Challenges to Democratic Transitions in Developing Countries: Case Study

Five years after the Arab upheaval and ousting the autocrats of the three Arab North African’s countries, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, none of these countries’ youths succeeded in achieving their ambitions of the revolutions. Egypt made a slight progress toward stability, whereas Libya has made transitioning into an absolute failed state. As the focus of this paper is Libya, the question that poses itself, why Libyan could not achieve even the minimum requirements of their youths’ dreams of enjoying pluralism, prosperity and social justice? Why did Libya miss the fortuitous to build democratic government after toppling the autocrat? The reality is that the active players in Libya’ scene are so complicated to be handled and made it so challenging for Libya to celebrate democracy in the present time.

I am a firm believer that humans are born, but citizens are made. Therefore, the biggest concern I have is the obvious lack of civic development that today children, our future generation, will suffer from and get them back from the globe. Being a member of the Libyan society, I witnessed how parents value education and how they compete to help their children to acquire all the basic education, cover school materials and be good in math, science etc., However, when it comes to civic engagement, there is a zero existence of it within the school curriculum, which negatively reflects on the development of our community. The 17th of February revolution and the events that followed are the biggest evidence of the absence of civic education that clearly mirrored in our political failure and every effort toward smooth transitioning to democracy. One can simply compare the number of Libyans who voted in July 2012 and the tremendous decline that is shown in 2014 parliament elections. Further, the increases in violation rate, property destructions, savage militias …etc., are all clear indications of the missing of civic education. Healthy democracy requires constant participation of its citizens. If this practice of commitment and participation to the society were rooted in children from kindergarten, nothing would hinder them from quitting what is learned to be part of their responsibilities toward their society. Should we blame schools for such failure? I would argue that schools play the biggest role in engaging children in civil society, however, from my own perspective, the blame must be shared between the three vital components on impacting our behaviors and thus, our community. Schools, family and mosques play mutual responsibilities in creating a healthy citizen able to embrace democracy and add a value to his/her society.

So in this paper, I will address the difficulties that encountered and hindered Libya’s transition to democracy. Also, I will share my model, which is from my perspective, might provide the future generation with an opportunity to start practicing democracy after not less than two decades from implementing it. A part of the model is based on John Dewey’s philosophy of democracy and education and some other American scholars.