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### **SOCIAL FACTOR IN TUNISIAN REVOLUTION**

The Tunisian revolution in 29 days destroyed the regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, which had lasted for more than 20 years, was supported by the West and was considered to be the most stable in the North Africa. The collapse outwardly unshaken regime has become a phenomenon that deserves special consideration and analysis.

Since Ben Ali had got the power through a coup in November 1987, the sources of legitimacy of the regime were political stability and sustainable economic development. Stability ensured inflow of foreign direct investments and created conditions for tourism development.

The United States and France supported Ben Ali, considering him as a severe and illiberal strongman who was capable to effectively deal with the Islamists and ensure the stability of the country, located in the immediate vicinity of Europe [5].

Authoritarianism that lasted for many years created in Tunisian politics absolute void outside the presidential power, not allowing a single viable political alternative to develop. Due to this numerous peaceful demonstrations swept the country in December 2011.

The reason for them was the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old vendor of fruits and vegetables, in Sidi Bouzid after police confiscated his goods due to the permission for trade on December 17, 2010. Protests had been growing each day and in late December demonstrations reached the capital.

What was initial, a protest of impoverished and marginalized people came to involve all social groups – including professionals such as lawyers, doctors,

and teachers – who took to the streets protesting their economic situation and demanding more political rights.

At first Tunisians demanded working places, reduction of food prices and were fighting against poverty. They also advanced other socio-economic requirements, and criticized the authorities for corruption and division of the national economy. However, this complex of slogans reflecting the urgent daily difficulties indicated the existence of a larger problem – Tunisians dissatisfaction of the quality of governance at all levels and distrust of the authorities.

Rafik Abdessalem, foreign minister of Tunisia, mentioned that during the last decades, the general condition in the region was based on the malfunctioning of political, social and economic structures. What is more, people of the region showed a strong will to preserve their dignity and their freedom. «Maybe the political change in Tunisia as well as in Egypt and other Arabic countries is the byproduct of anger, disillusionment, political failure as well as economic and social failure». But since there was no way for political change, peaceful political change, the only way they found was the revolt against political despotism and corruption [2, p. 4].

The Tunisian revolution can be divided into three intermediate periods [8]. A characteristic feature of this initial phase of the Tunisian Revolution was a serious lack of organizing power. There was no political party, organization, and no leader who «created» this social protest. It was formed spontaneously and was raised upwards. The information about the past or upcoming demonstrations was spread out through the social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. It had met the response in Tunisians discontent and despair, and they went out into the streets reinforcing the protest movement.

The second intermediate period was characterized with the foreign mediation. The United States, France, Germany, and Algeria were particularly active.

The outcome of this period was voting on the constitution on January 26, 2014. The date is now accepted as the first day of Tunisia's Second Republic. Endowed with one of the most progressive constitution in the Arab World the country seems on the right track for democracy.

The Arab Spring proved that people have a role to play in overcoming obstacles and bridging gaps, and their choices in mutual and complementary issues and integration will remain a strategic option. The future will no longer be able to marginalise the peoples' will as it had in the past.

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