Leadership Styles: Social Political Analysis of Syrian Leadership Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The Study is titled "Leadership Styles: A Case Study of Syria". The main objectives of the research work are to identify and then analyze the political leadership style in Syria, to generate a profile of past, current and emerging leaders of Syria, to study the reasons that led to the uprising in Syria and to assess the future consequences of the decisions taken by the Political Leadership.

The study will be descriptive in nature. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, appropriate data will be collected from people and organizations from both, official and non-official, taking a look at the current and emerging leadership Styles in Syria. Survey for the political, security and economic situation will be carried. Both primary and secondary sources of data will be used for present research.

For analysis and conclusion of the results of the survey, appropriate statistical tools and analysis will be done.

Keywords: Syria, Leadership Style, Political Leadership, Economic Impacts, Effective Management.

INTRODUCTION

What is Leadership?

In the past, some researchers have argued that the actual influence of leaders on organizational outcomes is overrated and romanticized as a result of biased attributions about leaders (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). Despite these assertions however, it is largely recognized and accepted by practitioners and researchers that leadership is important, and research supports the notion that leaders do contribute to key organizational outcomes (Day & Lord, 1988; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). To facilitate successful performance it is important to understand and accurately measure leadership performance.

Many people today are seeking to understand -- and many people are writing about -- the concept and practices of leadership. There are a great many reasons for the popularity of the topic, including that organizations are faced with changes like never before. The concept of leadership is relevant to any aspect of ensuring effectiveness in organizations and in managing change. This topic in the Library helps you to fully understand the concept and practices of leadership.

Recent empirical analysis suggests that individual national leaders can have large impacts on economic growth. Leaders have strongest effects in autocracies, where they appear to substantially influence both economic growth and the evolution of political institutions. These findings call for increased focus on national economic policies and the means of leadership selection, among other issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Styles

Kurt Lewin's Leadership styles
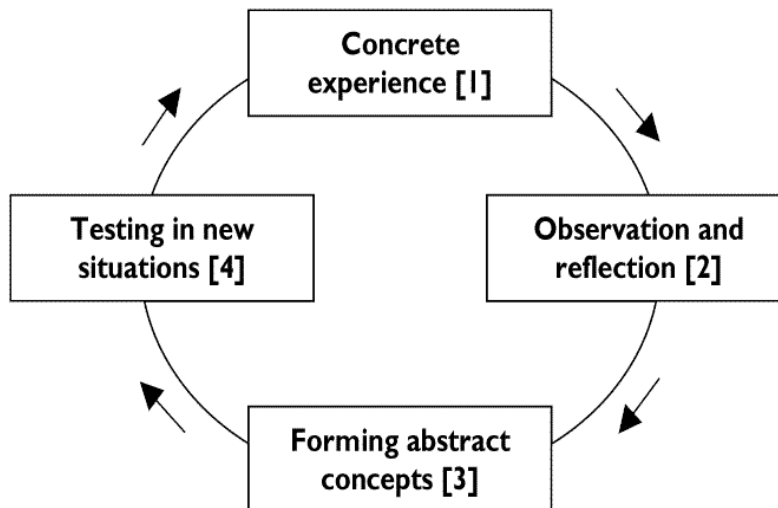
Leadership style refers to a leader's behaviour. It is the result of the philosophy, personality and experience of the leader. Kurt Lewin and colleagues identified different styles of leadership that is, Autocratic, , Participative, and Laissez-Faire. (Lewin *et al.*,1939):

- Autocratic or Authoritarian Leaders: Under the autocratic leadership style, all decision-making powers are centralized in the leader, as with dictator leaders. They do not entertain any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. The autocratic management has been successful as it provides strong motivation to the manager. It permits quick decision-making, as only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to the themselves until they feel it is needed by the rest of the group.
- Participative or Democratic Leaders: The democratic leadership style favours decision-making by the group as shown, such as leader gives instruction after consulting the group. They can win the cooperation of their group and can motivate them effectively and positively. The decisions of the democratic leader are not unilateral as with the autocrat because they arise from consultation with the group members and participation by them.
- Laissez-Faire or Free Rein Leaders: The phrase is French and literally means "let do", but, in a leadership context, can be roughly translated as "free rein". A free rein leader does not lead, but leaves the group entirely to itself as shown; such a leader allows maximum freedom to subordinates, i.e., they are given a free hand in deciding their own policies and methods.

Different situations call for different leadership styles. In an emergency when there is little time to converge on an agreement and where a designated authority has significantly more experience or expertise than the rest of the team, an autocratic leadership style may be most effective; however, in a highly motivated and aligned team with a homogeneous level of expertise, a more democratic or laissez-faire style may be more effective. The style adopted should be the one that most effectively achieves the objectives of the group while balancing the interests of its individual members.

Definition of Leadership

There are many diverse definitions of leadership. A few common approaches of the definition of leadership will be highlighted.

Peter Drucker (2003) sums up leadership as "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers." To gain followers requires influence but doesn't exclude the lack of integrity in achieving this. Indeed, it can be argued that several of the world's greatest leaders have lacked integrity and have adopted values that would not be shared by many people today.

John C Maxwell (1998): In the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, John Maxwell sums up his definition of leadership as "leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less." This moves beyond the position defining the leader, to looking at the ability of the leader to influence others - both those who would consider themselves followers, and those outside that circle. Indirectly, it also builds in leadership character, since without maintaining integrity and trustworthiness, the capability to influence will disappear.

Warren Bennis' (2003) definition of leadership is focused much more on the individual capability of the leader: "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential."

Transformational Leadership
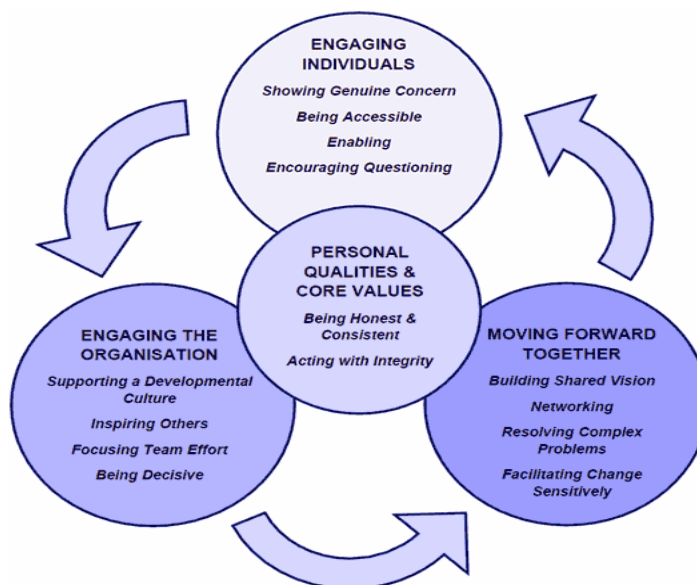
Significant attention has recently been given to the theories related to transformational leadership (e. g., Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Bass, 1997, 1998). The concept of transformational leadership was first highlighted in a comprehensive manner by Burns (1978).

 Burns (1978, p. 3) noted a qualitative distinction between transactional and transformational political leaders. In transactional leadership, leader - follower relationships are based on a series of exchanges or bargains between leaders and followers. According to Burns, the transformational leaders recognize the need for a potential follower but go further, seeking to satisfy higher needs, in terms of Maslow's (1954) need-hierarchy to engage the full person of the follower. Transforming leadership results in mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. Bass (1997, 1998) has contributed a great deal to the evolution of the theory and understanding the ramification of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership includes charisma (providing a vision and a sense of mission, and raising followers' self-expectations), intellectual stimulation (helping employees emphasize rational solutions, and challenge old assumptions), and individualized consideration (developing employees and coaching).

 Howell and Avolio (1993) note that leaders described as transformational, concentrate their efforts on longer term goals; place value and emphasis on developing a vision; change or align systems to accommodate their vision rather than work within existing systems; and coach followers to take on greater responsibility for their own development, as well as the development of others. These leaders are often described by the followers as inspirational (italic added). Such leaders frequently display transactional leadership behaviour as well (pp. 891-892).

Bass (1997) maintained that transformational leadership is more effective and satisfying than just constructive transactions and constructive transactions are more effective and satisfying than corrective ones. Apparently, the transformational leadership has been found to be an important variety of leadership functions.

Leadership Performance

In the past, some researchers have argued that the actual influence of leaders on organizational outcomes is overrated and romanticized as a result of biased attributions about leaders (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). Despite these assertions however, it is largely recognized and accepted by practitioners and researchers that leadership is important, and research supports the notion that leaders do contribute to key organizational outcomes (Day & Lord, 1988; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). To facilitate successful performance it is important to understand and accurately measure leadership performance.

Job performance generally refers to behaviour that is expected to contribute to organizational success (Campbell, 1990). Campbell identified a number of specific types of performance dimensions; leadership was one of the dimensions that he identified. There is no consistent, overall definition of leadership performance (Yukl, 2006). Many distinct conceptualizations are often lumped together under the umbrella of leadership performance, including outcomes such as leader effectiveness, leader advancement, and leader emergence (Kaiser et al., 2008). For instance, leadership performance may be used to refer to the career success of the individual leader, performance of the group or organization, or even leader emergence. Each of these measures can be considered conceptually distinct. While these aspects may be related, they are different outcomes and their inclusion should depend on the applied/research focus.

Leadership in Organizations

An organization that is established as an instrument or means for achieving defined objectives has been referred to as a formal organization. Its design specifies how goals are subdivided and reflected in subdivisions of the organization. Divisions, departments, sections, positions, jobs, and tasks make up this work structure. Thus, the formal organization is expected to behave impersonally in regard to relationships with clients or with its members. According to Weber's definition, entry and subsequent advancement is by merit or seniority. Each employee receives a salary and enjoys a degree of tenure that safeguards her/him from the arbitrary influence of superiors or of powerful clients. The higher his position in the hierarchy, the greater his presumed expertise in adjudicating problems that may arise in the course of the work carried out at lower levels of the organization. It is this bureaucratic structure that forms the basis for the appointment of heads or chiefs of administrative subdivisions in the organization and endows them with the authority attached to their position (Gibb, C. A., 1970).

In contrast to the appointed head or chief of an administrative unit, a leader emerges within the context of the informal organization that underlies the formal structure. The informal organization expresses the personal objectives and goals of the individual membership. Their objectives and goals may or may not coincide with those of the formal organization. The informal organization represents an extension of the social structures that generally characterize human life — the spontaneous emergence of groups and organizations as ends in themselves.

In prehistoric times, humanity was preoccupied with personal security, maintenance, protection, and survival. Now humanity spends a major portion of waking hours working for organizations. Her/his need to identify with a community that provides security, protection, maintenance, and a feeling of belonging continues unchanged from prehistoric times. This need is met by the informal organization and its emergent, or unofficial, leaders (Knowles & Sax berg, 1971).

Leaders emerge from within the structure of the informal organization. Their personal qualities, the demands of the situation, or a combination of these and other factors attract followers who accept their leadership within one or several overlay structures. Instead of the authority of position held by an appointed head or chief, the emergent leader wields influence or power. Influence is the ability of a person to gain co-operation from others by means of persuasion or control over rewards. Power is a stronger form of influence because it reflects a person's ability to enforce action through the control of a means of punishment (Gibb, C. A., 1970).

A leader is a person who influences a group of people towards a specific result. It is not dependent on title or formal authority. Leaders are recognized by their capacity for caring for others, clear communication, and a commitment to persist (Hoyle, J. R., 1995). An individual who is appointed to a managerial position has the right to command and enforce obedience by virtue of the authority of his position. However, she or he must possess adequate personal attributes to match his authority, because authority is only potentially available to him. In the absence of sufficient personal competence, a manager may be confronted by an emergent leader who can challenge her/his role in the organization and reduce it to that of a figurehead. However, only authority of position has the backing of formal sanctions. It follows that whoever wields personal influence and power can legitimize this only by gaining a formal position in the hierarchy, with commensurate authority (Gibb, C. A., 1970). Leadership can be defined as one's ability to get others to willingly follow. Every organization needs leaders at every level (Hakala, D., 2008).

Leadership Changes in Arab Region

Almost without exception, Arab summers are hot: temperatures above forty degrees normal. However, summer 2011 may go down as one of the region's hottest seasons irrespective of mercury readings. Several Arab countries still feel the heat of popular revolt.

The "Arab Spring" was fast and dramatic: Nonviolent revolutions in the streets removed presidents in Tunisia and Egypt in a matter of weeks, and similar revolutions got underway in Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen. The "Arab Autumn" is a much slower and messier affair.

Demonstrators in Bahrain were driven from the streets by massive military force, and Libya's revolution only triumphed after Western military intervention in support of the rebels. In both Syria and Yemen, originally nonviolent protests risk tipping into civil wars.

Clearly, the Arab world is in a transitory period.

It might be social media, a globalized world, a population bulge or simply a passing of the leadership baton to a younger generation. Most likely, the travails are a combination of all four and then some more.

So far, change within the Arab world has been of two types: cosmetic changes of 'personalities' and more revolutionary 'regime change.'

Syrian Uprising

Now to Syria where Human rights groups say that up to 8000 people have now died since the protests began in mid-March. The Syrian government blamed "terrorist" attackers for killing and death of many people, including Security forces and army men, and declared that its forces had seized a large number of weapons in many parts of the country.

The Arab League, the European Union, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Turkey, and the United States, have condemned the use of violence against the protesters, among others. The government of Iran, Assad's primary regional and political ally, initially suggested the demonstrations were a foreign plot. The Arab League has suspended Syria's membership over the government's response to the crisis.

Many Gulf States have pulled their ambassadors out of Syria, The UN Security Council has not condemned the violence, thanks to vetoes twice from Russia and China.

India, Brazil and South Africa, which hold non-permanent Security Council seats and are considered a bloc of influential developing countries, abstained from the vote first time, prompting criticism from Human Rights Watch.

In the light of that, The Syrian economy continues to weaken as international sanctions against the regime become more painful and the adverse effects of the political turmoil takes its toll on people.

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Leadership of Syria Trying to Manage the Crisis

Since the beginning of the uprising, the Syrian government has given several concessions. On 21 April 2011, emergency law in Syria was lifted after forty-eight years of enactment, which had granted the government sweeping authority to suspend constitutional rights. Furthermore, on 24 July 2011, a draft law was introduced in parliament to allow for the creation of more political parties under the conditions that they were not based on religious, tribal or ethnic beliefs and does not discriminate against gender or race. However, these concessions were widely considered trivial by protesters demanding more meaningful reform.

Economic Impacts of the Crisis

With sanctions restricting the export of crude oil as of November 2011, the Syrian Ministry of Petroleum has instructed most joint venture producers to reduce output because of a shortage of storage facilities in Syria. The latter is having difficulties exporting its crude.

In a bid to stem the rise in demand for foreign exchange, the CBS on 23 November 2011 announced a fourth auction of $41.925mn (sold at $1=S£53.01) to reduce the pressure on the Syrian pound, which has lost over 15% of its value since the beginning of the political unrest in March. The official price of the dollar rose to $1=S£55.26 on 19 December 2011, while the black market rate edged up to $1=S£62.

The continuing violence in the country is slowly bleeding the economy. Admitting the magnitude of the problem, the Syrian Minister of Economy Muhammad al-Sha'ar said on 24 November 2011, that the economic crisis was not an easy matter and that "it will have grave repercussions for Syria," which could spill over into other Arab countries. Businessmen complain of cancelled contracts, disrupted trade and laying off employees, as commercial entities continue to suffer from the violence and uncertainty since March 2011. Direct foreign investment has dried up, tourism income is negligible and there has been a regular outflow of capital since March 2011, although details as to where the funds had been transferred are not available. Some reports suggest that banks in Beirut and Dubai may have been the main beneficiaries.

Economic sanctions against Syria are sending a message to the regional business community to distance itself from the regime of President Bashar Al Assad, according to experts.

Dr Abdul Hamid Radwan, a leading economist in the UAE Ministry of Foreign Trade, told Gulf News that "Not only will the sanctions hurt the Syrian regime but they will also place additional pressure on Syrian traders, who have not yet taken a stance against Al Assad's regime, and make them unable to pay for their imports," .

Opposition to sanctions seemed likely to weaken their impact. Iraq, Syria's largest Arab trading partner, abstained after making clear that it would not back punitive measures, partly in the light of its own experience under Saddam Hussain.

Lebanon, still dominated politically by its larger eastern neighbour, voted against the sanctions.

Managing the Crisis and Economic Difficulties

The imposed economic difficulties are adding to an already difficult situation that has continued over the past nine months.

No doubt that all this is having a negative impact on the capabilities of the government and on standards of living for the majority of citizens.

According to Gulf News, Government projects and private investment have stopped, capital has fled abroad, and the tourism sector, which makes up 12 per cent of Syria's GDP, has nearly evaporated. Industrial production has shrunk, resulting in unemployment for part of its workforce, agriculture is affected heavily due to the vast army operations, exports have been cut to half, unemployment has increased to around 25 per cent, and prices have risen due to widespread shortages. The European Union halted imports of Syrian oil, which account for 90 per cent of the country's revenues, causing it to lose about $400 million a month. Syria's trade with the EU is based mostly on oil exports, which were halted by the EU sanctions. But in the past few days, Iran bought an 80,000 tonne shipment of Syrian oil, the first since the sanctions were imposed. Syria's second biggest trade partner, Iraq, which abstained in a vote to suspend Syria's membership in the Arab League, might not commit to imposing Arab League sanctions.

Unfortunately, Syrian citizens will also be hurt by the sanctions as they already face oil and gas shortages and increases in prices of commodities. The situation in Syria is getting very critical. Food prices are soaring; gas cylinders are not available in the market as well.

OBJECTIVES

By Studying the Leadership Style of Syria, we aim to:

- To identify and analyze the political leadership style in Syria.
- To study the reasons led to uprising in Syria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Problem to be investigated

Leaders carry out their roles in a wide variety of styles, e.g., autocratic, democratic, participatory, laissez-faire (hands off), etc. Often, the leadership style depends on the situation. Leading is a very human activity -- we're all humans and most of us have strong feelings and beliefs about leadership.

This study attempts to identify and analyze the political leadership style in Syria, to identify the past, current and emerging leaders styles in Syria, what was the reasons led to the uprising and how the Syrian Political Leadership managed the crisis.

The researcher expects that the present paper will help in answering if leadership style matter to the uprising, and how it's related. Since leaders matter, the decisions they make – i.e., their policies – appear to matter.

Sampling and Database Collection

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, appropriate data will be collected from people organizations from both, official and non-official. Taking a look at the current and emerging leadership Styles in Syria. Survey for the political, Security and economic situation will be carried. The data would be collected with the help of Questionnaire Based Survey. The sample size, which will be Stratified Sampling (probability), for the study would be of 2030 people. The Sample takes into account the

geographical and ethnic distribution of all the Syrians, as it will be taking into account the participation of all according to those ratios.

Data Collection

There are two types of the data for such type of research; one is the primary data which would be collected with help of questionnaire and personal interview method from the people of Syria.

Findings

We raised a long questionnaire of several important points, with open answers to the questions to tens of thousands of Syrians inside and outside Syria. And 2030 people of different ages and party affiliations, ideological, religious as well as cultural and social background participated in answering the questionnaire.

After around four years, of "Revolution" and "conspiracy", as called by the opposition, and the government respectively, the Syrian Crisis has witnessed the entry of the foreign players in addition to the influx of fighters from all corners of the world to fight with the sides of opposition or the regime or even Islamic Militants which had their way to Syria.

Recently, the American President Barack Obama has announced the formation of an international alliance with a number of Arab, European and regional countries to counter the challenges of the ISIS, that has taken control over large part of Iraq and Syria besides entering in confrontations with opposition and the Syrian regime, to become the third party in a conflict that turned into regional and international crisis with UN recognition.

Here, we should take the views of Syrians into consideration to know their point of view regarding the ongoing in their country, as millions of them have been displaced or became refugee after the conflict.

Factors led to spark the demonstrations

Nothing creates out of nowhere that is certain, for every reason a cause. The Syrian situation is no different, Syrians mentioned many reasons and factors led to the launch of the protests and popular demands. Most participants stressed that it is not limited to one factor, but several factors combined to witness demonstrations Syria has never seen such in many decades. The most mentioned factors are social (the spread of corruption and favoritism) which 69.41% mentioned it, then Economic factors (high rates of unemployment and poverty) 55.76% and Political factors (lack of political life and the absence of expression and media freedoms) 50.84%. And of course there was the External factors (trying dumping Syria in civil problems in favor to Israel, as Syria leads the Israel's reluctance axis) which were mentioned by 39.51%.

Regime Reforms

At the beginning of the crisis in Syria, the regime announced a set of reforms and changes in the political life which was almost not existed for decades, but how Syrians looked it. The majority 60.59% saw the reforms just a dodge by the regime, in reality nothing changed, 20.40% said it is good as a starter, but more reforms must be done and only 18.37% fully supported the reforms and said it is positive reforms, give room for the launch of public freedoms in the country.

Syrian leadership mistakes

It was necessary for us to explore the views about what the Syrians saw that they were errors committed by the Syrian regime in dealing with the volatile situation in the country, the participants stated many errors and mistakes, according to their point of view. The most mistake has been mentioned by 70.42% participants is the suppression of demonstrations by using arms, but 22.08% saw the opposite saying the biggest mistake made by the regime was not resolving the crisis from Daraa – Delay in the military decisiveness. Also 15.73% mentioned infringement on religious places and fueling sectarian was one of big mistakes made by the regime forces, 13.56% saw the lack of recognition of the People's demands as a mistake. Also there are other mistakes with lower percentage, like 7.36% said the repeated decrees amnesty for criminals was wrong and 6.92% said not paying attention to internal corruption allowed the entry of weapons and terrorists, which was a big mistake.

Opposition mistakes during the crisis

Opposition mistakes are many and do not end, according to Syrians point of view, but what were the most mistakes mentioned by the participants in the questionnaire. Almost half of them 49.06% mentioned that the biggest mistake made by the opposition is the dispersion, lack of unity and poor organization, then 17.75% said the armed action was wrong by all means and 14.28% saw one of their mistake is not accepting the political dialogue. Also 13.28% said one of the mistakes is everyone working according to personal interests and receiving external support, 10.25% saw the mistake is the lack of leadership figure leading the opposition, 9.96% accused them of sectarian rhetoric and terrorism, while 8.80% saw a grave mistake in the delay in armament - should take up arms from the beginning to protect civilians and 5.48% said the dependence on foreign false promises is wrong. Also other mistakes with little percentages have been mentioned, like 5.24% for lack of agreement on the future of Syria and understanding to topple the regime, 3.17% said that the political mistakes are due to lack of political life (Lack of political experience) and 1.44% saw one of the big mistakes is the pursuit of gains before the fall of the regime.

Opposition split

Perhaps the only thing agreed upon by the Syrians is the presence of a massive split of the opponents of the regime in terms of the action agendas or priorities or even divisions, but what the Syrians say in the reason for the split. Number of participants mentioned more than one reason, most of them by 46.50% was a natural consequence of the absence of political activities in Syria for several decades, then 42.27% said that is a result of personal ambitions and the varying foreign agendas they follow, after that 37.04% saw there is differences on specific details as a result of different ideas, visions and approaches for each and 1.08% said it is result of successful breach made by the regime into the opposition body.

Failure of Arab and international initiatives to find a solution

Arab and international conferences and initiatives did not stop, but none of them succeeded, the regime and opposition blamed each other for this failure, but what is the opinion of the Syrians about who was behind the lack of success of any of them. The minority 21.57% blamed both sides, the regime and opposition; and higher percentage 24.88% blamed only the Syrian opposition for the failure of the initiatives. But the majority 52.91% said the only side to blame in failing all Arab and international initiatives to find a solution is the regime.

Kind of Future Government
Despite the belief of the existence of significant influence of Islamists within the corridors of the Syrian opposition, there was not much of support among those surveyed for the formation of an Islamic

government in the future. 34.63% mentioned the need for national unity transition government, 28.42% said there should be an elected multi-party government, while 20.49% supported the formation of technocratic government, 8.95% thinks of forming a Secular government and only 4.18% called for an Islamic government. Also 1.88% demanded a federal government.

Conclusion

Syrians mentioned many reasons that led to protests like corruption and favoritism, high rate of unemployment and poverty, political factors, the absence of media freedom. The majority of Syrians people saw the reforms and changes announced and made following the uprisings as a dodge by the regime. And the majority think that the biggest mistake has been made by the Syrian regime is the suppression of demonstrations using arms. Almost half of the people said that the biggest mistake made by the opposition is their dispersion, lack of unity and poor organization. Majority of Syrian are convinced that there are opponents working according to foreign agendas. Syrians blamed both sides; the regime and opposition, with more than half of them blamed only the regime for the failure of all initiatives to find a suitable solution. It was clear that majority of Syrians prefer national unity transition government and an elected multi-party government.

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