

NATIONAL WINNER
YEAR LEVEL 9



HARIPRASAD
KRISHNAMURTHY
ROSSMOYNE SENIOR HIGH
SCHOOL

THE ARAB SPRING

People Power in the Arab Spring: Striving for Democracy

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Ms. N Matthews

9HSSEXT_2

Word Count- 1,282

Descriptor: The Arab Spring has strong relevance and link to the theme, People and Power. The Arab Spring's origin, revolutions and the cascade of consequences that followed were all the result of the people utilizing their power to overcome their oppressors and reach for their aspirations of democracy and equality.

“The revolutions of the Arab Spring happened because people realised that they were the power.”¹

These are the words of Mohammed Morsi, the first democratically elected president of Egypt². These words could not have been more accurate in demonstrating how the people of the Arab Spring had caused an array of changes, impacts and effects on not only on a regional scale but on a global scale. Prior to the events of the Arab Spring which was before December 2010, dictatorships and power-hungry tyrants had oppressed the Arab people. When referring to the countries of the Arab Spring/Region/World I refer to these countries: Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Oman, Egypt, Yemen, Djibouti, Sudan, Iraq, Bahrain, Libya, Lebanon, Turkey, Kuwait, Morocco, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran.³ With corruption and coercion from governments rampant across these countries, the people had decided that this shall be no more. The people had chosen to use their power to achieve their aspirations of democracy and equality. The power of the people was utilised for their own bettering.

Many factors contributed to the start of the Arab Spring. Firstly, the dire economic crisis in the Arab World had fuelled the revolutions and protests of the Arab Spring. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, the increasing oppression of the people. Many citizens had faced extreme economic hardship and poverty whilst the ruling party or dictator had lived a life of luxury; clearly at the expense of the people. For example, 24.3% of young adults in Egypt were unemployed because of poor governmental action to solve this crisis.⁴

¹ BrainyQuote 2019, Arab Spring Quotes. Available from: < https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/arab_spring > [10th May 2019]

² British Broadcasting Corporation n.d, Profile: Mohammed Morsi. Available from: < <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-18371427> >. [11th May 2019]

³ The National 24/2/19, The Arab Spring country by country. Available from: <<https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-arab-spring-country-by-country-1.401358>>. [24th February 2019]

⁴ International Labour Organization n.d, Youth unemployment in the Arab world is a major cause for rebellion. Available from: < https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_154078/lang--en/index.htm > [12th May 2019]

Economies in the Arab World were failing mainly due to their incompetent leadership. Authorities in various countries in the Arab World such as Tunisia were corrupt and often abused their power against innocent civilians. The Arab Spring was also fuelled by social media and its effects on how fast the Arab Spring spread. Thirdly, the use of Twitter and other forms of social media to spread the message of these revolutions had global impacts; it had helped many revolutions succeed. It was shown that over 10,000 tweets a day were made about Mohamed Bouazizi, the martyr who had sparked the revolution, before the Tunisian Revolution's end two months later where it had reduced to 1000 tweets a day.⁵ Thus, showing how the causes of the Arab Spring triggered a spark that led to the people's resistance.

The Arab Spring had started inside the small north African nation of Tunisia. A street vendor by the name Mohamed Bouazizi had his cart confiscated by authorities; their reasoning was that his business was not licensed. In response, Mohammed Bouazizi had immolated himself in front of a government building in December 2010. This marked the start of the Arab Spring; Bouazizi's actions had led to a series of protests and uprisings in Tunisia⁶. These grassroots movements spread to other countries involved in the Arab Spring because of two fundamental factors, the economic hardship, and corruption prevalent throughout the Arab World. The use of social media helped these movements to spread and strengthen⁷. Yet these grassroots movements had various effects and degrees of success in various countries across the Arab Spring. For example, in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Iran, the people's protests and movements were silenced by the military and other authorities.⁸ In other countries such

⁵ Project on Informational Technology and Political Islam 10/1/2011, Opening Closed Regimes What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?. Available from:

<https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2595096>. [24th March 2019]

⁶ History 8/5/18, Arab Spring. Available from: <<https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/arab-spring>>. [11th March 2019]

⁷ Primroz Manfreda 1/9/17, 10 Reasons for the Arab Spring. Available from: <<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-reasons-for-the-arab-spring-2353041>>. [24th February 2019]

⁸ The National 24/2/19, The Arab Spring country by country. Available from: <<https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-arab-spring-country-by-country-1.401358>>. [24th February 2019]

as Syria and Yemen, the conflict is still present and has resulted in civil wars and national instability.⁹ The Arab Spring's origin has a clear connection to how people power was used to help reach a democratic government and society.

The dichotomy of the impacts of the Arab Spring is a result of how the respective governments and other external forces responded to the people's resistance and protests for democracy and equality. In Tunisia and Kuwait, the people's efforts had achieved constitutional change and reform. The growing amounts of protests and resistance in Tunisia had overwhelmed the government and the dictator Zin El Abidine Ben Ali. As a result, Ben Ali was forced to resign and the people had created permanent reform by changing the constitution by introducing term limits and enforcing secularism. The people had banded together to create their representative group called 'The Quartet' who had negotiated with the government to form a democratic and modern Arab State.¹⁰ The people had essentially removed their main source of oppression and corruption, that being President Ben Ali and his government.¹¹ The people's ongoing protests in Kuwait had forced the government to satiate the citizen's hunger and demands for a more democratic government. The government had given each citizen 2000 dinar to distribute wealth more evenly and lessen the citizens' economic hardship; they had also implemented secret ballots and other laws that the citizens demanded.¹²

⁹ British Broadcasting Corporation 3/4/19, Who are the winners and losers from the Arab Spring?. Available from: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30003865>>. [3rd April 2019]

¹⁰ Open Democracy 23/8/19, Tunisia' new constitution progress and challenges to come. Available from: <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/tunisias-new-constitution-progress-and-challenges-to-/>>. [24 Aug 2019]

¹¹ Al Jazeera News 10/4/19, Revealing Tunisia's corruption under Ben Ali. Available from: <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/03/revealing-tunisia-corruption-under-ben-ali-201432785825560542.html>>. [9th April 2019]

¹² The National 24/2/19, The Arab Spring country by country. Available from: <<https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-arab-spring-country-by-country-1.401358>>. [24th February 2019]

This demonstrates how the people's power had large and permanent regional impacts on their government, society and culture.

Yet, the Arab Spring is largely known for its negative impacts on the Arab World and even the world in some cases. A large portion of countries had experienced adverse effects of the people's resistance due to external forces such as terrorist organisations taking over the people's resistance¹³ or the government retaliating by silencing these resistant and oppositional voices. Countries that fell into such a circumstance include Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Even though the people's actions and resistance were present in these countries they did not achieve constitutional change or reform to create a more democratic country.¹⁴ This is because of Saudi Arabia's use of their military to silence these grassroots movements and other forms of grassroots resistance. Another example is that the government in Bahrain could no longer tolerate the overwhelming resistance towards them so they had requested Saudi Arabia for assistance. As a result, the Saudi military had entered Bahrain's borders and silenced protestors using their guns, smoke grenades and weapons.¹⁵ This had resulted in a complete shutdown of resistance in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain which in turn had created little to no impact on the government.

Nothing in the Arab world happens in isolation. The impacts and effects of the Arab Spring have had a substantial influence on foreign relations and the global scene. Tunisia and Egypt have received millions in dollars of foreign aid and investment by the

¹³ The Guardian 4//4/19, The Arab spring: why did things go so badly wrong?. Available from: <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/15/arab-spring-badly-wrong-five-years-on-people-power>>. [4th April 2019]

¹⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation 3/4/19, Who are the winners and losers from the Arab Spring?. Available from: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30003865>>. [3rd April 2019]

¹⁵ The National 24/2/19, The Arab Spring country by country. Available from: <<https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-arab-spring-country-by-country-1.401358>>. [24th February 2019]

USA alone.¹⁶¹⁷ Yet, these newfound relations were only available to the countries which had positive consequences because of the people's resistance and grassroots movements. This left much of the Arab World in a worsened state than before the Arab Spring. Whilst Tunisia and other countries who have had constitutional change and reform engage their newfound and beneficial relations with NATO and the USA; major powers such as the USA puppeteer the rest.¹⁸ This was all a result of the people's power being utilised for their own bettering.

The Arab Spring essentially was an oppressed people's choice to use their power to overcome their oppressors and better their respective nations. The citizens of the countries in the Arab World strived to reach their aspirations of democracy and equality. Throughout the Arab Spring's origin, revolutions and consequences on a regional and global scale. We can see how the people's collective voice and resistance had caused all of this. The people resisted and protested corrupt regimes and governments because they realised they were the power and in some cases, they had achieved constitutional and governmental reform such as introducing term lengths, secularism and more democratic initiatives. Despite the largely adverse effects of the Arab Spring, its impact on the world and the cascade of events that followed demonstrated how powerful people can be. Thus, exemplifying how the people of the Arab Spring used their power to overcome their oppressors and used it to reach their aspirations of democracy and equality.

¹⁶ Foreign Assistance 5/4/19, Tunisia Foreign Assistance. Available from: <<https://www.foreignassistance.gov/explore/country/Tunisia>>. [10th April 2019]

¹⁷ Foreign Assistance 5/4/19, Egypt Foreign Assistance. Available from: <<https://www.foreignassistance.gov/explore/country/Egypt>>. [10th April 2019]

¹⁸ Ahmadi A. n.d, What Should We Learn from 40 Years of U.S. Intervention in the Middle East?. Available from: <<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/what-should-we-learn-40-years-us-intervention-middle-east-41542>>. [12th May 2019]

Bibliography:

Secondary Sources:

Books:

Lynch M, 2013, The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East, Amazon, New York.

This book extract, was useful in informing me of the consequences of the Arab Spring and how it changed the Middle East forever. This book has historical integrity as it comes from a reliable and somewhat impartial author.

Websites:

Academia 20/6/17, Causes of the Arab Spring: A Critical Analysis. Available from: <https://www.academia.edu/33568688/Causes_of_the_Arab_Spring_A_Critical_Analysis>. [11th March 2019]

This essay was published on a website that promotes the work of various academics and was created in 2017, making it a secondary source. It informed of the causes of the Arab Spring and gave me a detailed explain of why they were the causes of the Arab Spring. This essay also is reliable and unbiased to preserve the sanctity of their analysis and has historical integrity because of this.

Ahmadi A. n.d, What Should We Learn from 40 Years of U.S. Intervention in the Middle East?. Available from: <<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/what-should-we-learn-40-years-us-intervention-middle-east-41542>>. [12th May 2019]

This web article helped me learn about how the US played a large role in the Arab Winter and the ongoing conflicts in the middle east. This source is reliable as it comes from an impartial news organisation with an impartial view.

Al Jazeera News 24/3/19, Egypt Revolution: 18 days of people power. Available from: <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2016/01/egypt-revolution-160124191716737.html>>. [24th March 2019]

This secondary source, a news article about the Egyptian Revolution informed and aided me in understanding the processes and power of the people's ideas and values. Though this news outlet is biased at times, the journalist who wrote the article has decided to remain unbiased. The source is also reliable as it comes from a prominent and proper news outlet, therefore the source must have historical integrity.

Al Jazeera News 10/4/19, Revealing Tunisia's corruption under Ben Ali. Available from: <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/03/revealing-tunisia-corruption-under-ben-ali-201432785825560542.html>>. [9th April 2019]

This news article informed me of the conditions in the various countries involved in the Arab Spring before the Arab Spring. Although this source is slightly biased, it does come from a reliable news outlet and therefore it must have historical integrity to a certain extent.

Atlantic Council 9/4/19, Tunisia, the West, and the 'Arab Spring'. Available from: <<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/tunisia-the-west-and-the-arab-spring>>. [10th April 2019]

This web page and article informed and gave me a succinct yet detailed explanation of the current diplomatic situation in the Arab World after the Arab Spring. This source has historical integrity because it comes from an impartial and reliable organisation.

BrainyQuote 2019, Arab Spring Quotes. Available from: <https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/arab_spring> [10th May 2019]

This website gave me a direct quote from Mohammed Morsi that was directly relevant to the theme of this year's NHC. The source has historical integrity as it comes from a website that uses Twitter quotes; which then makes it reliable as it comes straight from Mohammed Morsi.

Brandeis University n.d., U.S.-Egyptian Relations Since the 2011 Revolution: The Limits of Leverage. Available from <<https://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/30470/WolkovThesis2015.pdf?sequence=1>>. [10th April 2019]

This online essay informed me of the newfound relations between Egypt and the USA in an in-depth and thorough manner. This source has historical integrity as it is reliable, factual and remains impartial throughout the essay.

British Broadcasting Corporation 3/4/19, Who are the winners and losers from the Arab Spring?. Available from: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30003865>>. [3rd April 2019]

This secondary source, a news article had given me a brief succinct summary of how various countries were affected by the Arab spring. It has historical integrity because it comes from a renowned and unbiased news outlet that has a reliable track record.

British Broadcasting Corporation n.d, Profile: Mohammed Morsi. Available from: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-18371427>>. [11th May 2019]

This web article gave me contextual information about Mohammed Morsi and gave me the information of how he fit into the Arab Spring. This source is reliable as it comes from a renowned news organisation but does have a strong outsider point of view.

The Economist 3/4/19, The Arab Winter. Available from: <<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2016/01/09/the-arab-winter>>. [4th April 2019]

This online web page and news article gave me a thorough, in depth explanation and description of the consequences of the Arab Spring. This source has historical integrity because it comes from a reliable news outlet that strives to be unbiased throughout.

Foreign Assistance 5/4/19, Tunisia Foreign Assistance. Available from: <<https://www.foreignassistance.gov/explore/country/Tunisia>>. [10th April 2019]

This web page gave me an accurate, brief and succinct view on the new benefits of the diplomatic relations between Tunisia and the US. This source possesses historical integrity as it comes from an official, reliable and albeit biased source whose main goal is to inform the public about foreign assistance schemes and programs in foreign countries done by the USA.

Foreign Assistance 5/4/19, Egypt Foreign Assistance. Available from:
<<https://www.foreignassistance.gov/explore/country/Egypt>>. [10th April 2019]

This web page gave me an accurate, brief and concise summary on the new benefits of the newfound friendlier diplomatic relations between Egypt and the USA. This source has historical integrity as it comes from an official, reliable and albeit biased source whose main goal is exoteric and informs the public about foreign assistance schemes and programs in foreign countries done by the USA.

The Guardian 27/3/19, People Power and the Arab Spring. Available from:
<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/07/people-power-egypt-arab-spring>>. [27th March 2019]

This article helped and informed me and gave me an in-depth view into people's personal experiences during the Egyptian Revolution. This article has historical integrity because it comes from an independent news organisation, which strives to publish the truth and avoid fake news. This article also contains reliable and true information, which makes this source have historical integrity.

The Guardian 4//4/19, The Arab spring: why did things go so badly wrong?. Available from:
<<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/15/arab-spring-badly-wrong-five-years-on-people-power>>. [4th April 2019]

This online news article informed me of the consequences of the Arab Spring and gave me more contextual knowledge. This source has historical integrity because it comes from a reliable source that remains unbiased and impartial throughout.

History 8/5/18, Arab Spring. Available from: <<https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/arab-spring>>. [11th March 2019]

This secondary source, an informative article informed me and gave me a succinct summary of the Arab Spring. It outlined the major events and how social media sparked and formed various resistances towards the governments affected by the Arab Spring. This source has historical integrity because it comes from an educational and impartial corporation, whose main goals is to inform and educate others about history.

International Relations Organisation 31/1/19, The Arab Spring. Available from:
<<http://internationalrelations.org/the-arab-spring/>>. [24th February 2019]

This secondary source, a web page which informed of the happenings and relations between countries in the Arab Spring. This source is reliable and has historical integrity because it comes from a legitimate academic source.

Middle East Policy Council n.d., The International Relations of the Arab Spring. Available from:
<<https://www.mepc.org/international-relations-arab-spring>>. [4th April 2019]

This web page and article informed me of the diplomatic situation of the Arab Spring and how that related to people and power. This source has historical integrity as it comes from an unbiased and reliable organisation whose goal is to solely inform.

The National 24/2/19, The Arab Spring country by country. Available from:
<<https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-arab-spring-country-by-country-1.401358>>. [24th February 2019]

This secondary source, an online news article had explained the impacts of the Arab Spring country by country. This helped me gain enough contextual knowledge and the source is reliable and has historical integrity as it comes from an impartial news outlet.

Open Democracy 23/8/19, Tunisia' new constitution progress and challenges to come. Available from: <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/tunisias-new-constitution-progress-and-challenges-to-/>>. [24 Aug 2019]

This web article, had informed me of how the Tunisian people change the constitution and reformed the government. This helped me gain a deeper understanding of how Tunisia was reformed and this source has historical integrity as it comes from a democratic activist group who remained impartial in this article.

Primroz Manfreda, . 1/9 /17, 10 Reasons for the Arab Spring. Available from:

<<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-reasons-for-the-arab-spring-2353041>>. [24th February 2019]

This web page was a simplistic source that listed the essential causes for the Arab Spring in an easy to digest manner. This also made it easier for me to understand the causes for the Arab Spring and was extremely useful in informing me of the context surrounding the Arab Spring.

The SAIS Europe Journal 5/5/17, Power shifts in the Arab Spring. Available from:
<<http://www.saisjournal.org/posts/power-shifts-in-the-arab-spring>>. [27th March 2019]

This journal, a secondary source helped me understand exactly what a power shift is and how it impacted the countries involved in the Arab spring. It has historical integrity as it remains unbiased and has come from a reliable source.

Taylor and Francis Online 18/2/19, The Use of Strategic Nonviolent Action in the Arab Spring. Available from:
<<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10402659.2014.876308?journalCode=cper20>>. [27th March 2019]

This extract of a journal published on Taylor and Francis Online, a secondary source, helped me understand how revolutions are distinct from more passive and peaceful forms of protest. This journal extract from Taylor and Francis online contains has historical integrity because it comes from an academic publisher that only publishes proper reports that contain citations and contain true information.

The Washington Post 3/4/19, What the Arab uprising protesters really wanted. Available from:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/10/19/what-the-arab-uprising-protesters-really-wanted/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.819c0e2d92af>. [3rd April 2019]

This news article not only informed of the people's intentions, desires and goals of their protest movement but it also alerted me to the fragile nature of power and movements. This source has historical integrity as it comes from a reliable source that may be biased but tries to remain impartial throughout.

The World Bank 8/4/19, Middle-class Frustration Fueled the Arab Spring. Available from:
<<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/10/21/middle-class-frustration-that-fueled-the-arab-spring>>. [9th April 2019]

This web article gave me vital contextual knowledge about the causes behind the Arab Spring by writing a thorough and detailed explanation on how the Arab Spring started. This source has historical integrity as it comes from an organisation whose main goal is to inform, which makes it unbiased and has come from a reliable source.

Primary Sources:

Source: Picture of protestors using bombs as a form of protest towards the government

Al Jazeera News 24/1/2011, Pictures: Tunisia's Uprising. Available from:

< https://www.aljazeera.com/photo_galleries/africa/201113163952111181.html#lg=1&slide=5>. [30th March 2019]

This photograph and other photographs available on this website were useful in showing the forms of protest used in the Arab Spring. It had demonstrated what lengths the citizens were reaching to justify their ideal outcome, a democratic and egalitarian society. This source has historical integrity as photographs are inherently biased and it was published by a reputable news organisation.

Source: Political Cartoon about the Arab Spring

Gustavo Rodriguez 2/5/2012, Arab Spring. Available from:

<<http://www.cartoonistgroup.com/store/add.php?iid=82031>>. [30th March 2019]

The source helped broaden my perspective and not focus on just the events of the Arab spring but to focus on the events following it and their consequences. It also aided me in understanding how the Arab spring had affected international relations and national affairs in various countries all in the name of democracy and reform. This source has historical integrity because it is reliable in its origin and demonstrates an outsider's perspective on the Arab Winter.

Source: Written Document by Muhammed 'Awad Qutb and published by Tahrir Documents

Muhammed 'Awad Qutb, 17/6/2017, A time for distinction and deliverance. Available from:

<<https://www.tahrirdocuments.org/time-for-distinction-and-deliverance/>>. [30th March 2019][30]

This source aided me in understanding the complexity of a revolution and the desperation and poor conditions the Arab people had to endure before the Arab Spring. It also aided me in grasping the concepts and actions that were a part of the revolution and what their intent was and how it differed

from the outcome at times. This source has historical integrity as it comes from the Egyptian people and demonstrates what their message was in the Arab Spring.

Source: Essay on the effects of social media during the Egyptian and Tunisian Revolution

Project on Informational Technology and Political Islam 10/1/2011, Opening Closed Regimes What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?. Available from:

<https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2595096>. [24th March 2019]

This research paper and its data was helpful in demonstrating the power of social media in the Egyptian Revolution and Arab Spring. It had shown me various graphs and charts that made it easy to interpret the number of people who had used Twitter and other forms of social media to protest their respective governments. This source historical integrity because it comes from a reliable source and is also impartial in its research and analysis.

Source: Poem/Text found in the Tahrir Square

Tahrir Documents 17/7/2017, A citizen's dreams. Available from:

< <https://www.tahrirdocuments.org/a-citizens-dreams/> > [24th February 2010]

This source was useful and had helped me understand the message and core values behind the democratic movements in the Arab Spring. The source comes from an Egyptian poet and reflects the views of the people; it showed what reforms they wanted and how desperate they were for it. This poem comes straight from the source which allows it to possess historical integrity.

Source: Photograph of protestors marching on the streets of Yemen

Wikimedia Commons, 14/10/2011, File:Protest Aden Arab Spring 2011.jpg. Available from: < https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Protest_Aden_Arab_Spring_2011.jpg >. [30th July 2019]

The source helped me understand how far spread these grassroots movements spread and it also made me understand the undeniable strength of the people's desires and aspirations for democracy. This source provided me with the image to use for my cover-page, as I believe it accurately represents the Arab Spring and the theme of people and power. This source has historical integrity as a photo is inherently impartial and is reliable in its origin; it provided me an insider's perspective on the Arab Spring.