Chapter 5
The Relationship between the Arab Spring Revolutions and Entrepreneurial Inhibitors, Enablers, and Activity in North Africa

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the impact of the Arab Spring Revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya in regards to entrepreneurship. This study tests the validity of three hypotheses, which were whether the Arab Spring revolutions had a positive relationship with entrepreneurial inhibitors, a negative relationship with entrepreneurial enablers, and a negative relationship with entrepreneurial activity in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. This quantitative study utilized data from before, during, and after the Arab Spring Revolutions to evaluate the validity of the hypotheses. Findings determined partial validity in regard to all three relationships; more research is necessary to determine if these hypotheses can be fully validated. With only a short time frame since the end of these revolutions, future data of these factors are required to determine whether it truly was the Arab Spring Revolutions that had an impact on entrepreneurship in these countries.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the impact of the Arab Spring Revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya in regards to entrepreneurship. Specifically, the chapter seeks to: describe the political environment of the countries prior to the revolutions, describe the revolutions and their end results, and determine the validity of the following hypotheses: 1) The Arab Spring had a positive relationship with entrepreneurial inhibitors, 2) The Arab Spring had a negative relationship with entrepreneurial enablers, and 3) The Arab Spring had a negative impact on entrepreneurship activity.

Finally, this chapter seeks to describe how future research can help gather more information about this topic.

BACKGROUND TO THE ARAB SPRING REVOLUTIONS

Tunisia

Prior to the Jasmine Revolution, the Tunisian revolution that sparked the Arab Spring, Tunisia was governed by the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD). According to Britannica.com, President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali took control by executing a constitutional coup in 1987. When Ben Ali first came into power, he stated that he was committed to creating a more liberal approach to politics, different than the one party rule that was in place before the coup. However, Ben Ali and the RCD kept the majority of power in Tunisia all the way until 2011, when, as a result of the Jasmine Revolution, he was forced from power by the people (Tunisia, n.d.). The "corruption, poverty, and political repression" that the Tunisian people faced during Ben Ali's reign served as the precursor for the Jasmine Revolution (Jasmine, n.d., para. 1).

Egypt

Using the Jasmine Revolution as inspiration, Egypt followed Tunisia's footsteps in attempting to overthrow the ruling government. According to Britannica.com, Egypt's ruling government at the time was the National Democratic Party (NDP), and the authoritarian President was Hosni Mubarak who ruled from 1981 (Hosni, n.d.). Although Mubarak reformed the presidential election in 2005 to allow multi-candidate polls for the first time since 1952, there were many restrictions and government involvement to insure

that Mubarak remained in power. Furthermore, after his re-election, Mubarak imprisoned the runner-up from the election, Ayman Nur, in fear of losing his position in the future. Nur was arrested on fabricated charges of falsifying petitions for the legalization of his party, the al-Ghad party in 2004 (Egypt, n.d.). As in Tunisia, the Egyptians were facing poverty and political repression. The Egypt Uprising of 2011 represented the point where people took control in order to change the quality of their lives.

Libya

After the success of Tunisia and Egypt, the citizens of Libya attempted a revolt as well. Brittanica.com listed that the ruling party of Libya was the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), with Muammar al-Qaddafi in place as the commander in chief of the armed forces and chairman of the RCC (Muammar, n.d.). Al-Qaddafi came into power by seizing control of the government through a coup in 1969, taking control and displacing the reigning king out of power. While he claimed that Libya would be under a form of democracy, al-Qaddafi ruled over Libya as he saw fit, making it more of an authoritarian state (Libya, n.d.). Four decades later, in the midst of turmoil in Egypt and Tunisia, the Libyan people were "angered by the arrest of a human rights lawyer, Fethi Tarbel" and desired to get Qaddafi out of office (Libya, n.d., para. 1).

THE ARAB SPRING REVOLUTIONS

Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution (December 2010–January 2011)

Starting in Tunisia, people started to rebel against the oppressive governments that were ruling their countries. In Tunisia, it all started with a fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, who set himself on

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