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**Oğuz DİLEK\***

\* Assist. Prof. Dr., Department of Political Science, Zirve University

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# Constructing Security and Community in the Middle East: A Security Community Approach to the Structure and Agents of the Arab Spring

Oğuz DİLEK\*

## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to problematize whether a Middle Eastern Security Community has ever gone further than a utopian mirage. Accordingly, it is inferred that a regional security community builds upon, at least, two antecedent conditions. The needed, but not sufficient pre-condition arrives when the peoples of a region re-imagine their security geography beyond its territorialisation among the scattered islands of nation states. Sufficient condition is then the presence of strong regional states with ideological appeal and material resources so as to build the first momentum towards a communal sense of security. This paper argues that the Arab Spring mostly met the first condition. The communal waves, at least briefly, united Arab people divided across the borders of multitude of states. But this short-lived 'spring' was not quite enough to forge a path from which the region could progress along the said direction. Whereas the classical cores of strength in the Arab world (Syria, Egypt and Iraq) are currently on the edge of an ultimate collapse; two non-Arab states (Israel and Iran) seem unwilling to cover this emergent power void.

**Keywords:** Security Community, Arab Spring, Middle East, Israel, Iran.

## Ortadoğu'da Güvenlik ve Topluluk İnşa Etmek: Güvenlik Topluluğu Yaklaşımı ile Arap Baharı'nın Yapı ve Yapanları

### ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel gayesi, Ortadoğu'da bir "Güvenlik Topluluğu" inşasının ütöpik bir mucize olmanın ötesine neden geçemediğini irdelemektir. Buna göre, güvenlik topluluğunun en azından iki tane koşul üzerine inşa olduğu savlanmaktadır. Gerekli ama yeterli olmayan ön-koşul, ulus-devletlere bölünmüş egemenlik alanlarının ötesinde güvenlik coğrafyasının yeniden tahayyül edilmesidir. Yeterli koşul ise güvenlik topluluğuna doğru ilk itkiyi verecek, maddi kaynaklara ve ideolojik cazibeye sahip, güçlü bölgesel devletlerin ortaya çıkmasıdır. Bu çalışmada savunulduğu üzere Arap Baharı ilk koşulu kısmen karşılar niteliktedir. Toplumsal ayaklanmalar, kısa süreliğine de olsa, sınırlarla bölünmüş Arap coğrafyasını düşünsel olarak birleştirmiştir. Fakat bu kısa ömürlü 'bahar' bölgenin bahsedilen yöne doğru ilerleyebileceği "o" yolu açmaya pek de yeterli olmadı. Arap dünyasının bildik çekirdek güçleri (Suriye, Irak ve Mısır) nihai bir çöküntünün eşliğinde iken, ne İsrail ne de İran oluşan bu güç boşluğunu doldurmaya istekli görünmekte.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Güvenlik Topluluğu, Arap Baharı, Ortadoğu, İsrail, İran.

\* Assist. Prof. Dr., Department of Political Science, Zirve University, Gaziantep, Turkey.  
E-mail: oguz.dilek@zirve.edu.tr.

## Introduction

There is almost no literature applying a security community to the Middle Eastern state system. With only a few exceptions,<sup>1</sup> any deductive studies that situate the Middle East into the conceptual framework of a security community are in short supply. Such negligence is not without reason. The state of affairs in this region has remained distant to the core notion of a security community—that is, a sense of “we” feeling.

This paper voyages through this area of study with one question in mind: Why is a Middle Eastern security community a non-starter? To confront this question, this paper pursues two consecutive phases of a deductive research: (1) a critical reading of the foundational assumptions on which the concept of a security community arises and, thereafter, (2) overlaying them onto the contemporary Middle East shaken by an upsurge of popular uprisings.

In this study, three broad generalizations are extracted from the security community perspective. First, Adler and Barnett confirm that states (i.e. agents) indeed factor in anarchy (i.e. structure) when guiding their affairs with one another on the condition that structure itself is incidental to or dependent on interactions among individual state agents.<sup>2</sup> Second, inasmuch as structure and agent mutually constitute one another, by logical extension, anarchical structure is undermined whenever agency transforms in character and purpose.<sup>3</sup> And third, such change of state agency is all but possible if peoples of a region assume a degree of divergence from the classical Westphalian security perceptions.<sup>4</sup>

As the Arab Spring comes to pass, a divergence between the Arab societies and states has appeared, albeit briefly, on the horizon. Gregory Gause III imagined the Arab Spring as a “communal wave”<sup>5</sup> that, at least in the beginning, seemed to intertwine an otherwise territorially divided Arabic-speaking world. But this trans-national movement has eventually become immaterial. The Arab masses’ outright frustration with the status quo eventually created no real momentum towards altering the established regional political discourse.

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1 See, Pinar Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective*, London, Routledge, 2005, p.181-194; Raymond Hinnebusch, “Order and Change in the Middle East: Twist on the International Society Approach”, Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (eds.) *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

2 Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.3, No.3, p.320.

3 Emanuel Adler, “Constructivism and International Relations”, Walter Carlsnaes et al. (eds.) *Handbook of International Relations*, London, Sage, 2002.

4 Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, “A Framework for the Study of Security Communities”, Adler and Barnett (eds.) *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 13.

5 Gregory Gause III, “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 4, 2011, p.87.

As Pinar Bilgin would also attest, security communities need not automatically follow the dissolution of a state system underpinned by a balance of power politics, “on the contrary there exists a potential for descent into chaos if no action is taken”.<sup>6</sup> According to theory, one or more materially powerful states have to stimulate an otherwise non-existent conversion from an *anarchical system of regional balance of power towards a security community system of governance*.<sup>7</sup> Yet, nowhere in the Middle East can this type of state actor (or concert of them) be found – neither with the necessary motivation to be a transformative agent nor with the regional power to render the current power politics inoperative.

Deutsch once forwarded that no state actor would achieve security communities unless they promoted a we-feeling with and among the recipient states.<sup>8</sup> For that matter, Iranian and Israeli states as two non-Arab players of the Middle East deserve special attention. These two narrate their regional security policies through a lexicon borrowed from cosmopolitan/above-the-state ideals—democracy, anti-imperialism, Islamic solidarity and so on. Their national role conceptions are intriguing in the sense that they convey a transnational quality towards disposing their bearers for the task of enabling the fall of undemocratic, corrupted regimes in their close environs. If only the developments that follow the outbreak of Arab Spring could build substance underneath this initial conviction.

In order to substantiate all these points, this paper will proceed through four parts. First, it will venture upon a discussion about what a security community is and how to build one. Second, it will provide a general outlook on how the Arab Spring impacts the inter-state order of this region and why it is not offering a way out of current state of affairs based around state-to-state fear. As third and fourth, this paper will elaborate on how two regional powers—Israel and Iran—have failed to rescue the Middle East from relapsing into the past vestiges of a Hobbesian state order.

## **What is a Regional Security Community, How to Build One?**

Bill McSweeney sustains that the notion of “security interdependence” is both “a condition of the world and an opportunity to fashion it.”<sup>9</sup> It is the only remedy to the Clausewitzian image of inter-state system in which each unit exercises its atomistic interests in a way that defies the possibility of a higher order than the nation-state. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever in *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security People, States and Fear* counter this “national security” tradition of the Realist school by giving clarity and content to the concept of security interdependence. To them, a state’s security strategy is both a cause and, at the same time, an effect of the social context (i.e. Regional Security

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6 Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East*, p.206.

7 See Adler and Barnett, “A Framework for the Study of Security Communities”, p.29-66.

8 Deutsch, *Political Community*, p.5.

9 Bill McSweeney, *Security Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 47.

Complex) in which this state cohabits with other state actors. The theory of Regional Security Complex (i.e. the RSC) thereby grows the notions of security and region into a single body of mutually inseparable constitutions. Accordingly, a region can be best understood as a complex network of security interdependence that tightly interlaces political, social, military and economic wellbeing of those states that are located in geographical proximity.<sup>10</sup>

The RSC's are sort of an ecological order in that the principle of sovereignty still applies to individual states on the surface, but a closer look reveals that state agents are denied the capacity to manage their security in isolation from other states.<sup>11</sup> Buzan reminds that a regional security complex, therefore, heads for two alternative modes of security architecture. "Conflict formation"<sup>12</sup> is one of the possible outcomes when the neighboring states are either unwilling to, or incapable of, acknowledging the girded nature of security. States, in this mode, compete for larger military and economic resources in order to buy higher degrees of security. Yet, such mode of conduct counterproductively brings about lesser security from the danger of war, as an upward shift in one's perceived preparedness for war propels adjacent states to respond in kind.<sup>13</sup> Security Communities, an alternative mode of security interdependence, transpire when regional players jointly give assent to the fact that "their security problems cannot reasonably be...resolved apart from one another."<sup>14</sup>

The phenomenon of a security community leads from Karl Deutsch's observational findings on post-WWII Europe.<sup>15</sup> He framed it as a concert of states that chose to manage the disharmony of interest among one another, only, but only, through "peace".<sup>16</sup> Two of Deutsch's contemporary followers, Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, later subjected his framework to a constructivist re-interpretation.<sup>17</sup> Such that, before this constructivist revision, the security community perspective exclusively provided intellectual expression on Europe's integration. Thenceforth, it has become incorporated into the agent/structure debate that overlays all other debates in international relations theory.

Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett delineated a security community as one of a region "comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of

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10 Barry Buzan and Ole Waver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 4.

11 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

12 Ibid., p. 489.

13 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

14 Ibid., p. 491.

15 Karl W. Deutsch, *et.al.*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957.

16 Ibid., p.2.

17 See, Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998; Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations*, London, Routledge, 2005.

peaceful change.”<sup>18</sup> This type of security complex prospers when, and if, participant nations develop a sense of “we-ness” or a “we-feeling”, interacting with one another on the basis of loyalty and common values. When juxtaposed against some other security regimes (i.e. a defense community or alliance); security communities ultimately strive to avoid conflict and identify the interests of partner countries in stability and peace. Security communities, to renounce in-fight among its members, deem “peace” as means by and for itself. Hence, they employ only peaceful means to achieve “peace”.<sup>19</sup>

A so-called “no-war community”<sup>20</sup> is then a cognitive space wherein states are able to establish a so-called “we-feeling” in shaping their individual security discourses and national interests.<sup>21</sup> In one way, it can be concluded that constituent states, as a *sine quo a non*, have to learn the idea of “peaceful change.”<sup>22</sup> Hence, in Adler’s words, “learning and not balancing...becomes part of the mechanism of change.”<sup>23</sup> As yet, “learning” here is not meant to exclusively mean internalizing some notion or thought: it also covers “an active process of collective redefinition and interpretation of reality,”<sup>24</sup> by the states of a region. There are most certainly effective ways of rendering war an illegitimate instrument of foreign policy; especially once the “discovery of new interests”<sup>25</sup> and/or recognition of collective identities, among and between states, makes their stage debut.

The vital question, then, is: How will individual state actors, self-interested and obsessed with security, bypass by this cognitive threshold and “learn” to manage their conflict with others peacefully? Given that there is no sort of guarantee of a state’s survival, countries are often afraid of being cheated by others, thus, normally expect the other party to first switch off all efforts of power-building. As a result of this Prisoner’s Dilemma, anarchy or the balance of power politics reproduces itself easily, leaving behind a limited space for conducting alternative security arrangements.<sup>26</sup> What will then elevate this state of affairs to a security community’s most basic level, at which, members of this community have the real assurance that there will be no physical intra-regional fight?

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18 Adler and Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, p.30.

19 Emanuel Adler, “Imagined (Security) Communities”, *Millennium*, Vol. 26, No 2, 1997.

20 Amit Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, London, Routledge, 2001, p.21.

21 Emanuel Adler, “Seeds of Peaceful Change: The OSCE Security Community- Building Model”, Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.120.

22 Deutsch, *Political Community*, p.5; Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, “Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective”, Adler and Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.3-27.

23 Emanuel Adler, *The Convergence of Civilization: Constructing a Mediterranean Region*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006, p.29.

24 Adler, *Communitarian International Relations*, p.239.

25 Emanuel Adler and Beverly Crawford, *Progress in Post-War International Relations*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, p.54.

26 Emanuel Adler, “Condition(s) of Peace”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No.5, 1998, p.169.

Touching upon what, in current parlance is known as the agent-structure problem, a security community as a normative theory frontally challenges Realism. In structural realist theory, the agent (i.e. state) is observed to be a tireless automaton. The agent is but for performing the routine task of *para bellum* as the standard-bearer of a balance of the power system. Contrary to this robotic depiction, Adler and Barnett “construct” state agency as one that can generate and flexibly fit into diverse international orders as far apart as anarchy and communal solidarity, or better-said a security community.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the agent (i.e. state) actually hovers in between sustaining and deactivating a balance of power politics (i.e. anarchy) depending on its identity and national role conceptions.

The security community perspective, springing from constructivism, acknowledges that anarchy is not the only form of international system. Nor does it stand independent of the perceptions and actions of states. It is thereby bound to transform whenever, and if, the constituting element—state as a political community, is socialized with different forms of self-knowledge.<sup>28</sup> A state’s perception of *system*, but not the system itself, invokes its security behaviour: any change in states’ perception of self-security is therefore always followed by the changes in the character of structure. Wendt’s motto of “Anarchy is What States Make of It”<sup>29</sup> unaidedly captures the core point made here.

As in post-WWII Europe, the mentioned change in the state’s agential demeanour came about when societies diverged from their state elites to the point of confronting their “undisputed right to determine the framework of rules, regulations and policies within a territory.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, challenging the cardinal principles of an anarchic international order was akin to first challenging “the spatial qualities of the state, understood as a geometric entity with precisely demarcated boundaries.”<sup>31</sup> After devastating one another in two fratricidal wars, fought paradoxically in the name of security; few people in the Continent affirmed that mutually exclusive territoriality conformed to the economic and political safety of citizens. It is this contestation that may be said to have placed some limits on the solid block of authority by which domestic elites preserved a monopolistic hold on the management of the state’s domestic and international affairs. That is to the extent that separate political communities (i.e. nations) withered away from the realist idea of a ‘unitary state’ to “become integrated”<sup>32</sup> around a community spirit defined by “mutual sympathy and loyalties...we-feeling, trust and mutual consideration.”<sup>33</sup>

27 Adler and Barnett, “Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective”, p.4-5.

28 Adler and Barnett, “A Framework for the Study of Security Communities”, p.29-30.

29 Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol.46, No.2, 1992.

30 David Held and Anthony McGrew, “Globalization and the Liberal Democratic State”, *Government and Opposition*, Vol.28, No.3, 1993, p.365.

31 Joseph Camilleri and Jim Falk, *Worlds in Transition: Evolving Governance Across a Stressed Planet*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009, p.238.

32 Deutsch, *Political Community*, p.2.

33 *Ibid.*, p.36.

The most prominent intellectual challenge to Deutsch came from Ernest Haas who faulted him for demonstrating the integration process as one that results from the benevolent intentions of “good Europeans”.<sup>34</sup> His moderate rationalism seats him on the bench of repudiating the Deutschian argument that identification with Europe preceded the constitution of a non-anarchical regional order with the necessary legitimacy and motive.<sup>35</sup> It was his point that “nationally constituted groups with specific interests and aims”<sup>36</sup> were the principle protagonists of forming a peaceful community and, such could be realized, when national elites saw it profitable to embrace supranational ideologies and institutions.

In 1958 Ernest Haas foreshadowed that it was probable to pass loyalty from individual states to a European level without giving up one’s national identity.<sup>37</sup> By claiming so he was bringing a much broader resonance to the notions of national identity and national sovereignty. He disposed them as reciprocally related phenomena that imply each other, stand in correlation, but cannot be seen as causative of one other. Haas, as such, problematized peoples’ firm identification with the Westphalian sense of sovereignty, which he saw as no more than a corollary that readily follows from the perceived indispensability of territorial state to the endowment of human societies with peace and prosperity.<sup>38</sup> What caused both of them to arise, concomitantly, is none other than the construction of the Westphalian state with a strong attachment to a certain piece of land (i.e. territory).

He tried to show that peoples may re-arrange their geographical imagination, thus attendant identity, in a way that is congruent with the idea of conceding sovereignty to political structures; structures which are organized over a larger space than an individual state’s jurisdictional zone. That is, if only international institutions prove more efficient than individual states as organizational instruments of meeting whatever peoples’ most commonly perceived needs (e.g. emancipation from economic poverty).<sup>39</sup> His theory, of Functionalism, thereby advises the engineers of a regional integration project to better focus on jointly perceived human needs. The first order of business is then to construe non-controversial ways that will help reduce each sovereign agent to demand from one another “practical cooperation...[that is]...coterminous with the totality of interstate relations.”<sup>40</sup>

Premised on a rehearsal of Kant’s commercial liberalism, this model of integration provides strong hindsight to the mentality that drove the path of Europe to becoming a security community. Indeed, each step taken to associate the material interests of the

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34 Ernest Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950-57*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1958, p. xiv.

35 Ernest Haas, “The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing”, *International Organization*, Vol. 24, No.4, 1970, p.607-646.

36 *Ibid.*, p.627.

37 Haas, *The Uniting of Europe*, p.16.

38 See Ernest Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State. Functionalism and International Organization*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

European people has made security interdependency even more pronounced, and created a deeper awareness on the part of constituent governments that economic unification indeed helps close off routes to intra-regional conflicts. Be that as it may, security community as a political construction is irreducible to a pacific union of rational governments that compromise on their sovereign privileges in return for economic prosperity. The construction of peace in the Continent is not just an effect of an economic logic that favorably compared the benefits of peace with that of the costs of war. In fact, that preference for relying on only, but only, non-violent measures of problem solving had already been made, long before the Europeans started reaping the resultant advantages of economic cooperation.<sup>41</sup> It should be noted that the political movements affiliated with supra-state identities, namely Christian Democrats, came first in pioneering the idea of regional integration. Robert Schuman, for example, was hard at work with another devoted Catholic, Konrad Adenauer, together rallying behind the restoration of the European spirit, which he believed “signifies being conscious of belonging to a cultural family and to have a willingness to serve that community in the spirit of total mutuality.”<sup>42</sup>

Finally, it took human agency first to redefine the nation-state through learning and deriving lessons from the past experiences, only then came about the causative link from collective identification with basic economic needs to “weaving an ever-spreading web of international institutional relationships on the basis of meeting such needs.”<sup>43</sup> Of the greatest concern, domestic agency, by instituting these new macro-foundations of legitimate state behaviour in Europe, never eventuated to create a borderless world that renders political territorialisation (i.e. nation state) an out-dated, obsolete matter. They, arguably, rebuilt their ‘states’ as post-Westphalian geographic constructs that, as a vehicle of change, provide material as well as discursive settings for a security community. A high level of geographic social mobility or a certain degree of interchange in-group roles, was pivotal in morphing the European international system into concentric circles with multiple and inter-penetrated authorities. As this paper argues, powerful states even after then, in this new era, needed to come forth to set in motion an otherwise not-existent conversion from *an anarchical system of regional balance of power towards a security community system of governance*.<sup>44</sup> To Adler and Barnett, “a community formed around a group of strong powers creates the expectations that weaker states...will be able to enjoy the security”<sup>45</sup> if and when they partake in this community. Deutsch’s remarks run in parallel: “the larger, stronger...units...form the cores of strength around which in most cases the integrative process developed,”<sup>46</sup> toward a security community.

41 See Thomas Risse, “Neo-Functionalism, European Identity, and the Puzzle of European Integration”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 12, No.2, 2005, p.291-309.

42 “The Coming Century of Supranational Communities”, (speech by Robert Schuman in Festival Hall, Strasbourg, 16 May 1949), *WWW.Schuman.Info*, 12 Dec. 2013, <http://www.schuman.info/>.

43 Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State*, p.6.

44 Adler and Barnett, “A Framework for the Study of Security Communities”, p.29-66.

45 *Ibid.*, p.53.

46 Deutsch, et al., *Political Community*, p.19.

In accordance, one or rather a concert of regional states could, and should, afford economic welfare and security, or expectation thereof, with the help of their relatively large basis of material power. These weighty states (i.e. role models/regional hegemon) summon material as well as the discursive resources necessary to inveigle all other states into gravitating towards each other.<sup>47</sup> Concisely, Adler and Barnett assigned the following two roles to regional hegemon/role models or what they call as “cores of strength,” to perform:

The first...is that cores of strength distribute the carrots and sticks that are frequently necessary to form and maintain the group and accomplish collective action. The second...is...the ability to create meanings and categories of legitimate action...to define what constitutes acceptable play, and to be able to get other actors to commit to these rules.<sup>48</sup>

In other locales, too, such as South-East Asia, one could observe that regional actors have both the motivation and strength to tend towards constructing a regional security community.<sup>49</sup> Thus, in varying degrees, states with means and will (from within) emerged in Europe, South Asia and Latin America to afford ideal and material building-blocks of altering “an egoistic definition of self to one based on membership in a conceptual social group.”<sup>50</sup> The Middle East constitutes the single most important exception to this.<sup>51</sup> The region’s inter-state order has yet to accomplish a security regime in that, as Arie Kacowicz and others contend, “the parties regard war as an illegitimate instrument for attaining national objectives.”<sup>52</sup> In the preceding section, this idea will be analyzed more broadly by looking at the circumstances surrounding the Arab Spring, and onwards.

## **The Insecure Regional Security Community of the Middle East and the Relevance of The Arab Spring**

The regional order in the Middle East is “broken,”<sup>53</sup> concludes Paul Salem. A measure of mutual-confidence and collective understanding among the region’s states, as principal bedrock on which a security community arises, has always been absent from the Middle

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47 Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, “Power and Knowledge”, Adler and Barnett (eds.) *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.424

48 Adler and Barnett, “Power and Knowledge”, p.438.

49 Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community*, p.90.

50 Bruce Cronin, *Community Under Anarchy: Transnational Identity and the Evolution of Cooperation*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1999, p.19.

51 Bezen Balamir Coskun, “Regionalism and Securitization: The Case of the Middle East”, Cilja Harders and Matteo Legrenzi (eds.) *Beyond Regionalism? Regional Cooperation, Regionalism and Regionalization in the Middle East*, Hampshire, Ashgate, 2008, p.89.

52 Arie Kacowicz, et.al. (eds.), *Stable Peace Among Nations*, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, p.25.

53 Paul Salem, *The Middle East: Evolution of a Broken Regional Order*, Washington D.C., Carnegie Press, 2008, p.1

Eastern state system. From a Buzanian-Constructivist perspective, the Middle East is a place as such wherein “enmity” but not “amity” prevails in the mood of inter-state affairs.<sup>54</sup> Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh concurs that “anarchy of the state system...deprive supra identities such as pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism to be used for effective common action.”<sup>55</sup> As a result, this geography has been “engulfed in war, asymmetrical warfare...state disintegration, and has not adapted culturally to entertain security-community practices.”<sup>56</sup> Precisely, the conditions of human existence in the Middle East have remained imprisoned to a mechanism of balance of power, or anarchy; “the region is conflict-ridden, even ‘Hobbesian’, with repeated efforts to forge security regimes having foundered.”<sup>57</sup>

Buzan pictures the Middle East as one of a “perennial conflict formation.”<sup>58</sup> In terms of its local security dynamics, this region can be thought of as yet another postcolonial space haunted by weak statehood, irredentism, a highly underdeveloped degree of intra-regional trade, near absence of regional security institutions and endemic violence.<sup>59</sup>

A long-held view, with powerful foundations, ascribes the Middle East’s fractured regional order to the forces, that are, “external”<sup>60</sup> to the regional people. A perspective from the dependency theory, a sub-current of structural Marxism, posits that the Western core has subordinated the Middle East to a network of economic dependency, which has left the regional states bereft of the means necessary to craft a stable/cohesive domestic and regional order.<sup>61</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch too concludes that, “the feudal pattern of economic dependency destroys the economic base of regional political solidarity.”<sup>62</sup> Such that the intensity and the depth of the relations with extra-regional actors easily outflanks that of intra-regional economic and security ties. For the western core, the economic fragmentation of the Middle East, as such, helps secure a consequential leverage. That is, in the security calculations of almost each regional actor, the need to maintain friendships with one or more core powers often marginalizes what is otherwise imperative for a state’s

54 Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, ECPR, 2008, p.188.

55 Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, “International Relations Theory and the Islamic Worldview”, Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (eds.) *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia*, New York, Routledge, 2010, p.189.

56 Barry Buzan and Patricia Greve, “When Security Community Meets Balance of Power: Overlapping Regional Mechanisms of Security Governance”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol.35, 2009, p.78.

57 Hinnebusch, “Order and Change in the Middle East”, p.201.

58 Buzan and Waver, *Regions and Powers*, p.187.

59 Ibid., p.194.

60 L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p.3-5.

61 See Abbas Alnasrawi, *Arab Nationalism, Oil and the Political Economy of Dependency*, New York and London, Greenwood Press, 1991, p.25-47; Samir Amin, *The Arab Nation: Nationalism and Class Struggles*, London, Zed Press, 1978. Also, see Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, London, Verso, 1987, p.1-25.

62 Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, p.35.

security—a certain measure of regional cooperation.

Without downgrading the significant findings of this school, Buzan still believes that the Middle East retains “an autonomous regional level of security [which] has operated strongly for several decades...[with]...a pattern of security interdependence”<sup>63</sup> that stretches from Iran to Morocco. The Arab-Israeli conflict, for instance, has been the epicenter around which the regional states’ domestic/foreign policy preferences, motives and intentions have become interdependent on one another. Once Cairo, from circa 1952 to 1979, and thereafter Iran, have yielded their counter-hegemonic and trans-state ideologies (pan-Arabism and Islamism) with the rhetorical ammunition partially derived from the victimized image of Palestinians. These two ideological orders (i.e. Pan-Arab and Islamic solidarity) at times furnish the region’s revisionist powers with the key potential of manipulating domestic public opinion in near-by, smaller Arab states.<sup>64</sup> This ideological penetration forces the latter to compromise on the principle of *raison d’être* in orienting a foreign policy based on “national self-interest”.<sup>65</sup> The frustrated elites, in Saudi Arabia or Jordan, reacted to this with various statecraft policies. Some of the “Hybrid Sovereigns,”<sup>66</sup> for the sake of crystallizing their states’ individuality, pursued regime consolidation via promoting sub-state identities (i.e. religio-tribal networks). Oil-exporters from the Gulf, to achieve the same end, pressed their energy-wealth into the service of building larger armies, buttressing their domestic legitimacy and/or circumventing stronger regional adversaries. Finally, for the sake of defending state sovereignty from the region’s larger powers, insecure regional players also submit to more entrenched forms of economic/military dependency on extra-regional actors. As William Thompson also posits, it is the lack of identification among the regional actors as what has generated every opportunity (e.g. Arab-Israeli or Israeli-Iranian contentions) for “intruders” convenience to establish a prolonged military and economic presence within the region.<sup>67</sup>

The absence of representational rules in the region are also firmly linked to the said lack of identification among the regional players, or fractured structure of the region. All the said state-crafting instruments, such as otherization of neighbors, tribal favoritism, or redistribution of oil-revenues—that regional statesmen use as a way of securing a distinctly different state identity, are apparently also the enabling elements of a process which has ensnared the Middle East to “the weak end of the spectrum of sociopolitical cohesion.”<sup>68</sup> The Arab Spring is a moment of this aforementioned *stasis* being punctured.

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63 Buzan and Waver, *Regions and Powers*, p.187.

64 See Michael Barnett, “Institutions, Roles and Disorder: The Case of the Arab States System”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No.3, 1993, p.271–96.

65 Michael Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, p.40.

66 Gökhan Bacık, *Hybrid Sovereignty in the Arab Middle East: The Cases of Kuwait, Jordan, and Iraq*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p.49–50.

67 See William Thompson, “The Arab Sub-System and the Feudal Pattern of Interaction: 1965”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 7, p.151–67.

68 Buzan and Waver, *Regions and Powers*, p.194.

It is an expression of regional restlessness with the founded status quo that has hitherto sustained “the most...anomalous aspect of Arab politics: the persistence of undemocratic rulers.”<sup>69</sup> After a while, such dissatisfaction is expected to widen the exposure of this region’s societies to nearby democratic alternatives (such as Turkey), thus stimulating their imagination towards a new order that brings with it liberty and prosperity. The trouble is, what Ajami named the “Third Great Awakening”<sup>70</sup> has not quite tread from a path in which the region could progress towards a security community. Quite to the contrary, the region is presently shifting from one default equilibrium of anarchy to a whole new one in those new forms of inter and inner-state alliances and hostilities replacing the pre-Arab Spring constellation of power balancing politics.<sup>71</sup>

For all that, the nature and the consequences of the Arab Spring provide, as it were, a laboratory that promises rich empirical content for further research. An attentive eye, by closely observing the course of the Arab Spring could discover the traces of those underlying processes and factors that have always hamstrung the prospect of a Middle Eastern security community. In any other circumstance, a trans-national movement with a shared social identity of the Arab Revolutions’ sort (i.e. Arab, Muslim) would, and could, afford a moment of convenience for the regional people to part company with Hobbes’s state of nature. Gregory Gause III, for example, styled the Arab Spring a “communal wave”<sup>72</sup> that, at least in the beginning, seemed to intertwine an otherwise territorially divided Arabic-speaking world. Ehud Toledano, albeit with strong reservations, also sets forth that with the outbreak of popular protests, “the common marketplace of ideas and information has been reinvigorated in the region.”<sup>73</sup> Despite having so diffused across the juridical borders and even set ablaze two of the principal pillars of regional power balance, Egypt and Syria, the region-wide uprisings have yet to conclude a new regional political discourse.

Having found one such window of opportunity indeed did little, in the case of the Middle East, to encourage Middle Easterners to embrace, or at least consider embracing, the social character of interstate relations to a point of disencumbering themselves from the bonds of anarchic competition, fear and/or power balancing. If presently such is not the case: this is arguably because the phenomenon of anarchy, just as a permanent motion machine, is a self-active process evolving from cycles of state interaction. This cyclic pattern of inter-state interaction, leading from Wendt, can possibly run over an indefinite period of time, unless states (from within), with “agential capacity”, step on the stage and usher out “competitive security systems

69 Gause, “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring?”, p.81.

70 The first two episodes of Arab Awakening happened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in the early 1950s. See Fouad Ajami, “The Arab Spring at One Year-A Year of Living Dangerously”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, No.2, 2012, p.56.

71 Robert Springborg, “Whiter the Arab Spring? 1989 or 1848?” *The International Spectator*, Vol. 46, No.3, 2011, p.5-7.

72 Gause, “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring”, p.87.

73 Ehud R. Toledano, “Middle East Historians and the Arab Spring: Early-Days Assessment”, *Sharqiyya*, November 1, 2011, p.5.

[that] are sustained by practices that create [state-to-state] insecurity and distrust.”<sup>74</sup> Alexander Wendt prescriptively implies that anarchy would remain as a continuing avenue of choice by state actors, insofar as they are, “without the power to transform identities and interests.”<sup>75</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, too, comprehends that;

the logic of... anarchy prevails over the logic of... international society... [until] the predominant power practices strategic restraint and gives up some of the advantages of its material superiority, its weaker neighbors have a compelling incentive to let down their guard and risk investing in stable peace.<sup>76</sup>

As it is argued in the previous part, the European integration did not in any fundamental sense finish off the state as a geopolitically-based economic and political entity. If anything, the process of economic and political interpenetration may be said to have limited the exercise of its sovereign privileges. Thanks to this same process, actually, European states quickly recuperated from the destruction wrought by WWII and, with a new sense of purpose, propelled the wheels of change towards a European security community. Finding a state agency to perform one such function is not a given in the Middle East, “the thinnest of international societies”.<sup>77</sup> Ian Lustick<sup>78</sup> once rightfully observed that this region has always been bereft of regional powers for a “Deutschian” community system to develop around them. As a result, this paper contends, it is stepping in any direction but not in that of consolidating a security order that promotes we-feeling, helps prevent violent conflict and induces confidence in each state that others are non-threatening but part of the same normative community.

Indeed, the Arab Spring seems to further corrode the already weak foundations of the Arab statehood in the region to the extent that the decisive portions of the regimes in this area are left worse-off than before the social upheavals erupted. Nawaf Obaid in his extensive examination of the present status of the Middle East concludes that the states of this region are generally “experiencing disastrous output contractions amid severe fiscal constraints and nearly collapsed monetary systems.”<sup>79</sup> Thereby the newly elected regimes in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen are devoid of means to cajole the discontented masses into harmony. Iraq, despite its massive oil wealth, is not as different from these economically squeezed Arab states of the Middle East. The ongoing tensions between the Kurdish North and Baghdad, in Iraq, herald the early stages of a social dissolution, whereas the

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74 Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It”, p.421.

75 Ibid., p.404.

76 Charles A. Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010, p.67.

77 Hinnebusch, “Order and Change in the Middle East”, p.203.

78 Ian S. Lustick, “The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political ‘Backwardness’ in Historical Perspective”, *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No.4, 1997, p.655.

79 Nawaf Obaid, *The Long Hot Arab Summer: The Viability of the Nation-State System in the Arab World*, Cambridge, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2013, p.3.

unbounded violence in Syria nears total state collapse. Dictatorships are currently dissolving into bleak chaos in the Arab Middle East.

There remained in place no Arab state, except perhaps the moderate kingdoms from Gulf sub-region. Saudi Arabia is omitted from this discussion because of the near certainty that Saudis are not now and, have never before, been incited by the ideal of, one-day, mobilizing the region's oil-wealth and human potential into some sort of convergence. A concerted response—a nullifying and foreknowable response in that—have instead come from the Saudi-led Gulf States (except Qatar). In certain places, such as Libya and Syria, the moderate kingdoms aligned themselves with forces of rebellion. Yet, in Egypt the Saudis used their oil wealth to devour the Arab revolution in its birthplace, all the while clamping down on social protests within the Gulf Region for the sake of deterring the rising specter of “radicalism”.

This paper excludes from its model of analysis the roles played by extra-regional powers, as well, which otherwise certainly effectuated the pace and direction of the Arab Spring. True, the military and economic thrust of the Western core as a pattern has always exploited, and perhaps even aggrandized, the fragmentation of the Middle Eastern politics. Yet, what obstructs the road towards a security community is more about this region's own identity-sovereignty dynamics than the core-periphery relations which “merely set the outside parameters within which Middle East regional politics are conducted.”<sup>80</sup> The restoration of military tutelage in Egypt well embodies the same logic. The western capitals could be at best blamed for not exerting sufficient pressure against a rare occasion of regional consensus among Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia on Morsi's departure from power.

For that matter, Turkish, Iranian, and Israeli states as three non-Arab players of the Middle East deserve special attention. All three narrate their regional security policies through a lexicon borrowed from cosmopolitan/above-the-state ideals—democracy, anti-imperialism, Islamic solidarity and so on. Their national role conceptions are intriguing in the sense that they convey a transnational quality towards disposing their bearers for the task of enabling the fall of undemocratic, corrupted regimes in their close environs. Yet, this paper will only make space for the latter two, leaving Turkey to the side. Turkey surely stands out as a Muslim template of democratic order and of economic prosperity for the people of the Middle East to look to as a new version of security community. But, Iran's and Israel's preferences and choices are incomparably more consequential to those of the regional disputes—Arab-Israel or Sunni-Shiite—that define the main contours of regional security. Turkey, on the other hand, is still a relatively new player in these domains, whose influence over these matters is no match for that of Iran's or Israel's. That Turkey suffered set backs in the face of developments in Syria should be the clearest reflection of such unpreparedness.<sup>81</sup>

80 Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics*, p. 4.

81 See Cihan Tuğal, “Democratic Janissaries: Turkey's Role in the Arab Spring”, *New Left Review*,

## **The Tale of Two Nations: Israeli and Iranian National Role Conceptions**

Marsha Cohen deliberates that the domestic and international discourses of both Iranians and Israelis are underlined by an intrinsic sense of insulation and victimization, which serve for, and even justify, the belligerent tones present in their foreign policy courses.<sup>82</sup> The “paradigmatic images of Auschwitz and Ashura”<sup>83</sup> give them the discursive resources to recast their past as a “relevant model for the present.”<sup>84</sup>

As a shared feature of the Israeli nationhood, the themes of *victimization* and *pride* conjugate together within the Iranian nationhood.<sup>85</sup> These two paradoxical constructs of Iranian self-perception are, in return, derived from the imagery use of Imam Husayn’s gallantry and ultimate sacrifice against the injustice in Karbala.<sup>86</sup> Karbala’s (i.e. *Ashura’s*) narrative performs its role as a “convecting layer” through which messages from the past are transmitted into today’s world so as to make sense of the current international order, of which contemporary Iran is a part. The paradigm of Karbala is not just a story recited from the far past. It also functions as a foundational myth that eliminates alternative readings of this past event and, as Yael Zerubavel suggests<sup>87</sup>, furnishes justification for institutions and practices of the present time. As such, the state of Iran has integrated the Karbala narrative into itself as a state-crafting ideology, an invaluable instrument that has proven ultimately effective in mobilizing political consent from within, and without Iran. Meaning, Tehran effectively has the ability of retarding its pro-western neighbors’ domestic and regional credibility.<sup>88</sup> Against which, the region’s western-friendly elites’ attempts at immunizing their own public against Iran’s subversive influence has never truly ensured loyalty to state identity.<sup>89</sup>

It was at first plausible, then, to expect that this self-reflection as a regime, under siege in its struggle against injustice, would impulse Mullahs to bolster pro-democratic demonstrators. Tehran, not weighing in favor of the oppressed masses against the unpopular elites, risks corroding the fabric of its credibility as a regional actor; a credibility that is based off the allegation that they are prepared to square off with whoever inflicts injustice on defenseless. The Arab Spring, as such, pushed the Iranians to the very limits of their discursive possibilities. A transition to a security

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Vol. 76, 2012, p.5-24.

82 See Marsha Cohen, *Lions and Roses: An Interpretive History of Israeli-Iranian Relations*, Unpublished Ph.D. diss., FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2007, p.177.

83 Ibid., p.233.

84 Ibid.

85 Eva P. Rakel, *The Iranian Political Elite, State and Society Relations, and Foreign Relations since the Islamic Revolution*, Ph.D. diss, University of Amsterdam, 2008, p.149-151.

86 Cohen, *Lions and Roses*, p.177.

87 Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p.10.

88 Rakel, *The Iranian Political Elite*, p.162.

89 Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, p.181.

community in the Middle East, for all of these reasons, appeared to be on the horizon with the prospect that Iran, this time, had both tactical and even perhaps genuine interest in backing up the social upheavals.

The Israeli nationhood, on the other hand, also exudes an air of exceptionalism and isolationism without losing sight of keeping its historiographic ties to tradition. The European Holocaust, Tom Segev forwards, is the key to meaningfully linking Israel's present security doctrines to some of the Biblical concepts (i.e. "the few against many" or "a nation that dwells alone"), which occupy a deep-seated place in the Jewish collective memory.<sup>90</sup> As Segev observes, the Holocaust has become a sufficient argument for the truth of the supposition that "the only solution to the Jewish problem was an independent state in Israel."<sup>91</sup> In Cohen's account, the foundation of the Eretz-Israel "represented the return of the Jewish nation not as a colonial settlement on foreign territory, but a return to its biblically promised ancient homeland."<sup>92</sup> Whereas this narrative attests to Israelis' right to claim sovereignty over these "Biblically promised lands", it completely depicts the Arabs' connection to the same geography as historically false and hollow.

As part of this geopolitical program, of reconquering Jerusalem and actually physically rebuilding Israel on dry-land, necessarily involved justification of the dispossession of the Arab people of the land. One way of fulfilling this was to present Palestine as a land without a nation; so much so that Jews were pictured as returnees, not colonists, who as true indigenous people of this land were there to convert the *wilderness* into a *garden*.<sup>93</sup> Today, the same narrative demonstrates the Israeli state as the last standing bastion of democracy in the Middle East, while at the same time positing the nearby Arab states as places in which Arabs are held back from exercising their right to political self-determination by their own corrupted and unreasonable leaders. Israel has always justified its belligerent security discourse on this basis, of being sieged by tyrannical regimes disfavored by their own public.

Israel's abstinence in siding against (all or some of) the unrepresentative political elites in the Arab world then also involved the risk of refuting their alleged position of "perpetual victims". For that matter, Israel also had a strong incentive to hold the democratic forces in special favor. But, as will be seen, Tehran and Tel-Aviv have both become a force for augmenting the fissure that splits the people of this region. Up to this point, they have shown no interest in helping the region coat itself with a new layer of identity that facilitates inter-communal ties—we-ness, loyalty and/or amity.

In an attempt to rationalize this sheer incompatibility between the moral narratives and praxis, both Iran and Israel have pragmatically added up an *ad hoc* discus-

90 Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, New York, Picador, 2000, p.11.

91 Ibid., p.187.

92 Cohen, *Lions and Roses*, p.116.

93 Yael Zerubavel, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, p.58.

sive resource to its foundational beliefs about security. As that, they both currently simply deny, or reject, the element(s) of democracy in the popular upheavals. This conscious state of denial is necessary for them in order to justify their lack of aiding the opposition in both Syria and Egypt. Borrowing from their historiographic traditions, they consider these events as a continuum of the Cosmic Battle, in that, they will fight many more skirmishes against their demonically-inspired nemesis (the “Great Satan” and “Amalekite Nations”).

## **Iran and Israel amidst the Arab Spring**

Iran’s reception of the Arab Spring alternates from containment to cooperation according to the degree in which the oppositional groups’ identity conforms to Iran’s regional stances. Such that Iran was prompted to voice its support for the pro-democratic forces that swept aside the hostile regimes, while at the same time retarding those force that undermine the states from inside the Iranian sphere of influence. The way Tehran deals with Syria is the single most important validation of this.

To the fall of the pro-Western leaders in Egypt and Tunisia, Iran’s reaction was favorable and very public. They quickly likened Mubarak’s regime, for example, to that of Shah’s, in reference to his alleged clientele relationship with the US, political repression, rampant corruption, and alleged treachery of Islamic causes.<sup>94</sup> As for Libya, Tehran staunchly opposed the western aerial strikes in line with its aforementioned ideological views but nevertheless welcomed the departure of Qaddafi.<sup>95</sup> Then again, Tehran successfully maneuvered in the Gulf Region by focusing on the US’ sustained support for the ongoing oppression in Bahrain and Yemen wherein, indeed, both governments harshly cracked down domestic opposition.<sup>96</sup> In all these cases, Iran literally hijacked the Arab Spring by deeming it a mere extension of its own revolution.

The Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei buoyantly introduced Iran’s Islamic Revolution as a precursor of the Arab Spring, which he believes is a “widespread awakening... [and]...directed towards Islamic goals”<sup>97</sup> except, of course, the fomenting crisis in Syria wherein Tehran came to a very peculiar situation. With its revolutionary establishment, Iran is awfully misplaced in Syria as that clerical elites eventually opted to aid an unpopular, but friendly, Damascus over shifting their allegiance to support the cause of the brutalized Syrians. To bring their new balancing strategy in line with their national narra-

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94 Payam Mohseni, *The Islamic Awakening: Iran’s Grand Narrative of the Arab Uprisings*, Massachusetts, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, 2013, p.5.

95 Ali Parchami, “The Arab Spring: The View from Tehran”, *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 18, No 1, p. 42.

96 Hossein Mousavian, “An Opportunity for a US-Iran Paradigm Shift”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No 1, 2012, p.131.

97 “Khamenei Backs Revolts, Accuses Obama of Lying”, *AFP*, 21 Mar 2011, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jG67zzodChPrO2HIoaDCTNzHFVIA?docId=CNG.a807bd69f3debaa7a6b4ca2383f9500b.271>.

tives, Tehran styled the democratic demonstrations in Syria as agitators and even terrorists parented by Israel.<sup>98</sup> Hence Iran rekindled internal divisions in the domestic theatres of predominantly Sunni states, under the guise of defending the brutalized against the perpetrators, all-the-while aiding an unrelenting, but allied, dictatorship in Syria, with the excuse of resisting against another round of imperialistic incursion into Iran's vicinity.

It should be noted that the instability induced by the Arab Spring enabled Mullah's to hebetate economic sanctions by building an upward pressure on oil-prices,<sup>99</sup> thus brightening Iran's economic situation. Consequently, Iran presently senses that a divided Arab world gives it both an ideological and material edge with which to blunt western pressure on its nuclear agenda. On the other side of the coin, however, Iran sees the energy unleashed by the communal waves as something that might also absorb Iran into the Arab Spring's whirl. Hence Tehran's tacit approval for the restoration of military tutelage in Egypt.<sup>100</sup> Iranians likely anticipate that such will sufficiently contain Sunni groups in one hand, and still fan the emergent annoyance in the direction of the Saudis, Israel and the US on the other.

As for Israel, this self-defense mechanism takes the form of demonstrating the entirety of the Arab Spring as an inner fight between evils and *lesser* evils, or a sinister turn that, Benjamin Netanyahu warns, is walking in Iran's proverbial footsteps.<sup>101</sup> He also suggested that the Arab Spring heralds an "anti-liberal, anti-Israeli, undemocratic wave,"<sup>102</sup> with which their Arab neighbors are "moving not forwards, but backwards."<sup>103</sup> Israelis, thus, are only content to see the region's other major states (i.e. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran) preoccupied with leading proxy wars in the name of a sectarian feud between Shiites and Sunnis. Much to the Israel's liking, Egypt will most probably not resume its leading position as within the pre-1979 era, but will likely stay embroiled in its own domestic troubles for at least another decade. And, even then, Israeli statesmen acknowledge that "the only people in Egypt...committed to peace are the people in Mubarak's inner circle,"<sup>104</sup> revealing their anxiety about a fallen friendly-foe in Egypt. Regardless of its anxious foreign policy rhetoric, Israel demonstrates a sure-footed stance in the face of an embattled Syria.

98 "Khamenei Warns Arab Revolts Against Trusting West", *Arab Times Online*, 17 Sept 2012, <http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smld/414/ArticleID/173924/refab/96/t/Khamenei-warns-Arab-revolts-against-trusting-West/Default.aspx>.

99 "HSBC: Arab Spring to Cost Middle East \$800 Billion", *JerusalemPost.com*, Sept 10 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/HSBC-Arab-Spring-to-cost-Middle-East-800-billion-328262>.

100 "Iranians, Invoking CIA's 1953 Iran Coup, Say U.S. Still Interfering in Egypt", *CNCNews.com*, August 20 2013, <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/iranians-invoking-cia-s-1953-iran-coup-say-us-still-interfering-egypt#sthash.y9eo0Dvt.dpu>.

101 "Arab Spring Turned into Arab Winter", *Haaretz*, Dec 19 2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/the-arab-spring-turned-into-arab-winter-1.402208>.

102 Thomas L. Friedman, "The Arab Awakening and Israel", *New York Times*, 29 November 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/30/opinion/israel-and-the-arab-awakening.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/30/opinion/israel-and-the-arab-awakening.html?_r=0).

103 Ibid.

104 "As Egypt's Crisis Grows, So Do the Anxieties in Israel", *Time*, Jan 30 2011, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2045166,00.html>.

Overall, Israeli self-knowledge appears to be inspired by a transnational ideology that somewhat advocate the overthrow of the existing social order. Which, interestingly, is exactly what the Arab upheavals aspired to accomplish in the first place. However, Israel has neither owned the transformative forces in the nearby countries nor did it stay completely dormant. But instead of this Jerusalem broke free from the Arab Spring as in Egypt where Israel loudly entertained the recent demise of the ideological forbearer of Hamas—the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>105</sup> Israel's mood can best be described as self-assurant, born in the knowledge that the Arabs cannot fight simultaneously with Israel and with each other.

From this landscape comes of a bleak assessment for the future of the region and the prospects of a Middle Eastern security community. Both of these states, Israel and Iran, seemed to turn their respective supra-state identities (democracy and Islamic revolution) into official state ideologies, geared for serving the national self-interest in a game played over power. These “statized” ideologies help them to justify the view that their neighboring states do not have common goals.

## **Conclusion**

A regional order modelled on a security community has never been seen outside of the European case. But, in fact, it has been repetitively called upon as a model that can be emulated in other parts of the world. If such is the case, then how does one make sense of the Middle East's historical absenteeism from this sort of security partnership? This paper, in order to reason out this ‘anomaly’ has laid in place a set of assumptions that draw from a baseline of the security community perspective.

First, anarchy and security communities, albeit rely on distinctive principles, are nevertheless two interchangeable modes of regional security order. A state's perception of reality, or structure, is what constitutes its security behaviour and any change in perceptions will first reshape this structure, thereby, changing the state's security behaviour. Second, states as agents may change their perception of self-security, or interest, whenever the domestic agency (political elites) identifies their welfare is in line with terms that are aligned to trust and a “we-feeling.” Third, European integration is neither against nor independent of “state”, but actually rested on these new Leviathans' renovated institutional and material capabilities to fuel the long journey, away from anarchy and towards higher crests of security community. Forth, the Arab Spring is framed here as a massive communal wave that, to some extent, challenged the territorialisation of Arabs into a multitude of weak and hostile states. This time around, however, popular unrest failed to bring about the emergence of a security community in the Middle East like it did in Europe.

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<sup>105</sup> “Israeli Ambassador Calls Al-Sisi a National Hero for all Jews”, *Middle East Monitor*, July 19 2013, <http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/6617-israeli-ambassador-calls-al-sisi-a-qnational-hero-for-all-jewsq->.

Because, as fifth, the argued precondition crucial for a pluralistic security community is nowhere to be found amidst the Arab Spring, that is—state agency. There has emerged no regional power to truly back the reformist-minded people's transition toward functional democracies. State-collapse is so rampant and catastrophic across the Arabic-speaking geography that aiming for a region wide transition is too much of a luxury for the Arab elites who are busy struggling for power on their own home fronts. Israel and Iran could have compensated for this on-going failure in the Arab world had they possessed sufficient motivation to act as a transformative agent. Iran and Israel obviously have little love for nearby Arab dictators, as they frequently portrayed them as relics of an age coming to a rapid end. Yet, it is their perception of security that still favours a divided Arab world.

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