stepanova 2011:1). It follows therefore that modern telecommunication technology is a factor to reckon with as far as the future of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa is concerned. This revolutionary effect of technology has made average person more politically aware in an emancipating fashion and hence Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to experience such effects in terms of political communication, interest aggregation and agenda setting in the public sphere.

Yet while the North African revolutions seemed to have succeeded for the greater part; the beginning of December 2011 was marked by a spiraling pattern of increasingly violent protests in and around Cairo's Tahrir Square. Street battles that began in November 2011 saw 33 dead and 1,700 wounded across the country. Frustrated by their unfinished uprising, Egyptians took to the streets again to protest the continued rule by the military junta who promised to hand-over power to a civilian government by mid-2012 following Presidential Elections. In Libya, one youth was quoted as saying 'We have freedom now, but it is not a good freedom. There are weapons everywhere' (Seierstad 2011:4). One would ask; were these regime changes cosmetic? Is this wind of change transforming Africa in form but not necessarily in content? In this light the following section makes a critical analysis of the implications of these changes on 21st century governance in Africa.

Regime Change in North Africa: Possible Implications for 21st Century Governance in Africa

In the late 1980s, democratic transformation in and around Africa increasingly became associated with the question and/or idea of 'good governance'. A report prepared by the World Bank in 1989 was the first to highlight this term when it referred to Africa as experiencing a "Crisis of governance". Governance is defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for developing, creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development" (Skinner 2000).

Good governance requires a greater pre-occupation with the creation of an enabling framework for development and the devolution of power from the centre to lower levels of government. In this light, a state pursuing good governance would do the following: Adhere to the rule of law; Enhance public transparency and accountability; Actively fight corruption and the use of public office for private gain; Enhance democratic procedures, institutions and principles, and Institute limited terms for key public offices; and Promote an independent and effective judiciary (Hulme D. and Turner M., 1997:11-12).

Throughout the post-independence period, Africa experienced many crises of governance. Today many sitting governments around Africa are highly compromised due to the low degree of legitimacy they actually enjoy among the populace. It was not surprising that due to this state of things many Presidential Elections have been highly contested but poorly conducted and ill informed, culminating in violence and mass protests, destruction and economic retrogression as witnessed in of Kenya in late 2007 and early 2008 and a replica of the same in Zimbabwe (2008) and Ivory Coast (2010 and

2011). Recent elections in Uganda, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo were accompanied by many qualms associated with vote buying, harassment and blackmail (BBC *Focus on Africa*, April-June 2011, 5).

The former President of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, once reportedly said that "power is like a bottle of whisky; you have a sip, enjoy the taste, take another and before you know it the bottle is finished and you are drunk" This seems to be the *raison d'être* behind the resilience of authoritarianism in Africa and their tendency to cling-on to power. It seems to be a situation best expressed as: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* meaning "the more things change, the more they remain the same". In this light it would be interesting to assess the reactions by several Sub-Saharan Africa Presidents to the wave of regime change in North Africa.

President Zuma declared that there will never be a Tunisia in South Africa because South Africa has a constitutional democracy where every person has the right to say what they want and to vote. For him such events were impossible in South Africa. For President Museveni of Uganda; he wondered what the people of Libya lacked in order to turn against their leader Col. Gaddafi, who had built some of the best road infrastructure in Africa for them. He could understand that in Tunisia and Egypt people were poor and unemployed but the events in Libya truly stupefied him. He felt that the US and NATO support for Libyan rebels was at the least unfair. He argued that the so called revolutions in North Africa were no more than unconstitutional power takeovers- civilian coups that could only be crushed in Uganda. To others supporting these changes, the North Africa revolutions were real and they served as a warning to sit-tight African leaders that there is

certainly a limit to how long people can be oppressed (*New African*, No. 504, March 2011:18-19).

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of an age in which many of Africa's "elders, sages and warriors" seemed to have outlived their usefulness at least in ideological terms. Their "milking cows" (Cold War Super Powers) finally 'kicked the pale', accompanied by changes in the international body politik, in which US-led liberalism stepped-in to fill the ideological vacuum left behind by the Cold War. Furthermore, ideologies that informed the struggle for independence and the consolidation of political legitimacy for the elders, sages and warriors; such as African nationalism, African socialism and anti-imperialism were no longer appealing to the masses- they were nothing more than stale slogans in the wrong mouthpieces.

This state of things slowly culminated in the overthrow of authoritarian regimes in countries like Ethiopia (1991), Somalia (1991), Liberia (1990) and Sierra Leone (1990) and; as well as the adoption of multiparty systems in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Burundi among others, soon thereafter. This was the so-called 'second liberation'- liberation meant to rid Africa of its own, home-grown colonialists (Thomson 2004:232-238). But this second liberation for many countries never materialized. Instead the long awaited restoration of the Westminster style remained a mirage by and large. In these countries, there seemed to be lack of consistency from one country to another in terms of free, fair and regular elections; significant turnover of national leadership; better and accountable governance records and responsive and responsive leadership. Worse still, Africa was characterized

by a crisis of legitimacy, regime collapse, civil war, mass internal displacements and genocide in the hands of sitting presidents and rebel leaders (Gupta 1996: 1-13).

At the extreme of this orthodoxy are Africa's rebel leaders- who unfortunately carry a lot of political clout among their followers- the likes of the late Foday Sankor in Sierra Leone, Charles Taylor in Liberia, Joseph Kony in Uganda and Jean Pierre Bemba in Congo DRC, the Al Shabaab Militia and the Oromo Liberation Front among others; whose idea of leadership is maiming, murder, mutilation, rape, torture and other forms of terror on civilian populations (Pumphrey et al 2003:11). It is courtesy of such "extraordinary leaders" that an extraordinary court- the International Criminal Court (ICC) had to be established, to deal with such political toxicity.

More recently a poor imitation of the Westminster style of democratic leadership seems to have emerged; starting with Kenya's experience in 2007. Under the guidance of national and party leaders: violent and corrupt party nominations took place; followed by the disputed December 2007 General Elections in which, nation-wide voting was followed by nation-wide vote rigging and other forms of electoral blackmail which then culminated into nation-wide ethnic violence, crime and near civil war (Commission on the 2007 General Elections *Kriegler Report*, 2008). The final result was an African Union-led mediation process led by the former UN Secretary General Koffi Annan among other Eminent Persons on the continent such as Graca Machel and Benjamin Mkapa the retired President of Tanzania; that settled on a compromised mix in the name of 'Coalition Government'.

Sadly, a replica of the same was soon to take place in Zimbabwe. It is the same kind of orthodoxy that saw the rise to power of military juntas in Mauritania in August 2008 led

by General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz; in Guinea under Captain Moussa Daddis Camara who staged a coup and captured power following the death of President Lansana Conte in 2008; and in Madagascar where the army installed a puppet regime led by President Rajoelina following the ouster of President Mark Ravalomanana. One striking feature of these leaders is their resilient belief that they are Africa's 'long-awaited democratic political leaders'. Yet this need not be the case. These regimes have been accused of mass violations of human rights including rape, mutilation and mass murder. Most of them have proved to be pure neo-benevolent despots.

But none of these incidences of gross misgovernance on the continent was more dramatic and sad in literal terms as that of the Ivory Coast experience in late 2010. Having emerged from a civil war that divided the country diametrically, Ivory Coast held Presidential Elections in which the results were heavily contested. While Ivory Coast's electoral commission declared Alassane Ouattara the winner with 54% of votes cast, the country's Constitutional Council declared the Incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo winner. A stand-off ensued and despite international diplomatic efforts to broker a peaceful agreement; President Gbagbo hang-on to power. But the Ivorian political class was not quite ready for a smooth handover of power. Instead, the Kenyan and Zimbabwean style of doing things seemed a better model- "that if you lost the cup final, you could still walk away with hand on the trophy" (*BBC Focus on Africa*, April-June 2011:5).

Alassane Ouattara, who enjoyed the sympathy of many Western states, ECOWAS and the United Nations decided to root-out President Gbagbo from power through armed force. The country degenerated into a state of civil war. On April 11th 2011, President

Gbagbo was captured by Ouattara's forces with the help of UN and French Special Forces (though France has always denied this role) in a most shameful and undignified manner for a person of his nature and stature. In November 2011, he was handed over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer to war crime charges against his toppled regime. He made his First Appearance at the Court's Pre-Trial Chamber on December 5th 2011.

All said and done, the regime changes sweeping across Northern Africa had more positive than negative possible implications as far the future of governance in Africa is concerned. In positive terms, the people's revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt went a long way to open-up political space and to make headways for democratization on the continent, by the continent's own people. Mass and peaceful protests are legitimate ways to hold leaders accountable and to enforce the rule of law. All these processes require organization in the form of human and material resources. As such the role Facebook, Google and Tweeter all acted to facilitate these actions (Stepanova 2011:1-6).

Another crucial aspect about the Arab Spring was that it was predominantly African and less of a process choreographed by dominant world powers. In fact, some of the world's leading hegemonies such as the United States, China, Russia, France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain seemed to have been dismayed and dumbfounded at this African "home grown democracy"; by the organization and relative lack of violence in Tunisia and Egypt; which appeared less nasty and brutish compared to those that rocked parts of the United Kingdom in Mid 2011. In fact Gaddafi and Mubarak had branded it the work of Al Quaeda- only to learn that it had nothing to do with Islam or Fundamentalism. The people had finally decided to "change the rules of the game".

At this point, it is not easy to tell what would have transpired if the mass protesters and NTC fighters were left to confront President Muammar Gaddafi without the much contested UN Security Council, US and NATO Presence. Many world leaders including Vladmir Putin of Russia felt the issue (especially the brutal death and capture of Col Gaddafi and his Sons) could have been better handled. Nonetheless, the events that ensued in Libya were partly a reflection of the strong influence of the Arab Spring on Libyans in general. They exhibited a lot of zeal in fighting Gaddafi's forces- a fact that goes far to say that they yarned for some "form of political change" even though in literal terms Libyans have never lacked save for a constricted political space.

In that case, Sub-Saharan Africa despots and benevolent dictators might argue that 'Gaddafi was perhaps too good. He overfed Libyans, paid their medical bills, subsidized the cost of fuel and education; and so they could afford to turn their backs on him in his darkest hour; a hopeless sense of euphoria triggered by hungry and jobless Tunisians and Egyptians that they (Libyans) sought to join without thinking.' In reaction to this state of affairs, these dictators and sit-tight rulers would in future choose to "tighten the noose" on political freedoms and avoid "pampering" populations that would in future "get spoilt" and ruin their grandiose dreams.

In as much as the Middle East and North Africa in particular, now enjoys the new infusion of democratic ideals, it may be too early to celebrate for democracy. What of the near failure and reversals in the gains for democracy following the "Second Liberation" in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s? A number of scholars and analysts remain skeptical with the recent democratic gains especially in view of the increasing islamization of politics in the region. Lukyanov (2012), in relation to this observes that,

'Democracy can develop further in the Middle East if secular parties are established in addition to Islamic ones and if the forces of political Islam are interested in building modern institutions. Otherwise, the Arab spring will serve only to legitimize a new anti-democratic model, this time Islamic in nature.'

Conclusion

Many African countries including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and many more in Western and Southern Africa may not be as privileged as the people of Egypt and Tunisia or Libya. But one thing is for sure. It is no longer "business as usual": no African president, politician or regime and no matter which World Hegemonic Power backs it; will plot genocide or mass extermination of populations and get away with it. In the same vein, none will rig elections or attain power unconstitutionally and remain in power unmoved. Finally none will govern or reign without popular support of the people for too long. These observations will hold for some period into the future, hoping that the Arab Spring and the changes it promises is a reality and not a mirage. These are likely to be the Political Socialization Lessons from the regime changes in North Africa; a 21st Century Governance Gift for Africans, by Africans.

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