ORTADOĞU ETÜTLERİ

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

ORSAM

CONTENTS / İÇİNDEKİLER

In its July 2014 issue*, Ortadoğu Etütleri* brings together six articles and two book reviews.

This issue starts with Raymond Hinnebusch's timely contribution on the *Tangents of the Syrian Uprising.* Looking at the agency as the key to understand the Uprising in Syria, Hinnebusch analyses four important aspects: mass protests failing to lead to democratic transition, the unxpected regime resilience, the descent into "security dilemma" and the external dynamics that feed into the "war economy". These factors culminate in such a way, the author argues, that neither the opposition nor the state is successful, creating a stalemate and a prolonged civil war situation. The author finishes with a lesson learned from the Syrian case: that it is easy to destabilize fragmented states but once they are in turmoil, it is "much harder to put the pieces back together".

The second article of this issue, titled *Russia and the Arab Spring: Adjusting to a New Political Vista*, written by Nikolay Kozhanov, argues how before the Arab Spring the Russian policy towards the Middle East was inconsistent with the developments in the region and was ill-defined. Kozhanov argues that the Russian policy-makers came face to face with economic and political losses as a result of the Arab Spring and only by 2013, they managed to come up with a new approach that would make Russia still an important player in the region.

In the third article of the issue, Benjamin MacQueen and Kylie Baxter analyse the impact of the Syrian refugees on Lebanon. The article, titled *Refugees and Political Stability in Lebanon*, first deals with the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The authors argue that the Palestinians were kept at a bay from the Lebanese society, being confined in the camps they were mostly estranged to the Lebanese societal dynamics. As different from the Palestinians, the Syrian refugees have family and societal links with the Lebanese society and integrate much better into the system, have come over a longer period of time with higher numbers and settled in a dispersed manner. Yet, the large numbers and the dynamics of the Syrian refugee flow into Lebanon, makes the issue not a political one as in the case of the Palestinian refugees but a national one which, the authors argue, require a national compromise among different fractions in the Lebanese political system.

Özden Zeynep Oktav in her article titled *Understanding Obama's Policies Towards a Nuclear Iran* analyses the US approach to the nuclear issue and questions why the US so far did not apply decisive, i.e. military, measures to tackle with this

issue. Underlining that the answer lies in the systemic change, the declining US power and the transition from a unipolar system to a multipolar one, the author argues that the best that the US can do is to "lead from behind" in issues relating to the Middle East in general and in the nuclear issue in particular.

Canan Şahin in her article titled *Fragile Politics of the Pro-Sisi Alliance in Egypt: Nasserist Legacy within Neoliberal Context* makes a detailed analysis of the post-Mubarak Egyptian politics and tackles with the Nasserist discourse used by the pro-Sisi coalition by emphasizing its outstanding elements like corporatism, militarism and secular nationalism. The author also identifies the difficulties ahead in Egyptian politics, especially the entrenched authoritarianism and its linkage to the neoliberal economy which mar the democratic practices in the country.

Harun Öztürkler in the sixth article of this issue titled *The Role of Labor Markets in the Arab Spring* poses two crucial questions addressing the relationship between the labor markets and the Arab Spring: what has been the impact of the labor market outcomes in the events leading to the Arab Spring and whether the conditions after the Arab Spring provide mechanisms to transform the labor markets and contribute to the development of the Middle East. The author answers these crucial questions with a detailed analysis.

This issue contains two bookreviews. Kübra Oğuz reviewed Hamid Dabashi's *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* and Ismail Numan Telci reviewed Hazem Kandil's *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt* for this issue.

Özlem Tür

SURİYE AYAKLANMASININ FARKLILIĞI

ÖZ

Bu makalede, Arap Bahar'ının başlaması ile birlikte Tunus ve Mısır'daki gibi barışçıl protestolar yoluyla veya Libya'daki gibi iç savaşla ya da Yemen'deki gibi bu ikisinin arasında bir yolla yönetim değişikliğine giden ülkelerden farklı olarak iç çatışmaların, üç yılını doldurmasına ve çökmüş bir devlet yapısına rağmen ne rejim ne de lider değişimine uğrayan Suriye'nin kendine has farklılığı analiz edilecektir. Her ne kadar rejimin protestolar karşısındaki kırılganlığı işlemeyen devletler sistemi, belirli bir devlet inşa etme yöntemi ve küresel neo-liberailzm şemsiyesi altında post-popülizme kayan hareket gibi yapısal nedenlere dayansa da, bu çalışma Suriye'nin farklılığını şiddet içermeyen kitlesel protestoların demokrasiye geçişteki başarısızlığının; muhalefetin sınırlılıkları ve rejimin beklenmeyen direncinin ve olayların "güvenlik ikilemi "ne ve ebedi bir "savaş ekonomisi"ne dönüşmesinin sonucu olarak açıklamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler :Suriye, Ayaklanma; şiddet içermeyen protesto; demokratik geçiş; otoriter direnç; güvenlik ikilemi

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الاختلافات التي تميزت بها الانتفاضة السورية

ريموند حنا بوش خلاصة :

تتناول هذه المقالة تحليل اختلاف وتميز الوضع السياسي الخاص بسوريا التي لم تتمكن من الاطاحة بالنظام وتحقيق التغيير السياسي كما حدث في مصر وتونس من خلال المظاهرات السلمية وكذلك لم تستطع تحقيقه ايضا من خلال الحرب الاهلية كما حدث في ليبيا او من خلال الطريقة التي تعتبر وسطا كما حدث في مصر وسوريا وما حدث في لبيا وهي الطريقة التي استطاع من خلالها اليمنيون الاطاحة بنظام الحكم هناك حيث تحولت المظاهرات بسوريا الي منازعات داخلية استمرت نحو ثلاث سنوات دون امكانية الاطاحة بالنظام بالرغم من بنيتها السياسية الهشة. ويمكننا القول بان النظام السوري نظام ضمن الانظمة التي لا يمكن الاطاحة به من خلال المظاهرات السلمية وحتي ولو اعتمد على اسباب هيكلية مثل الحركة التي مالت الي الشعبوية الجديدة تحت مظلة النيو ليبرالية العالمية وطريقة بناء دولة معينة حيث تقوم هذه المقالة بتوضيح الاختلافات التي تميزت بها سوريا عن باقي الدول التي عاشت الربيع العربي، وكذلك الفشل الذي مرت به الحركة الشعبية في عدم نجاحها في الاطاحة بالنظام من خلال المظاهرات السلمية وتحقيق الديمقراطية وكذلك ايضا الامكانيات المحدودة لدى المعارضة والمقاومة والتماسك غير المتوقع الذي اظهره النظام، كما يتم التاكيد في هذه المقالة على ان نهاية كل هذه الاحداث التي تشهدها سوريا تكمن في تحولها الي معضلة امنية وحرب اقتصادية.

الكلمات الدالة: سوريا، الانتفاضة، المظاهرات السلمية، التحول الديمقراطي، مقاومة السلطة الاستبدادية، معضلة الامن.

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THE TANGENT OF THE SYRIAN UPRISING*

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the unique tangent of the Arab Uprising in Syria, namely one where Uprising did not lead to overthrow of a president, either through peaceful protest (Tunisia, Egypt), or civil war (Libya) or some middle path (Yemen), but rather after three years of civil conflict, president and regime remain standing, but the state has failed. While the vulnerability of the regime to the Uprising lay in structure-the flawed states system, a particular state building formulas, and the movement under global neo-liberalism, to "post-populism," the paper explains Syria's tangent as an outcome of the failure of mass non-violent protest to lead to democratic transition; the limits of the opposition and unexpected regime resilience; descent into the "security dilemma" and an eternally-driven "war economy."

Keywords: Syria; Uprising; non-violent protest; democratic transition; authoritarian resilience; security dilemma.

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[*]This analysis utilizes empirical written material by Omar Imady and Tina Zintl; however, the interpretation of the material is wholly the author's own.

At the outset of the Arab Uprising, President Bashar al-Asad famously declared that Syria was different because the leadership and people shared the same values-stability and nationalist steadfastness--which his regime had delivered--and hence that the Arab spring would not spread to his country. He was, of course, wrong, but over three years after the outbreak, Asad's regime constitutes the domino left standing.

What explains the unique tangent of the Arab Uprising in Syria, namely one where Uprising did not lead to overthrow of a president, either through peaceful protest (Tunisia, Egypt), or civil war (Libya) or some middle path (Yemen), but rather after three years of civil conflict, president and regime remain standing, but the state has failed?

Toward Understanding the Syrian Tangent: Between Structure and Agency

Several key concepts or issues are needed to grasp the Syrian tangent:

1) We can see the *vulnerability of the regime* to the Uprising by examination of its structural roots-the flawed states system, particular state building formulas, and the movement under global neo-liberalism, to "post-populism." While this paper will briefly examine this, it has been amply covered elsewhere[1] and will here be treated chiefly as the *context* for understanding the Syrian tangent.

2) The paper will argue that this tangent is best seen as the outcome of agency, with the choices of actors-regime and opposition-generating a path dependency that locked both into unwanted and unexpected outcomes. To understand the particular tangent the uprising took, we need to look at four issues of agency: a) the failure of mass non-violent protest to lead to democratic transition; b) the limits of the opposition and unexpected regime resilience; c) the descent into the "security dilemma" and d) an eternally-driven "war economy."

Theoretical perspectives: flaws of the non-violent resistance paradigm

According to the mass non-violent protest paradigm, mass protest can rapidly and effectively destabilize authoritarian regimes. The work of Stephan and Chenoweth[2] not only describes the dynamics of mass protest, but also has evidently inspired Arab protestors. They argue that mass protest can readily destabilize au-

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[1] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Syria: from Authoritarian Upgrading to Revolution?" *International Affairs*, January 2012; Raymond Hinnebusch and Tina Zintl, *Syria: From Reform to Revolt: Politics and International Relations*, (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014).

[2] Erica Chenoweth, and Maria J. Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict, *International Security,* Vol.33, No:1, 2008, 7-44.

thoritarian regimes; even if the regime refuses protestors' demands and uses violence against them, this is likely to backfire, stimulating wider anti-regime mobilization, precipitating international sanctions and support for the opposition, and, most importantly, causing defections in the security forces, which will be reluctant to use violence against fellow citizens who are not themselves using violence.

The problem with this literature is that it leaves little agency to ruling elites, when, in fact, how they respond to mass protest makes all the difference for outcomes--which can range from peaceful democratization to regime collapse to civil war. The best chance for peaceful democratization is, as the transition paradigm argues, a pact wherein the opposition refrains from threatening the vital interests of incumbents who, in return, concede a pluralisation of the political system. Such a scenario is more likely when non-violent resistance encourages moderates within the regime to push for reform and withdraw their support from hard-line authoritarians and less likely when rebels make maximalist demands or resort to violence, thereby empowering hardliners against the moderates.[3] The former scenario arguably held in the Egyptian and Tunisian cases, the latter in Syria or Libya. In Syria, from this "original sin," in which both sides were complicit, a downward spiral toward a failed state and civil war resulted.

What the non-violent protest paradigm also fails to anticipate is the consequences when protest destabilizes the state but does not lead to democratic transition. The outcome may well be a failed state, a Hobbesian world in which life becomes "nasty, shortish and brute." Also, it does not appreciate that such a breakdown in order may be very difficult to reverse. Even though a "hurting stalemate" ought, at a certain point, to lead actors to realize neither can defeat the other, and hence to seek a compromise political settlement, what is equally possible is what happened in the Syrian case-each hoped to win by further escalating the level of violence, encouraged by external backers. This takes on an autonomous logic outside of the control of leaders, for once the state fails and order breaks down, the "security dilemma"[4] kicks in: as all groups, fearing the other, fall back on group solidarity for protection and seek their own security through what they see as self-protective violence, insecurity actually increases for all, making for an unstoppable spiral of violence. But additionally, as the normal economy collapses, a "war economy" in which people deprived of a normal life seek survival through spoils and flock to those groups with access to largely external funding, civil war persists despite the damage it inflicts on all sides.

[3] Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part 4 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

[4] Barry Posen, 'The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict', *Survival*, Vol.35, No. 1, Spring 1993.

Structure: The Roots of the Uprising

The origins of the current crisis can ultimately be traced to a failure of state building resulting from the post-WWI imposition of the states system in the region by Western imperialism in what David Fromkin[5] called a "peace to end all peace." Levant states, which had been artificially created by imperialism in violation of the dominant identities of the region's peoples had to compete with powerful sub- and supra-state forces for the loyalties of their populations, and hence suffered built-in legitimacy deficits which made them perhaps set up to fail.

In these circumstances, Arab state builders gravitated toward *neo-patrimonial* practices that combined time-honoured indigenous state-building formulas (Ibn Khaldun's *assabiya* that is, elite solidarity built on primordial ties) with modern bureaucratic machinery and surveillance technology. This formula was empowered, perhaps beyond its shelf life, by the exceptional availability of hydrocarbon and geopolitical rent in the region, which enabled the lubrication of clientele networks supportive of patrimonial rule and also enabled a populist "social contract" with the masses.

Ba'thist populist authoritarianism in Syria was no exception. Hafiz al-Asad established a regime based on the *assabiya* of the Alawi elite that he appointed to strategic commands of the military-security apparatuses; this was combined with rent-fuelled clientalism and the mass incorporation through the Ba'th party of the state-employed middle class and (both Sunni and non-Sunni) peasantry (via land reform); the regime was legitimized by Arab nationalist ideology and defended by the repression of persistent (mostly Islamic) opposition. While this ended Syria's endemic instability and consolidated forty years of Ba'thist rule, each ingredient of Asad's state building recipe had its costs: sectarian *assabiya* alienated out-groups; rent was finite; repression left many politically unincorporated and legitimation from Arab nationalism embroiled Syria in costly regional conflicts and generated Western hostility-particularly dangerous after Asad lost his Cold war era Soviet patron. And, relying on sub-state (Alawi) and supra-state loyalties (Arabism) to an extent deterred consolidation of identifications with the Syrian state.

Across the region, a combination of rent decline and population boom created economic crises that put extreme pressures on the authoritarian republics – especially under the influence of global neo-liberalism – to move toward what might be called "post-populism" in which, as in Syria under Bashar al-Asad, the state withdraws from welfare provision and favours investors, creating a new crony capitalism and exacerbating social inequality. This generated the cocktail of grievances that exploded in the Arab Uprisings.

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[5] David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace; the Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, New York: Avon Books, 1989.

In parallel, even as the global convergence of LDCs toward a homogeneous neo-liberalism was depriving them of their capacity to meet the needs of their growing populations-and in MENA forcing them to renege on the populist "social contract"-- globalization was also accompanied by a diffusion of new media and internet technology, and with it, West-centric democratization discourses that helped to delegitimize the post-populist ruling formulas of regimes like Bashar al-Asad's Syria. The street protest that has become increasingly endemic in the non-Western world is encouraged by both Western NGO funding and democratization discourses.

The younger Asad's post-populist economic policies sowed the seeds of rebellion and made his regime vulnerable to mobilization of discontent; at the same time, the regime's reforms debilitated its own institutional base, making it vulnerable to what ultimately became an Sunni Islamist led revolt. There had been similar grievances among Sunnis during the Islamist rebellion in the early 1980s, but the rebellion then was much more localized, so what had changed? Then, many Sunni villages, still incorporated into the Ba'th party and its peasant union, sided with the regime against the urban-based Muslim Brotherhood; however, in the 2000s, the party/peasant union infrastructure and rural services had been debilitated and agriculture neglected and devastated by years of drought. Population growth on fixed land resources had left peasant youth, whose fathers had been part of regime base, landless, dependent on entering a depressed non-agricultural job market, and "available" for anti-regime mobilization. Regime connections to the mass public, whether the ruling party or corporatist structures (trade unions, peasant unions), had withered in a way similar to the case in other Uprising states. But this was especially dangerous in Syria if one considers how crucial this political infrastructure was to allowing a minority-dominated Ba'th regime to consolidate a cross-sectarian power base in the first place.

Agency: stumbling on the way to democratization--from mass protest to the security dilemma

The Failure of Democratic Transition

As Bassam Haddad had anticipated,[6] the one thing that could spread the Arab Uprising to Syria was an over-reaction by the security forces. In a 17 February 2011 protest in the Old City of Damascus the Interior Minister had exemplified how protests ought to be handled: he arrived personally, placated the protestors and disciplined a policeman whose behaviour had sparked the protest. The protests did not spread, despite Syrian expatriates earlier 5 February invocation of a "Day of Rage" against the regime. By contrast, in Dera, formerly

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[6] Bassam Haddad, "Why Syria Is Unlikely to be Next . . . for Now", *Sada*, 9 March 2011, http://carneg-ieendowment.org/2011/03/09/why-syria-is-unlikely-to-be-next-.-.-.-for-now/6bhl

a stronghold of the Ba'th party, a March confrontation between protestors and heavy-handed security forces escalated out of control; resistance quickly spread via tribal networks and sparked sympathy protests in other parts of the country which started a spiral of revolt that the regime would never be able to bring fully under control.

In the early days of the crisis, however, effective leadership from the president could still have made a difference, particularly had Asad reacted with democratic concessions instead of repression. Had Bashar chosen to lead the reform process, he might have actually won a free election to another presidential term. Unfortunately, his March 30, 2011 speech at the beginnings of the protests, in which he deprecated popular grievances, disillusioned the many who wanted him to use the crisis to advance reform.

There appear to have been "soft-liners" in the regime, such as Vice president, Farouk al-Sharaa, who, originating from Dera, was distressed at the use of force there and Bouthina Shabaan, whose public discourse seemed to promise substantial reforms. In reaction to Dera there were hundreds of resignations from the Ba'th party and there were later to be defections among top elites who also presumably would have urged compromise with the protestors. However, in the event, it appears that either the president was a captive of the hardliners or they convinced him that the Uprising could be quickly squashed if substantive force were used; what the Egyptian and Tunisian regimes had done wrong, security chiefs reputedly told Bashar, was to hesitate in their use of repression.

One explanation for his failure to better manage the crisis could be that, preoccupied with foreign policy and having become complacent owing to his success in surviving threats from the US and reversing isolation from Europe, he neglected the domestic vulnerabilities of his regime. One could argue that the most reliable command post of the Syrian state had always been the *mukhabarat* and hence regime leaders' natural fallback position when challenged was to turn to the levers of repression. Further, in the words of the International Crisis Group, the new generation of the ruling elite, 'having inherited power rather than fought for it, grown up in Damascus, mingled with and mimicked the ways of the urban upper class' had lost touch with its social roots.[7] Also, given the minority core of the regime, it may be Asad simply could not afford to make sufficient democratic concessions, especially after the debilitation of the regime's former cross-sectarian base would have made success in elections problematic. In addition, his rule had started to be more of a family regime, and the rest of the clan could well have been losers under democratization, especially the highly unpopular tycoon Rami Makhlouf and Maher al-Asad whose violent overreaction reflected the tribal mentality and

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[7] International Crisis Group, 'The Syrian People's Slow Motion Revolution,' Brussels and Damascus, 6 July 2011.

minority complex of some Alawis in the regime. In the event, Asad chose to stand with the hardliners.

If non-violent protest was going to precipitate a transition, a coalition between soft-liners in the regime and in the opposition combining to marginalize the hardliners was needed, but in the Syrian case, the soft-liners were marginalized on both sides by the regime's use of violence but also by the maximalist demands-fall of the regime – of the opposition. Asad blamed the uprising on external troublemakers and terrorists and while these claims are usually dismissed in the West and were grossly exaggerated, there is a modicum of substance in them. Determined activists, many of them exiles, systematically set out to spread the Arab uprising to Syria, using the Internet and promoting a discourse of democratization meant to de-legitimize the regime. In some instances, the regime was deliberately provoked, when, for example, in sectarian-mixed Banias an uncompromising salafi shaykh exploited years of anti-Alawite resentment among Sunnis. In some places party headquarters or the officers club were attacked, statues of Hafiz al-Asad and portraits of his son were torn down, and, much earlier than is usually acknowledged, there were armed attacks on the regime's security forces.[8] How the regime responded to the protests (and provocations) made all the difference for the Syrian tangent; it did not have to fall into the apparent trap set by its opponents - but it did so in its precipitate resort to disproportionate repression.

But equally, as several analysts argued, the mistake of the Syrian protest movement was its "rush to confrontation" with the regime while the latter still retained significant support.[9] Even though the regime conceded many reforms that the opposition had been demanding for decades and proposed dialogue, those committed to its removal had to dismiss them as inadequate and insincere. Besides the moral outrage at the killings perpetuated by the government, opposition activists believed that they could only be safe if the regime was totally destroyed since if it survived it would be certain to seek retribution.

However, with the hardline opposition insisting on the fall of the regime, and its resort to periodic violence, the soft-liners in the regime were unlikely to marginalize the hardliners. Senior soft-liners, who spoke the language of reconciliation, seemed too far from the immediate levers of command that were in the hands of hardliners such as Maher al-Asad.[10] Similarly, internal

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[8] Robert Worth, "The Price of Loyalty in Syria", *New York Times*, 19 June 2013. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/23/magazine/the-price-of-loyalty-in-syria.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=2&pagewanted=all&

[9] Maged Mandour, "Beyond Civil Resistance: The Case of Syria", *openDemocracy*, 26 October 2013, www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/maged-mandour/beyond-civil-resistance-case-of-syria.

[10] Peter Harling, 'Syria's Race against the Clock', *Foreign Policy*, 11 Apr. 2011, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/04/11/syrias_race_against_the_clock

third parties who tried to mediate were squeezed out, notably the tradition-
al opposition organized in the National Coordination Committee (NCC)
whose members were much more experienced than the younger demonstra-
tors. At the famous Samiramis conference in June 2013 they put forth a com-
promise proposal but both regime and opposition rejected it.

Why did a negotiated transition fail? The spilling of blood happened so
quickly on such a significant scale that compromise was soon rejected on both
sides. With regime concessions, too little too late, the opposition escalated its
resistance via ever larger mass demonstrations which in turn provoked violent
and repressive counter-escalation by the regime. Henceforth also the oppo-
sition lacked credible leaders who could deliver its consent to a negotiated
settlement should that have appeared in its interest.

In summary, an Egyptian or Tunisian scenario of relatively peaceful transi-
tion toward democratization would have required that, in parallel, soft-liners
in the regime and the opposition marginalize the hardliners on both sides
and reach a deal on power-sharing and transition. Instead, on both sides, the
hardliners marginalized the soft-liners.

Regime resilience in the face of mass protest

The Syrian Uprising took particular forms, both similar and different from
those in other Uprising states. Among the similarities was the key role as-
sumed by youth activists. Events in Tunisia and Egypt spread the idea that
popular protests could indeed succeed in overthrowing authoritarian rulers
and broke the "fear barrier" in Syria, creating an illusion of empowerment
especially among youth. Diaspora activists played a pivotal role, using the In-
ternet and new media, in encouraging revolt. Mobilization took place on two
levels: at the local level, coordinating committees planned day to day protests
while cyber activists used the internet to share information, coordinate and
publicize their protests, keep the momentum going and convey a sense of na-
tional-level solidarity.[11] As in other cases, also, protestors were able to mount
sustained large-scale demonstrations that put the regime very much on the
defensive.

The main difference, however, from Egypt and Tunisia where a similar
spiral took hold, was that the president was not quickly overthrown in a rel-
atively brief and sharp burst of revolt quickly converging on the center of
power. Different from Egypt but somewhat similar to Libya, the uprising was
geographically dispersed and away from the capital, beginning in the rural
peripheries, then spreading to small towns, suburbs, and medium sized cities,
where its foot soldiers were unemployed youth, refugees from drought and

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[11] Kim Ghattas, 'Syria's spontaneously organised protests', *BBC News*, 22 Apr. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/
news/world-middle-east-13168276

others among the "losers" of a decade of post-populist neo-liberalism. For a considerable period, protest was contained in the periphery while the centers of power (Damascus) and business (Aleppo) stayed relatively immune. This corresponded precisely to the geographical distribution of benefits and costs of Bashar's post-populist upgrading.

Different from other cases, also, was that the Uprising had from the beginning a sectarian dimension, inevitable given the Alawi dominance of the regime and the concentration of the Uprising among the majority Sunnis. The main occasion for mobilization became Friday prayers, with *imams*, natural leaders of their neighbourhoods and, outside the main cities, mostly anti-regime. Saudi-financed salafi and Muslim Brotherhood connected elements actively mobilized protestors. Initial centers of grievances were mixed areas where Alawis and Sunni lived together as in Latakia, Banias and Homs. The Uprising then spread to Hama and Deir az-Zur, traditional bastions of Sunni piety resentful of the regime. Tribes also played a role; the decline of the security forces' control of them thorough subsidies and exemptions and its replacement by Saudi money was important in the regime's loss of control over the tribal periphery.

Given this character of the opposition-pious lower class, rural and Sunni -the social base on which the regime relied to survive had many of the opposite characteristics and was the product of a decade of "authoritarian upgrading." It comprised the crony capitalists, urban government employees and the minorities, especially Alawis and to a lesser degree Christians who, not suffering from the restrictions on public religiosity and church building typical elsewhere, were rallied by exploiting their fear of salafi Islam. The main cities, Damascus and Aleppo, where the investment boom, the take-off of tourism and the new consumption were concentrated, remained largely quiescent months into the Uprising, although their poor suburbs were often hotbeds of revolt. The regime was able to mobilize significant counter-demonstrations in these cities. The middle class of the two main cities originally saw Bashar as a reformer and while they were disillusioned by his repression of the protestors they preferred a peaceful democratization and feared instability and loss of their secular modern life style if traditional rural or salafi insurgents took power. Senior urban *ulama*, many of whom had been co-opted, took advantage of the uprising to win new concessions from the regime rather than abandoning it.

As with all post-populist regimes, Bashar's had started to forge an alignment with the business class, but such "authoritarian upgrading" had gone much less far in Syria than in Egypt or Tunisia and cooptation of the bourgeoisie on the regime side was as thorough as in Egypt. Aggrandizement of the presidential family also weakened the regime's potential class support for its neo-liberal tangent. Indeed, exiled businessmen who had lost out to regime-connected operators were big funders of the insurgency. Still, much

of the in-country business class saw no alternative to the regime and initially hoped it would end the disorder.

A main difference from all other Uprising cases was that a major split in the regime or army did not happen. The opposition strategy depended on a level and scale of protests that the security services would be stretched thin and exhausted, perhaps so provoked they would increase violence that would turn a majority of the population against the regime, or split the regime internally and especially lead to such disaffection in the army that it would become an unreliable instrument of repression.

However, the military, organized around its Alawi core and closely linked to the presidential clan, but also long invested in the regime through the military branches of the Ba'th party, remained largely cohesive and loyal. It did not turn against its superiors and enough loyal units were willing to fire on demonstrators. The defections that did take place did not touch upon the core of the government's power base until much later when non-violence had become marginalized. Alawi dominated units, such as the 4th division, headed by Maher al-Asad, and the Republican Guard, seen as the most loyal, were most involved in repression. Alawis were also mobilized in militias (the *shabiha*), later organized into a formal national guard, and were recruited into the military reserves; with much to lose if the regime fell, they remained its most reliable shock troops. Moreover, as the Syrian army generally became implicated in the repression-with protestors starting to denounce it-its stake in regime survival increased. Defections were of a lesser scale and amounted to attrition over time rather than the sudden major splits or collapse of the army in Yemen and Libya and contrasted even more sharply with the early refusal of the military top commands in Tunisia and Egypt to defend the President against protestors.

While al-Asad's regime's increasing use of lethal force against non-violent protestors *did* alienate wide swaths of the public, as the non-violent resistance paradigm expects, because society rapidly became communally polarized, the opposition could be constructed, among the regime's constituency, as the "other." As for the many Syrians caught in the middle, especially the upper and middle classes, the regime's claim to defend order against the disruption unleashed by the Uprising caused a significant portion of them to acquiesce in it as the lesser of two evils; this was all the more the case once radical Islamists, and especially al-Qaida-linked jihadists, assumed a high profile within the opposition and as the opposition itself fragmented into warring camps.

In summary, it is apparent is that there were enough grievances to fuel an uprising in Syria but only among a plurality of the population, with a significant minority adhering to the regime as a better alternative than civil war, and the majority on the sidelines. This helps explain the regime's ability to sustain its cohesion and retain control of the main cities, Damascus and

Aleppo (until part of the latter fell to jihadist incursions).[12] This scenario is quite at odds with the non-violent resistance paradigm in which the regime's violence progressively isolates it from the vast majority of the population, precipitating its collapse and it distinguishes Syria from Tunisia and Egypt where the incumbent presidents proved unable to rally sufficient support to survive. This points to the reality, ignored by the resistance paradigm, that differences in the social structure of societies and composition of regimes makes for important variations in the vulnerability of authoritarian regimes to revolt. In homogeneous societies such as Egypt and Tunisia mass anti-regime mobilization is likely to be much more thorough and decisive than in communally divided ones like Syria; and where the presidency's clientalist and political ties to the military are stronger and the army's institutional autonomy lesser, the military is far less likely to jettison presidents to save itself.

From the "Security Solution" to the "Security Dilemma"

Throughout 2011 and into 2012, the numbers of anti-regime demonstrators ran into the tens of thousands and major protests took place without respite in virtually every Syrian town and city except Damascus and Aleppo, such that, even though unarmed, they posed a serious threat to the regime's survival. The regime's forces, lacking training and experience in crowd or riot control, continued to respond with excessive violence, multiplying its enemies and making funerals occasions for more confrontation. However, the opposition was complicit with the regime in the deterioration into violence. Indeed, both sides opted consistently to escalate the level of violence and thus, further polarized society, resulting, however, in stalemates which both then sought to overcome through further escalation.

The regime, despite the high risks, deliberately sought to rally the solidarity of its minority base, intertwined with the security forces, by sectarianizing the issue, accusing the opposition of Islamic terrorism, framing the issue as a choice between stability and social peace and jihadi violence to win the support of minorities, who could expect retribution if the regime fell. The opposition initially sought to win over the minorities with a rhetoric of civic inclusion; however, as democracy activists either exited Syria or fell back on religious zeal in a time of high insecurity, the balance shifted to Islamist hardliners, empowered by money and guns from the Gulf. The opposition also had an incentive to sectarianize the conflict since to the extent it became framed in sectarian terms a regime of minorities would be vulnerable to a large demographic imbalance (70%) in favour of the Sunnis majority from whom the bulk of the protestors were drawn.[13]

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[12] Hassan Abbas, 'The Dynamics of the Uprising in Syria,' *Arab Reform Brief*, 51, October, 2011, p 9.

[13] Of course, many Sunnis were secular, hence would not normally mobilize on the basis of Sunni identity and this figure also include the Kurds (7-10%) whose separate ethnic identity overrode their Sunnism.

Another major dimension in the escalation of the conflict was the battle for cities in which the opposition sought to escape from confinement in the peripheries. The opposition realized it could not win without breaking the alignment between the regime, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and middle class, on the other hand, in the two main cities, Damascus and Aleppo, where many valued stability and had much to lose economically from the disorder and which therefore remained immune in the first year to the spread of the Uprising. At first the opposition thought that the turmoil and Western sanctions would paralyze the economy enough to cause the business elites to desert the regime, while sanctions would sap the regime's revenue base, hence its ability to pay salaries and sustain the loyalties of the state administration. However, an economic collapse did not take place, and more importantly, the regime proved capable of perpetuating itself financially.

Ultimately, therefore, to turn the main cities against the regime, parts of the opposition reverted to the strategy of showing that the regime could not guarantee stability. It therefore turned to bombings and armed infiltrations into urban neighborhoods and suburbs; the regime, in turn, used heavy weapons against suburban neighborhoods harboring the insurgents to send the message to populations that such armed groups should not be tolerated in their midst. Homs, which slipped almost entirely under opposition control, became a particular victim of this dynamic in which regime violence against urban neighborhoods was particularly bloody. A further watershed in intensification of the conflict was its spread to Aleppo where the opposition escalated the fight, infiltrating and seizing half of the city, to demonstrate that the upper and middle classes would not remain immune to the violence; in summer 2012 battles in Aleppo drew increasing numbers of jihadist fighters. The regime resorted to air and artillery attacks on urban built up areas. There followed the destruction of large parts of Syrian's industrial base and looting on a massive scale as whole factories were dismantled and exported to Turkey.

Militarization of the conflict was perhaps inevitable. It was the regime that chose fatefully to further escalate its security solution-from use of the police and militias-to a military solution in which heavy weapons and aircraft were used in urban areas. The move toward a military solution appears partly to have been a response to the killing of over a hundred regime soldiers and police in the Islamist stronghold of Jisr ash-Shaghour in June 2011 and also a bid to prevent establishment of "liberated areas" that would facilitate Western intervention on behalf of the opposition, as had happened in Libya. As the regime found it impossible to contain the protests at one level of violence, it increased the level thereby killing many innocents and peaceful protestors and, eventually, destroying entire neighbourhoods. The regime's escalation generated a desire for revenge and legitimized the notion of armed self-defense among the mostly Sunni opposition. Eventually, perhaps 10,000 defectors from a 200,000-man Syrian army formed the core of armed resis-

tance to the government, the Free Syrian Army, while many of the protestors joined armed Islamist groups, which could soon deploy tens of thousands of fighters. The regime may have welcomed a militarized opposition as an enemy easier to deal with than mass civil protesters. In abandoning peaceful protest, the opposition opened the door for the regime to move from the security solution to the military solution. Red lines regarding the use of particular weapons systems were overstepped one by one, with the much better armed regime usually leading the way: a spiral of violence led from bullets to bombs, tanks and fighter planes and, as the conflict entered its third year, also chemical weapons, with both conflicting parties perpetrated violations of human rights.

As order broke down, the "security dilemma" kicked in and each side resorted to defensive tactics that made both more insecure, while trapping much of the population in the middle. Hatreds of the "other" spread the conviction on both sides that no political solution was possible, even once it became clear that neither could defeat the other. As the conflict morphed into semi-sectarian civil war, whole communities became entrapped in the "security dilemma," seeing the "other" as enemies. Mass flows of refugees emptied the country of many of those caught in between and also of many of the secular middle class peaceful protestors, leaving the field to the radical Islamists.

Jihadists and al-Qaida arrived on the scene since they saw a failing state as a perfect arena to recover the momentum they had lost when the Arab Spring made it appear that non-violent protest could produce democratic transitions. Most of these groups were under no unified command and not accountable to any civilian political body. Instead, they maintained diverse and opaque connections to domestic or, more often, foreign bodies and thus contributed to the internationalization of the conflict.

The armed opposition's capacity to deny the regime control in many areas and the army's lack of sufficient reliable manpower to repress what became widespread armed insurgency, led the regime to withdraw into its strategic southern and western heartlands; this left much of rural northern and eastern Syria out of government control, a scenario somewhat similar to Libya but different from Egypt where the army retained territorial control (except in the Sinai). Three years after the Uprising began, the country had become divided between regime and opposition controlled regions, an egregious example of a failed state.

The External Factor Drives Internal War

From the outset, the possibility of external military intervention shaped both opposition and regime strategies. Anti-regime activists, including Syrian expatriates who were instrumental in initiating and internationalizing the Uprising, understood that they could not succeed without external intervention

to restrain the regime's repressive options. External activists told those on the ground, pointing to the Libya no-fly zone, that "the international community won't sit and watch you be killed." They claimed that another Hama was not possible because "Everything is being filmed on YouTube and there's a lot of international attention on the Middle East"[14] There were reports that the opposition, particularly external internet activists, systematically exaggerated bloodshed and found willing partners in the Western press and particularly in the Gulf-owned Pan-Arab media whose patrons saw an opportunity to remove an Iranian ally.[15]

The regime for its part, having survived several decades of international isolation orchestrated by the US, but also involving Europe, had always seen itself as besieged by foreign enemies; the role played by external exiles and internet activists abroad, often Western funded, in provoking or escalating the Uprising was congruent with its perceptions of conspiracy. It tarnished the indigenous opposition with the suspicion of treasonous dealings with foreign enemies, justifying the resort to repressive violence. It could be said to have been a major mistake of opposition activists, deluded by Western discourse of humanitarian intervention and international human rights, to solicit support from external powers in a region where the struggle against "Western imperialism" remains so salient.

The West did become involved but, in so doing, it made a major contribution to the further deterioration of the situation. It slapped sanctions on the regime meant to deprive it of oil revenue, which was indeed, a key step in the debilitation of the *state* and of its capacity to provide basic services to the population, *but not of the regime,* which found alternative informal sources of revenue; this was yet another in a long line of examples that prove how blunt and untargeted such sanctions always are. The West also moved to diplomatically isolate and demonize the regime, withdrawing its ambassadors, and with Western politicians clamouring for military intervention and raising the spectre of the International Criminal Court; at a certain point, the regime inner core realized that there was no way back for them and that they had to hang together or hang separately and do whatever was necessary to survive, including escalating from the security to a military solution. Yet the threats against the regime by the West, while encouraging protestors, proved, as so often, to be hollow and hence to contribute to making a bad situation worse. The regime tried to calibrate its violence within limits that would not trigger an international bandwagon toward intervention, although over time this bar was steadily raised. But not dependent, as the Egyptian and Tunisian regimes were

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[14] Kate Seelye, 'Syria Unrest "Cannot Be Contained"', *The Daily Beast,* 28 Mar. 2011, www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/03/28/syria-unrest-cannot-be-contained-dissidents-say.html.

[15] Angela Joya, 'Syria and the Arab Spring: The Evolution of the Conflict and the Role of Domestic External and Factors', *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, Vol.4, No. 1, July 2012, 40–3.

on the West, the regime had far less need to restrain its use of violence against protestors. In mid-2011 it also felt the need to quickly smash resistance so as not to lose control of territory that could be used to stage intervention as had happened in Libya; the Libyan precedent thus helped precipitate a transition from the "security solution" to the "military solution."

While the uprising started indigenous, it was much intensified by regional forces, which turned Syria into a regional battleground among those who believed that the outcome in Syria would shift the wider power balance in the Middle East. Qatar used Al-Jazeera to amplify the uprising from the outset, while the Saudis funnelled money and arms to anti-regime tribes. In November 2011, Qatar and Saudi Arabia prompted the Arab League into unprecedented moves to isolate Syria, aimed, together with parallel European sanctions, at drying up the regime's access to economic resources and breaking its coalition with the business class. An anti-Asad coalition, led by France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey, with the US in the background, and with the collaboration of lesser actors such as the Hariri faction in Lebanon and the new Libyan regime, began financing, training, arming and infiltrating insurgents into the country, escalating the militarization of the conflict. The safe haven provided by Turkey to the armed opposition particularly enabled it to "liberate" vast areas bordering Turkey from regime control. Somewhat later, trans-national jihadists flowed into the country, acquiring a dominant position in the east as this area slipped out of government control.

The Asad regime's ability to slip out of this tightening stranglehold depended on its links to Hezbollah in the west and, in the east, to Iran and Iraq. It increasingly relied on Iran, whose Revolutionary Guard assisted it with electronic warfare and which urged Iraq to provide Syria with cheap oil and to stay out of the anti-Asad coalition and later on Hizbollah fighters whose entry into the fray tipped the balance toward the regime in the western areas bordering Lebanon. Meanwhile Russia and China, antagonized by the West's use of a UN humanitarian resolution to promote regime change at their expense in Libya, protected Asad from a similar scenario.

These external involvements, each blocking the other, contributed to the stalemating of the conflict: Turkish, Saudi and Qatari support for the opposition being offset by Iranian, Hizbollah and Iraqi support for the regime; and internationally, American and European support for the Uprising being offset by Russian and Chinese support for the regime. The resources external powers provided to their Syrian proxies was also crucial in keeping the conflict going.

Failed State, War Economy

Once the Syrian state failed, the conflict came to betray symptoms of Mary Kaldor's "New Wars."[16] In her scenario, state weakening, itself linked ulti-

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[16] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999).

mately to globalization, empowers transnational non-state actors. When order breaks down, the security dilemma kicks in as warring sides engage in identity wars and ethnic cleansing, and the distinction between combatants and non-combatants is blurred. Warlordism fills the security gap; refugee flows, funding by Diasporas, and transnational arms trafficking embed the conflict in wider regional struggles that make it all the harder to resolve. Since neither regime or opposition had by 2014 any prospect of victory over the other, they ought potentially to have been close to the "hurting" stalemate that would allow both sides to be ready to settle for less than victory and to try to minimize their losses, which continued on all sides, rather than maximize their gains. However, this dynamic was short-circuited by the war economy that was generated by outside funding and arms: it helped the regime to continue fighting, attracted foreign fighters to the opposition and helped recruit Syrians, who had lost their livelihood, to militant groups, with more attracted to the best-funded, usually radical or at least Islamist factions.

Conclusion - Syria: failed transition

The Syrian Uprising began with massive protests that the Asad regime could not quickly suppress and which put it very much on the defensive. Yet it did not stimulate a transition to a more politically inclusive political order and led instead to civil war. A pacted transition was frustrated by the marginalization of the soft-liners on both sides. On the one hand, the President's choice to respond to the demonstrations with a "security solution" rather than democratic reforms mattered: in standing with regime hardliners, he empowered the hardliners in the opposition as well. On the other hand, the opposition, with exaggerated confidence in the efficacy of mass protest (owing to Western discourse as well as events in Tunisia and Egypt) bore some responsibility for this failure as its increasingly maximalist demands made an insider-outsider coalition unlikely.

Nor could the opposition mount sufficient civil disorder to force the departure of the president and his core supporters. The protests began in the peripheries, rather than at the heart of power, where the regime had co-opted key social forces and retained sufficient support to block a periphery move on the centre. There were enough grievances to fuel an uprising but only among a plurality of the population, with others adhering to the regime as a better alternative than civil war, and the majority on the side-lines. The regime framed the protests as radical Islamic terrorism in order to rally the support of secular the middle class, the minorities, and, in particular, its Alawi constituency, which dominated the security forces. Clearly, authoritarian regimes constructed in fragmented societies around a cohesive communal and armed core may be far less susceptible to non-violent resistance regardless of its magnitude and duration. The security forces did not generally split and while there were defections, notably among Sunni officers, rather than leading to regime

collapse this merely militarized the conflict, and, as the army proved unable to retain full territorial control, precipitated the division of the country into mutually exclusive and contested zones.

There were several watersheds in the descent into armed civil war when agency could have mattered and the conflict stopped. However, each side sought to break the stalemate by escalating the conflict. The opposition sought to de-stabilize the state through massive civil unrest, to undermine the economy and to spread disorder to the cities and break the regime alliance with business. To work, this required that external constraints deter full-scale regime repression – or that the latter would provoke outside intervention. Far from being deterred, the opposition's call for external intervention only encouraged the regime to move toward a "military solution" that did not spare civilians or shrink from use of heavy weapons against urban neighbourhoods, thus precipitated the overall militarization of the uprising.

The outcome, thus, was neither revolution nor effective repression, but stalemate and a failed state, with the security dilemma, external intervention on behalf of the warring sides and the war economy giving civil war an extended shelf life. One of the lessons of this story is the fragility of fragmented states like Syria: it is relatively easy to de-stabilize them, but much harder to put the pieces back together.

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RUSYA VE ARAP BAHARI: YENİ SİYASİ GÖRÜNÜME UYUM SAĞLAMAK

ÖZ

Arap Baharı başlayıncaya kadar, Rus yetkililer Ortadoğu'nun nispeten istikrarlı siyasi ve ekonomik yapıya sahip olduğu konusunda yanlış bir algıya sahiptiler. Onların varsayımlarına göre periyodik olarak ortaya çıkan olaylar bile (2003 yılında Irak'ta olduğu gibi dış güçler müdahil olmadıkça) bölgedeki mevcut güç dengesini değiştiremezdi. Bundan dolayı Moskova, herhangi bir yapısal değişiklik getirmesine ihtimal vermediği ve küçük bir çalkantı olarak gördüğü Arap Baharı'nın sadece başlagıcını kaçırmış oldu. 11 Şubat 2011 tarihinde Mısır'da Cumhurbaşkanı Hüsnü Mübarek'in düşüşü bile Rusya Federasyonu'ndaki yetkililerin olayı yeniden ele alması noktasında harekete geçirememişti. Fakat Rusya, tam olarak 20 Ekim 2011 tarihinde Muammer Kaddafi'nin öldürülmesinden sonra 'uyanmaya' başlamıştı ve aslında bu olay Rusya için 'geç kalmış bir uyanış' olmuştu. Rus analistler tarafından belirtildiği gibi, Arap Baharı esnasında kendi ülkelerinin Ortadoğu'daki siyasi kargaşada yaşayacağı kayıp diğer bölgesel olmayan oyuncuların kayıpları ile karşılaştırılabilecek düzeyde değildir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Rusya, Suriye

روسيا والربيع العربي، وضع رؤية سياسية جديدة

نيكولاي ا كوزهانوف خلاصة:

كان للمسؤلين الروس فكرة خاطئة حول اعتبارهم منطقة الشرق الاوسط على انها منطقة تتميز بالبنية الاقتصادية والسياسية المستقرة، الي ان جاء الربيع العربي وغيّر كل افكارهم هذه. وبحسب كل توقعاتهم هذه ،انه بالرغم من المظاهرات التي تحققت بصورة دورية ان لم تتدخل القوى الخارجية كما حدث في العراق عام 2003 فانه لم يحدث تغييرا يقلب موازين المنطقة. ولهذا السبب فان موسكو التي لم تتوقع ان الربيع العربي سيحقق اي تغيير ونظرت له على انه ما هو سوى اضطراب بسيط فلم تدرك بداية الربيع العربي. وحتي تنحي الرئيس المصري حسني مبارك في 11 فبراير 2011 لم يتناوله ولم يكن يتوقعه مسؤولو الاتحاد الروسي ايضا. ولكن روسيا بدأت تستوعب حقيقة الامر بعد مقتل معمر القذافي في 20 اكتوبر 2011. لدرجة ان هذه الواقعة كانت بمثابة اليقظة المتاخرة لروسيا. وكما تم توضيحه من قبل المحللين الروسيين ، بان بلادهم لم تكن قادرة على مقارنة الخسائر التي من المحتمل ان تواجهها نتيجة توتر الاوضاع بمنطقة الشرق الاوسط بالخسائر التي من الممكن ان تتعرض لها باقي الاطراف الاخرى التي لا تحتل مكانا بالمنطقة.

الكلمات الدالّة : الربيع العربي، روسيا ، سوريا.

RUSSIA AND THE ARAB SPRING: ADJUSTING TO A NEW POLITICAL VISTA

ABSTRACT

Until the beginning of the Arab Spring, the Russian authorities had the false perception that the Middle East is a relatively stable political and economic system. As they presume, even periodically emerging conflicts were unable to change the existing balance of power (unless external powers involved as it happened with Iraq in 2003). Subsequently, Moscow merely missed the beginning of the Arab Spring considering it as a minor turmoil which will be unable to bring any structural changes. Even the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt on 11 February 2011 did not make the authorities of the RF reconsider the situation. Russia literally 'woke up' only after the murder of Muammar Qaddafi on 20 October 2011, and this was indeed 'the morning after the night before'. As stated by Russian analysts, during the Arab Spring, the losses of their country from the political turmoil in the Middle East were hardly comparable with the losses of any other non-regional player.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Russia, Syria

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Initially, trying to keep aside from the intra-Arab conflict and limiting its re-action to the events in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen by the statements on the necessity of the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the Russian government suddenly found out that the new Middle East is not that friendly to Moscow as it was before. By 2012, the old regimes had already fallen, and the new authorities did not determine its attitude to Russia: the Russian neutral position prevented them from attributing Moscow either the status of a friend or an enemy. When the authorities of the RF changed their tactics and started clearly voicing their preferences, this new strategy also appeared to bring controversial results. The support of the regime of Bashar Assad shocked the large part of the Arab street: the understanding that Moscow supports the old dictatorial regime substantially contradicted to the image of the Russians as supporters of liberation movements in the Middle East that emerged during the 1960s – 1970s. Subsequently, this led to the cooling of Russian relations with the large part of the Arab world.[1]

Losing the Grip

Economic Losses

First of all, Moscow sustained heavy economic losses whose real volume is still to be determined. Thus, the fall of Qaddafi in Libya immediately led to the flee of Russian companies from this country whose consumer and investment markets were closed for them due to the controversial behaviour of the authorities of the RF during the civil conflict in this country. Although the leaders of new Libya periodically declare their intention to retain the certain level of economic contacts with Moscow, experts in Russia are sure that the situation will repeat the experience of post-Saddam Iraq where it took Russian companies about six years to return.[2] Meanwhile only the main Russian arms exporter Rosoboronexport estimates its financial losses in Libya in USD 2 - 6,5 billion. For some companies of the Russian military-industrial complex these losses are non-recoverable: in certain cases, Tripoli was the main buyer of their products.[3] Russian railway corporation RZD is another victim of the Arab Spring in Libya: its current losses are estimated to be USD 2,2 billion. Taking into account the fact that the management of this company planned to work with Qaddafi's government for many decades to come, the amount of lost profit could be even higher. Russian oil and gas companies should not also be forgotten. Before 2011, such giants as Gazprom, Lukoil Overseas and

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[1] Interview with an analyst on the Middle East Politics, St.Andrews, June 2013.

[2] Igor Naumov, "Rossiyskiye Ubytki ot Arabskoy Vesny", Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 29 February 2012, http://www.ng.ru/economics/2012-02-29/1_arab_vesna.html Last accessed on 4 October 2013.

[3] Ibid.

Tatneft either were involved or planned to invest in the energy sector of Libya. However, their cooperation with Tripoli has ceased.[4]

Finally, in April 2008, Moscow forgot about USD 4,5 billion of Qaddafi's debts to the USSR in exchange for the involvement of Russian companies in new joint projects in Libya. After the fall of Qaddafi and the freeze of economic relations between Tripoli and the RF, this sum could also be considered an irrecoverable loss of Moscow. Under these conditions, Russian experts are not very optimistic about the future of the assets of the RF in Syria: Moscow's active support of Bashar Assad leaves no illusion about the presence of Russia in this country after his fall. Meanwhile, Russia has a lot to lose in Syria. Since the early 2000s, the volume of trade between the two countries has been gradually growing. By 2012, it almost achieved USD 2 billion. Traditionally, the trade balance was in favour of Russia and this, subsequently, made Syria an appealing market for Russian companies. In 2005, Moscow agreed to restructure the Syrian government's debt to the former Soviet Union, literally forgetting about three quarters (according to other sources – only half) of the sum, in exchange for new contracts for Russian businesses. This has led to a substantial increase in Russian investments in the economy of the country (mostly in energy and infrastructural projects) which is currently estimated to be USD 20 billion.[5] Russian sales of military equipment to Syria are quite impressive: if, in 2006, Moscow and Damascus signed military contracts for USD 4 billion, by 2010, this sum had allegedly increased to nearly USD 20 billion.[6]

Although, Libya and Syria represent the two most problematic cases for Moscow, Russian economic positions were generally undermined by the outbreak of the Arab Spring across the whole region. Thus, some experts speak about the problems with Russian arms sales in the region. The continuing political turmoil in Egypt harmed the incomes of Russian grain exporters who considered this country as one of the main buyers of their product in the Middle East.[7] The growing confrontation between Moscow and the Gulf Arabs

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[4] Eldar Kasaev, 'Rossiysko-liviyskie Ekonomicheskiye Otnosheniya' in http://iimes.ru/rus/stat/2010/08-06-10.htm Last accessed on 4 October 2013.

[5] Vladimir Evseev, 'Nikotoryie aspekty rossiysko-siriyskogo sotrudnichestva' http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2008/04-03-08b.htm (accessed on 31 May 2013); Ministerstvo Ekonomicheskogo Razvitiya Rossii, 'Torgovo-ekonomicheskiye otnosheniya Rossiyskoy Federatscii I Siriyskoy Arabskoy Respubliki' http://www.economy.gov. ru/minec/press/news/doc1227277900147?presentationtemplate=docHTMLTemplate1&presentationtemplateid=2dd7bc8044687de796f0f7af753c8a7e&WCM_Page.ResetAll=TRUE&CACHE=NONE&CONTENTCACHE=NONE&CONNECTORCACHE=NONE (accessed on 31 May 2013)

[6] Vladimir Evseev, 'Nikotoryie aspekty rossiysko-siriyskogo sotrudnichestva'; Aleksey Sarabyev, 'Rossiysko-Siriyskoye "nastoyaschee-budushchee": voenno-morskoy aspekt' in Rossiyskiy Sovet po Mezhdunarodnym Delam, 10 October 2011. http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=35#top (accessed on 31 May 2013)

[7] Ekaterina Kats, "Arabskiy Shchet", Kompaniya №33, 2011 http://ko.ru/articles/23468 Last accessed on

caused by the Russian position on Syria tangibly limited Russian options to strengthen cooperation with the members of the GCC. For instance, during 2010 – 2011, the RF offered Qatar a number of investment projects that cost USD 10 – 12 billion in different fields of Russian economy (first of all, oil and gas, construction as well as gold mining sectors). However, all these proposals were ignored by Doha. As argued by some analysts, the political factor was not the last to determine the Qatari approach.[8] Even the UAE where the Russian presence in the Arab part of the Persian Gulf is probably the strongest are considered an unreliable partner since the beginning of the Arab Spring. As stated by one of the leading Russian experts on the economy of the Middle East, Eldar Kasaev, "the UAE is a member of the GCC whose main ideologists are Saudi Arabia and Qatar are famous for anti-Russian feelings. … [As a result,] it should not be assumed that the Emirates will continue to develop relations with Moscow if the Qataris and Saudis start waging an [undeclared] war against Russia".[9]

It is necessary to say that Qatar is also supposed to be one of the main Russian rivals in the gas market. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, this unofficial confrontation received an ideological base. Additional troubles are created by the fact that both the RF and Qatar are members of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). Subsequently, the political confrontation often influences the behaviour of these players within the framework of this structure. Thus, in 2011, Russia deliberately sent to the summit of the leaders of the GECF countries in Qatar a delegation whose level was far lower than that required by the protocol. In 2013, the Qataris responded in the same way when the meeting was held in Moscow.[10] Taking into account that the two other members of the Forum, Libya and Egypt, are busy with the domestic situation, such behaviour of Moscow and Doha does not make the GECF an effective organisation. This, in turn, harms the interests of all participants.

Losing the Face

The troubles in the Russian economic relations with the members of the GCC are the results of changes in the perception of the RF in the Middle East. Probably, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011 were the most important tests for the image of Russia in the region. In the first occasion Moscow managed to come out victorious: its negative diplomatic reaction on the war in Iraq and voiced concerns that the Saddam's WMD threat was just a pretext for the Americans to change the

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4 October 2013,

[8] Eldar Kasaev, 'Rossiya i Katar: Prichiny Ekonomicheskoy Stagnatcii' in http://www.iimes.ru/?p=17847 Last accessed on 4 October 2013.

[9] Eldar Kasaev, "Ekonomicheskoye Partnerstvo Rossii I OAE: Tekushchee Sostoyaniye i Politicheskiye Riski", http://www.iimes.ru/?p=18069, 4 October 2013

[10] Kasaev, "Rossiya i Katar".

disliked regime in the foreign country found positive feedback in the Middle East. However, the very modest reaction on the events of the Arab Spring bewildered the Arab street and even caused certain disappointment in Moscow. The attempts of some Russian officials and analysts to present these events as another possibly outside-inspirited movement which will not bring many changes in the political structure of the region only strengthened the further criticism of the authorities of the RF.[11] Subsequently, the support of the central government by Moscow in the Syrian conflict was the last straw to break the camel's back. When, in 2012, the Russian diplomats first vetoed the UNSC resolution on Syria, the RF became closely associated with all things the Arab Spring was supposed to fight against: violence, dictatorship and bloodshed. As stated by an expert on Russian-Arab relations Irina Mokhova, "almost all media resources from Morocco to Lebanon (with the exception of Algeria and Syria) became moderately critical on Russian efforts in the Middle East".[12]

The crucial role in this process was played by the newspapers and TV channels of Qatar and Saudi Arabia whose public opinion on Russia was and still is far from being positive. Taking into account the influence which *the Asharq Al-Awsat, Al-Hayat* and *Al-Jazeera* have on the public opinion in the region and outside of it, Moscow was doomed to lose the information war for the Middle East. Thus, on 29 September 2012, *the Asharq Al-Awsat* published an editorial article by Tariq Alhomayed which accused Lavrov in fabricating the facts about the situation in the region. Moreover, the stance of Moscow on Syria was just an invitation for the discussion on other topics sensible for the RF such as the state of democracy and Muslim minorities in Russia. For instance, in July 2012, *Al-Jazeera* voiced concerns about the domestic policy of Putin and called him "the dictator of the XXI century". The active polemics on these issues in the Arab press led to the further demonizing of the image of Russia. Subsequently, on 12 October 2012, in his interview to state channel Qatar TV one of the leading religious figures of the Middle East, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, called Russia "enemy number one" of Islam and Muslims.[13]

Political Defeat

The negative changes in the perception of Russia in the Middle East are closely related with another challenge to Moscow's interests in the region posed by the Arab Spring: the shrinking of the number of countries ready for a dialogue with the RF. First of all, the fall of the old partners of Moscow such as Qaddafi substantially questioned the future of Russian relations with the countries previously headed by these dictators with Russia. As assumed by Russian analysts, the U.S., E.U. and even China have much more chances to

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[11] Mokhova, "Obraz Rossii v Arabskom Mire".

[12] Ibid

[13] Ibid

become the partners or even allies of new regimes than Moscow. According to them, the approaches of these non-regional states to the Arab Spring appeared to be more intricate. Thus, the U.S. and E.U. openly supported the revolutionary movements whereas the Chinese created a reliable safe net by establishing close economic contacts with local private business whose interests are independent from the type of domestic political regime. Russia had none of these advantages.[14]

As it has been already mentioned, the Arab Spring hampered the development of Russian relations with those countries whose governments became interested in the establishment of closer political and economic ties with Moscow in the 2000s. The members of the GCC represent the most notorious example. The Russian support of Bashar Assad diverted them from Moscow. After 2011, it took about two years before the RF could finally resume the effective discussion of bilateral, regional and international issues with Saudi Arabia.

Finally, the Arab Spring put a serious threat to the dialogue between the Russian authorities and the religious leaders of the Middle East. The positive development of these relations are traditionally seen by Moscow as one of the factors directly influencing the political stability of the country: until the majority of Muslim religious leaders consider the situation with the rights of the Russian Muslim community normal, this, as believed by the authorities of the RF, seriously limits moral and financial assistance to radical Islamists acting in the South of Russia from abroad. Thus, in May 2012, the Russian authorities supported the organization of the international meeting of Islamic theologians from 23 countries in Moscow. The event was held under the slogan 'Islamic doctrine against radicalism'. The list of invited participants included such prominent figures as Secretary General of the World Council of Muslim Scholars Ali al-Qaradagi and vice-president of this organization Abdallah Bin Bayyah. The meeting ended with the adoption of the declaration condemning religious radicalism. It also called upon Muslim theologians to be very careful when using such terms as caliphate (*khilāfā*), jihad (*ǧihād*) and takfeer (*takfîr*) since they could justify the activities of religious extremists. This document was considered to be the serious diplomatic success of Moscow. However, the impact of this achievement was undermined when, a year after, the similar meeting was held in Cairo. That time, the gathering blessed the activities of the Syrian opposition and called the civil war in this country 'a jihad'. This statement indirectly affected Russia by logically posing it as a country supporting the side against which the holy war is waged. It could be hardly called a coincidence that the organizing committee of the Cairo meeting did its best

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[14] Aleksandr Shumilin, Rossiya i "Novye Elity" Stran "Arabskoy Vesny": Vozmozhnosti i Perspektivy Vzaimodeystviya, (Moscow: Rossiyskiy Sovet po Mezhdunarodnym Delam, 2013), p. 34.

to maximally include the participants of the Moscow meeting in the list of invited people.[15]

The Reasons for Failure

There are several reasons explaining why the Arab Spring appeared extremely harmful for Moscow's ties with the region. First of all, this was determined by the general ill approach of the Russian authorities to the Middle East. Seeing the region as a play ground for their games with the West, they did not pay attention to what was happening in the Middle Eastern countries. As opposed to the Soviet or Imperial times, Moscow's foreign policy towards the Middle East lacked direction and credibility. Policy priorities towards individual states and the region as a whole were contradictory and ill-defined. Russia refrained from diplomatic initiatives, while its links with regional governments were not used constructively. Thus, since 1991 and until recently, Russia neglected such factor as soft power. The creation of the Arabic service of the state Russia Today Channel in 2007 and the creation of the Russian cultural centres in the Middle Eastern countries during the 2000s were bold, but insufficient moves.

While the U.S. and Europe were busy with the creation of the pro-Western groups within cultural, economic and political elites of the region through different cultural, humanitarian and educational programmes, Moscow minimized its cooperation with the Middle East in this field. Moreover, it literally cut relations with those pro-Russian groups formed during the Soviet times. Subsequently, during the two decades after the fall of the USSR, these pro-Russian elements either perished or lost their influence without the support of Kremlin. For instance, this was the case of Syria where as stated by some analysts, the pro-Russian group was almost completely eliminated in the struggle for power after the rise of Bashar Assad in 2000. However, Moscow realised this only in 2011 when it tried to re-establish connections with people previously loyal to Moscow. As a result, in the events of the Arab Spring there were few people both on the side of the regime and on the side of revolutionaries who could lobby the interests of the RF.[16]

Moreover, before the Arab Spring, the Russian authorities developed the dialogue with the Middle Eastern countries primarily on the governmental level neglecting ties with non-state economic and political actors who could have created the safe-net for Russia during the Arab Spring. Subsequently, after the fall of the ruling regimes in Egypt, Libya and other countries, Moscow was compelled to start its relations with new authorities of the Arab states

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[15] Dmitriy Nechitaylo, "Severokavkaztcsy v Grazhdanskoy Voyne v Sirii", http://www.iimes.ru/?p=18111 Last accessed on 4 October 2013.   .

[16] Vladimir Akhmetov, "'Russkaya Komanda' v Sirii?', http://www.iimes.ru/?p=17868 Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

from scratch.[17] The existing close connections of Kremlin with major Russian governmental and semi-governmental corporations also played the negative role. It is not a mere coincidence that the majority of the success stories of Russian business in the Middle East are related to corporations affiliated with the government. The Russian government spares no effort to support its economic behemoth. On the contrary, medium and smaller businesses (as well as Russian industries which are considered to be of secondary importance for the economic elite) usually do not enjoy this level of support. As a result they are doomed to encounter numerous problems with Iranian realities on their own. After the outbreak of the Arab Spring, this situation had negative implications for Russian interests in the Middle East. The close support of the business interests at the government level led to the association of the Russian business with the Russian state, and, thus, made it dependent on the fluctuations of the political situation. Subsequently, the lost of political positions in the Middle Eastern countries caused the lost of economic position. The ties of medium and smaller business with the private sector would have preserved Russian presence in the region. However, the creation of these ties was never encouraged by the authorities of the RF.

By 2011, Russian foreign policy-making on the Middle East was fragmented as it involved several policy-making actors with conflicting agendas - the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, NGOs, as well as governmental, semi-governmental and private commercial companies and even the Russian Orthodox Church. In the absence of long-term policy goals and priorities, Moscow took a case-by-case approach sticking to the principle of momentary profit and balancing between all regional forces.

The Russian attempts to follow the principle of open doors and be friends for all were relatively inefficient even before the Arab Spring. Thus, during the 2000s, the periodical efforts of the Russian authorities to maintain equally good relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel without acknowledging problems existing in the relations of Riyadh, Tehran and Tel-Aviv with each other only irritated Moscow's partners. For instance, Moscow attempt to upgrade the Russo-Israeli relations during the visit of Putin to Tel-Aviv in 2012 without admitting the threat paused by Tehran's nuclear program was, from the very beginning, doomed to be futile. In addition to this, since the 1990s, the Middle Easterners have been keeping somewhere in the back of their minds the thought that post-Soviet Russia is more oriented to the West. This, in turn, did not add much trust to Russia.

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[17] Shumilin, "Rossiya i 'Novye Elit' Stran 'Arabskoy Vesny'".

The events of the Arab Spring only confirmed an old wisdom that it is hard to be a friend for all. This was proven by the civil conflict in Libya. In 2011, the attempts of Moscow to play in a shuttle diplomacy between the rebels and the government of Qaddafi raised a lot of questions in both camps. On one hand, the leader of the Libyan Jamahiriya was confused by the fact that Russia which, in 2008 – 2010, was actively developing relations with Tripoli suddenly started to persuade him to start negotiations with his enemies and, possibly, to leave the throne. This could not be considered otherwise than treachery. On the other hand, the opposition felt the moral and military support of the West and wanted to end the dictatorial regime. Under these conditions, any attempts to persuade them to start the dialogue with the opponent could probably only rise questions about whether the authorities of the RF wanted the peace or tried to postpone the final blow to Qaddafi.[18]

Last, but not least, the attitude of Moscow to the Middle East as a trading item in the Russian relations with the West also played its role. Thus, as it had happened previously, in 2011, Moscow decided to use Libya as a trading item in order to bargain preferences in its relations with the U.S. and E.U. On 17 March 2011, the Russian government did not veto UN SC resolution 1973 which paved the way for the U.S. and E.U. intervention in the Libyan conflict. Subsequently, the RF imposed sanctions on Libya and it was the first to stop arms exports to the regime of Qaddafi. In the eyes of the pro-Western group of Russian ruling elite these steps were worth making: in 2011, Moscow still hoped to reset relations with Washington, and the military contracts with France also played their role. Nevertheless, this time, the losses did not justify gains. The situation itself had changed: if, for instance, the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement of 1995 when Russia agreed to stop military assistance to Iran had significant, but not crucially negative effect on Tehran, Moscow decisions on Libya probably determined the destiny of Qaddafi. In other words, in 1995, Russia only cheated Iran whereas, in 2011, it betrayed the regime of Qaddafi. Under these conditions, the image of the RF in the Middle East suffered heavy losses: according to the traditions of the region, a treachery (no matter who is a betrayed person) is never forgotten.[19]

Treachery is also considered a sign of weakness (as well as the strategy of balancing between different forces: a strong player can afford to clearly

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[18] RIA Novosti, "Margelov: RF Aktiviziruyet Kontakty s Oppozitcsiey i Vlastyami Livii" RIA Novosti, 27 May 2011. http://ria.ru/arab_ly/20110527/380644465.html Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

[19] "Medvedev Podpsal Ukaz o Sanktcsiyah protiv Livii", VoA, 12 August 2011 http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/russia-lybia-medvedev-sanctions-2011-08-12-127578108/241893.html Last accessed on 5 October 2013; Zhenmin Zhibao, "Rossiya Sklonyaetsya k Uzhestocheniyu Sanktcsiy protiv Livii", Zhenmin Zhibao, 15 August 2011 http://russian.people.com.cn/31519/7568885.html Last accessed on 5 October 2013; "Bastrykina Poprosili Proverit Deyatelnost Medvedeva na Fakt Izmeny", Nakanune, 4 February 2013. http://www.nakanune.ru/news/2013/2/4/22299398/ Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

demonstrate his preferences). This, in turn, assured the opponents of Russia in the region that in other cases the opinion of Moscow could be ignored. For instance, since the very beginning of the Arab Spring, the Qataris have been periodically repeating the idea that the RF has long lost its status of the centre of power in the international politics, but it still tries to return to it by playing the role of a minor troublemaker and supporting the dictatorial regimes.[20] The representatives of the Syrian opposition went even further: when persuading the American and European policymakers to intervene in the civil conflict in Syria, they argued that Moscow has no real leverages on the West. As an example they referred to the situation with Yugoslavia in 1999, Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011. According to them, in all cases the Russian government was compelled to deal with the U.S. and NATO behaviour as granted.[21]

End of the Game?

However, it is still early to say that, after the beginning of the Arab Spring, Russia completely lost its position in the Middle East. On the contrary, if the period 2011 – 2012 was the time of a serious stress-test for Moscow, the events of 2013 demonstrated that Moscow still has all the chances to preserve its presence in the region. As stated by some experts, by 2013, the negative implications of the Arab Spring for the RF had been finally counterbalanced by positive trends.

Rethinking Approaches

First and foremost, by 2013, Moscow reconsidered its approaches towards the Middle East. The Russian foreign policy on the region became tougher in defending its red lines and, at the same time, more clever. Thus, Moscow started to look at the domestic situation in the region more carefully. Currently, Russia does not conceal its interest in a dialogue with almost all forces in the Middle Eastern arena . For instance, over the past two years, Russia has established contacts with the different groups of the Syrian opposition.[22] Thus, if until the summer of 2012 the Russian authorities were dealing mostly with semi-legal and moderate opposition forces, such as members of the National Coordination Council, by autumn 2012, the Russians were looking for contacts with members of the Syrian National Council. And in 2013, these contacts were established at different levels. Finally, on 10 February 2013, in his interview on the Russian television channel *Rossiya 1*, Russian Foreign

[20] Kasaev, 'Ekonomicheskoye Partnerstvo Rossii I OAE'

[21] Interview with an expert on Syria, Washington DC, May 2012; interview with an expert on the Middle East, St.Andrews, June 2013.

[22] Ministerstvo Inostrannikh del Rossiyskoy Federatcsii, "Intervyu minisra inostrannikh del Rossii S.V. Lavrova v programme 'Voskresniy vecher s Vladimirom Solovevim' na telekanale "Rossiya-1", Moskva, 10 fevralya 2013 goda' http://mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/2fee282eb6df40e643256999 005e6e8c/02eb-c66354ef10e544257b0e0045ad41!OpenDocument (accessed on 31 May 2013).

Minister Sergey Lavrov acknowledged that Moscow has links with "all groups inside the Syrian opposition without any exceptions" and uses them for the periodic exchanges of views. As an example of such dialogue, the foreign minister referred to his recent meeting with the head of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, Sheikh Ahmed Moaz Khatib, on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on 1-3 February 2013.[23]

The agenda of such meetings has never been made public. However, information leaks allow analysts to assume that the Russian authorities are talking about ways not only to bring about a ceasefire between the Syrian government and the opposition, but also to start negotiations. Moscow is probably trying to demonstrate that, under certain conditions, it will be ready to deal with the new Syrian authorities after Assad's fall or resignation.

These declarations are supported by the examples of Russia's relations with the other Arab countries in which authoritarian regimes have recently fallen: namely, post-Mubarak Egypt and post-Qaddafi Libya. Moscow was one of the first to start a dialogue with the Egyptian government after the fall of Mubarak's regime. In November 2012, Lavrov visited the country and confirmed the Russian government's readiness to pursue political and economic cooperation with Egypt, regardless of the Islamist background of Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsi. The same thesis was probably used by Lavrov during his meeting with the head of one of the largest Libyan parties – National Forces Alliance – Mahmoud Jibril in Moscow on 27 February 2013. As noted by some analysts, both in the case of Egypt and Libya, Russia tried to play on existing mistrust to the U.S. and E.U. among political groups in the above-mentioned countries. The signal sent from Moscow was simple: close ties only with American and European leaders did not save Hosni Mubarak and Muammar Qaddafi from their fate (i.e. there is a necessity to relay on alternative force which could be represented by Moscow). It is highly probable that the same thesis is (or will be) used by the Russian authorities in their contacts with the members of the Syrian opposition.[24]

Meanwhile, it is not the same tactics of open doors which Russia used before the Arab Spring. Russia is ready for the dialogue with many regional groups but not with all of them: any connections with the radical Islamic groups are not an option for the authorities of the RF. This Russian principality brightly contrasted with the behaviour of some Western countries which could apply radically different labels to the Islamists fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Libya or Syria. With the return of Putin, the role of the Middle East as a trading item in Russo-American and Russo-European relations became less obvious. On the contrary, Moscow set certain red lines (such as

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Interview with an expert on Russian foreign policy, Moscow, February 2013.

the unacceptability of foreign military intervention in Syria) whose crossing by the West could cause the retaliatory measures of the Russian government. At the same time, this Russian stubbornness was accompanied by the success of the Kremlin's diplomacy in 2013. Thus, Moscow received the support of its stance on Syria from China, India and a number of other countries. In September 2013, it undermined the U.S. attempts to form the coalition for the military intervention in Syria and stepped with the initiative on the termination of the Syrian chemical arsenal. The later proposal (at least, temporary) allowed Moscow to neutralise American efforts to use the WMD of Assad's regime as a pretext for the military operation against Damascus. Finally, whenever Putin raised the Syrian issue on the sidelines of the meetings of the leading world powers such as the G8 Summit in Loch-Erne (17-18 June 2013) and G-20 Summit in St.-Petersburg (5-6 September 2013) he was always more persuasive and eloquent than his opponents. This was not left unnoticed by the public opinion in the Middle East. On one hand, in the eyes of those regional states which managed to preserve positive or neutral attitude to Moscow the Russian authorities managed to rehabilitate themselves after the ambivalent foreign policy on the region during the period 2011 – the early-2012. The authorities of the RF proved that they are able to keep a given word. On the other hand, the regional opponents of Russia such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia were compelled to recognise the Kremlin as an important player whose opinion should be taken into account. Thus, such influential newspapers as *the Asharq Al-Awsat* and *al-Hayat* considered the failure of Obama to persuade Putin to change the Russian stance on Syria during the G-8 summit in Loch-Erne as a pure victory of Russia whereas the U.S. administration was accused in 'opportunism and weakness'.[25]

Brave New World

The Arab Spring has changed the political map of the region. Its outbreak caused the formation of a new system of regional relations which roughly divided the Middle Eastern countries in the following three groups:

1. Countries aspiring to the role of the architects of the Arab revolutions and leaders of the new Middle East (first of all, the GCC members which were and still are actively involved in the process of the overthrowing of dictatorial regimes in Libya and Syria)

2. New regimes emerged as the outcome of the Arab Spring which are trying to find their own way of political development (such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen)

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[25] Grigoriy Kosach, "Pozitcsiya Rossii po Siriiskomu Krizisu v Arabskoy Presse posle Vstrechi G8", http://www.iimes.ru/?p=17779. Last accessed on 5 October 2013

3. "Fragments of the old world" or countries which lived through the turbulence of regional uprisings and managed to preserve their old regimes (such as Algeria).

As it appeared by 2013, all these three groups have their own interests in establishing a certain level of good relations with Russia. Thus, for such countries as Algeria whose governments are concerned with the growing influence of the Gulf monarchies in the region as well as scared to repeat the destiny of the Qaddafi or Mubarak regimes, Russia is seen as a reliable partner and protector. The Syrian experience shows that the RF under Putin is capable to outbalance the Western influence and can guarantee a certain level of security for its partners.

For instance, approximately since 2012, analysts argue about the intensification of Algerian dialogue with Moscow. In spite of certain setback in military cooperation (which, however, has temporary nature and, to a certain extent, determined by the decision of the Algerian authorities to diversify the sources of military supplies), Algiers could be called one of the closest partner of Moscow in the North African region. By 2013 the volume of trade between the two countries achieved the level of USD 2,7 billion and continued its growth. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, Algeria and Russia have been confirming their decision to strengthen multidimensional cooperation within the framework of the declaration on strategic partnership signed by the authorities of these states in 2001. To a large extent this behaviour of Algiers and Moscow is determined by common threats and challenges posed by the aftermath of the Arab Spring. They are equally concerned with the rise of Islamism in the region, intense Western interference in the Middle Eastern affairs and the growing influence of Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Both countries are also worried with the perspectives of their presence in the European gas market as well as with the attempts of the E.U. to diversify the sources of hydrocarbon imports.[26]

During 2012 – 2013, in order to have a constant opportunity to exchange opinions on these issues, Algeria and Russia substantially increased the number of working meetings at different levels. Thus, in September 2012, Lavrov met with his Algerian colleague Mourad Medelci on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. In November 2012, Deputy Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Messahel visited Moscow. In February 2013, Lavrov made Algiers a part of his North African trip. During his stay in this country, the Russian Foreign Minister had consultations with Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Medelci. In return, the later visited

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[26] Ministerstvo Inostrannikh Del Rossiyskoy Federatcsii, "Intervyu Ministra Inostrannikh Del Rossii S.V.Lavrova Alzhirskoy Gazete "Al-Khabar"", 3 Iyulya 2013', http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/BRP_4.nsf/fa711a859c4b939643256 999005bcbbc/c48f6a5826b92fc544257b9d003f674f!OpenDocument Last accessed on 5 October 2013

Moscow on 25 June 2013. Finally, during 1-2 July 2013, Minister of Energy and Mines Youcef Yousfi and the head of the Council of the Nation, Abdelkader Bensalah, represented Algeria at the GECF summit in the Russian capital.[27] The results of this meeting demonstrated that this country remains the reliable partner of Russia within the framework of the Gas Forum, thus, outbalancing the uncooperative behaviour of Qatar. On the bilateral level, the Algerian authorities do their best to coordinate the efforts of the two countries on the European hydrocarbon market (as reported by some analysts, the issues of Russo-Algerian energy cooperation in Europe are coordinated by special president envoy to the GECF, chairman of the board of the directors of Gazprom, Viktor Zubkov). In response, the Kremlin provides the Algiers with moral support and expert assistance in its negotiations with the E.U. on energy issues. The Russian oil and gas companies such as Gazprom, Rosneft and Stroytransgaz are also actively involved in the development of the hydrocarbon reserves of Algeria. In the spring 2013, for the support of the activities of Russian companies in this country, Moscow and Algiers held the meeting of the bilateral commission on the trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation.[28]

However, not only old partners decided to strengthen their relations with Moscow. New regimes also intended not to cut ties with RF. Their decision was determined by the two following groups of factors. On one hand, even though in the majority of cases Moscow is hard to be called the main political and economic partner of the Middle Eastern countries, the level of relations with the RF achieved by the beginning of the Arab Spring could not be immediately downgraded. Thus, in the case of Egypt, Cairo was dependent on the imports of Russian grain. By 2011, the Arab republic bought about 4,8 billion tonnes of this product from the RF and, thus, it made Moscow one of the guarantors of Egyptian food security. Given the dependence of the budget incomes of this Middle Eastern country on tourism, it was also the unaffordable luxury for the Egyptians to lose 2,5 – 3 million Russian tourists annually visiting Egypt by 2012. Apart from this, since the early 2000s Cairo demonstrated certain interest in cooperation with Russia in the field of oil, gas and nuclear energy as well as mining, tourism infrastructure, high technologies and space. By 2012, the subsidiary of Russian oil company Lukoil, Lukoil Egypt, was conducting geological exploration in the Gulf of Suez whereas another Russian company Novatek was going to make the geological survey of the el-Arish gas block in the Mediterranean Sea. Finally, Russian companies SMV Engineering and Verteks took the decision to invest their money in gold mining and complex ore extraction.[29]

[27] Ibid.

[28] Eldar Kasaev, "Alzhir: Ekonomicheskiye Svyazi s Rossiey i Sostoyaniye Energeticheskogo Sektora", http://www.iimes.ru/?p=18101 Last accessed on 5 October 2013

[29] Eldar Kasaev, "K Voprosu o Torgovo-Ekonomicheskikh Svyazyakh Rossii I Egipta", http://www.iimes.

On the other hand, as it was mentioned above, the Arab Spring proved the Middle Eastern countries that the dependence on one political and economic partner (no matter, the U.S., U.K., France or Russia) is dangerous. According to some analysts, the fall of Mubarak left the Arab street with a bitter after-taste: the neutrality of Washington was considered as a certain treachery of its fallen ally.[30] Under these conditions, new regimes tried to diversify the range of their main trading and political partners. Thus, both Morsi and post-Morsi administrations were very fast to confirm their loyalty to the Russo-Egyptian friendship and the treaty on strategic partnership signed by Medvedev and Mubarak in 2009. As a result, in 2012, Lavrov visited the Arab Republic for two times (on 9 – 10 March and 4 – 5 November). This provided the ground for the two meetings of Putin with Morsi. One of these took place on the sidelines of the BRICS meeting in Durban on 27 March 2013. The next time, the Egyptian president visited his Russian colleague on 17 – 19 April 2013. The meeting took place at the presidential residence in Sochi. The range of discussed questions included possibilities of Russian assistance in the development of the nuclear programme of Egypt, the continuation of Russian exports of fuel and grain to the Arab Republic as well as options for providing Cairo with the loan of USD 2 billion.[31] After the fall of Morsi government, the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nabil Fahmi, visited Moscow in order to confirm that the political turmoil did not affect the bilateral relations.[32]

The restoration of Russo-Libyan dialogue is also possible. Although the political situation in this country is far from being stable, Moscow tries to support a certain level of the dialogue with the Libyan political groups. The first sign that these contacts may potentially lead to the resumption of economic cooperation was received in September 2013. As reported by Russian media sources, on 24 September 2013, Russia delivered to Libya a military consignment consisted of 10 infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) BMP-3 (according to other sources, antitank missile complexes Khrizantema-S developed on the base of BMP-3) as a symbol of the new era in the military ties of the two countries. The high ranking military officials, Gen. Abdel-Salam Jadallah Obeidi and Brig.Gen. Yousef Abu-Hajar, were sent to take part in the official ceremony of the transfer of these IFVs to the Libyan side. According to some analysts, it could not be a mere coincidence that the arrival of this military equipment was preceded by the visit of the Algerian Minister of International

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ru/?p=16844 Last accessed on 5 October 2013

[30] Interview with an analyst on the modern Middle East, Moscow, August 2013.

[31] Vitaliy Bilan, "Vizit Presidenta ARE M.Mursi v Rossiyu I Egipetskaya Yadernaya Programma", http://www.iimes.ru/?p=17374 Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

[32] Ministerstvo Inostrannikh Del Rossiyskoy Federatcsii, "O Peregovorakh Ministra Inostrannikh Del Rossii S.V.Lavrova s Ministrom inostrannikh Del Egipta N.Fakhmi", http://mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline/ECF7E11312785 DD644257BE8004A55AB Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

Cooperation and Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Abdelaziz to Moscow in September 2013.[33]

There is a hope that the fall of regimes in the countries previously friendly to Russia does not mean the end of partnership between the RF and these states and the experience of Russian-Iraqi relations could be given as an example here. After the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, arms and energy markets of this Middle Eastern state were considered to be lost for Moscow. Kremlin analysts believed in the inevitable political and economic reorientation of Baghdad to Washington. However, the late 2000s were marked with the massive return of Russian oil and gas companies to Iraq. As it appeared, Baghdad was interested in this: the Russians were ready to work in difficult conditions for less amount of money (as compared with Western companies). They were and still are actively cooperating with the authorities of the regions where their companies have projects by employing the locals, donating money for charity needs, developing social infrastructure and establishing good relations with local warlords. Subsequently, by 2013, Baghdad started signing agreements on the development of oil and gas fields with Russian companies on more favourable conditions than usually offered to foreigners. Moreover, the Iraqi authorities closed their eyes on the active penetration of the energy giants from the RF to the part of the country controlled by the Kurdish regional government.

In 2012, Russia and Iraq signed the package of military contracts whose overall volume is estimated in USD 4,2 billion. According to these contracts Moscow was supposed to sell to Baghdad anti-aircraft complexes Pantscir and attack helicopters Mi-28. As it was argued by some military sources, Russian military contracts with Iraq signed in 2012 were not limited by the above-mentioned vehicles. According to them, the main reason for the Iraqi interest in Russian arms is the mistrust of Baghdad to the Western partners and the wish to diversify the range of the suppliers of military equipment.[34] It is notable that even the corruption scandal (Moscow was accused in bribing some Iraqi officials in Baghdad in order to have these contracts signed) which emerged around these military deals shortly after the sides reached the agreement upon them did not lead to the cancellation of the contracts.[35]

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[33] Igor Korotchenko, "Liviya Poluchila Pervuyu Partiyu Novikh Rossiyskikh Vooruzheniy Posle Sverzheniya Kaddafi", VestiFM, 30 September 2013. http://radiovesti.ru/blogs/post/80001 Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

[34] Viktor Nekhezin, "Rossiya Prodala Iraku Nedodelanniye Vertolety MI-28", BBC, 28 June 2013 http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2013/06/130628_iraq_russia_helicopters.shtml Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

[35]"Irak: Kontrakty na Pokupku Oruzhiya v Rossii ne Otmenyalis", BBC, 13 February 2013. http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2013/02/130213_iraq_contracts_russia.shtml Last accessed on 5 October 2013.

In general, by 2014, even the toughest opponents of Russia among the Middle Eastern countries demonstrated their intention to talk to the RF. Probably, this was determined by the firm position of Kremlin on Syria and its persistence in preserving contacts with the region after the return of Putin. In all these cases, Moscow demonstrated that its opinion should be taken into account. Under these circumstances, the members of the GCC states were compelled to maintain the dialogue with Russia. The visit of Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, Secretary General of the National Security Council and head of the Saudi Intelligence Agency, to Moscow on 31 July 2013 and the meeting of Putin with General Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces on 16 – 17 September 2013 are, probably, the most notorious examples of this. In the first case, the details of the talks between Putin and Prince Bandar are still not official. Putting speculations aside, analysts argue that this was an unofficial attempt to bridge relations between the RF and the Kingdom, which was tangibly undermined by the Syrian crisis. As noticed by an expert on regional affairs, Naser al-Tamimi, in spite of existing contradictions, Moscow and Riyadh have certain topics for constructive dialogue including regional political stability and bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy and space.[36] For instance, in 2004, Lukoil Overseas signed the contract with Saudi Arabia. According to the document, this company was granted a 40-year long concession on the exploration and development of the gas field in the Rub-al-Khali desert. For the implementation of this project, Lukoil Overseas and Saudi Aramco established the joint company Lukoil Saudi Arabia Energy Ltd. (LUKSAR). The share of the Russian company is 80%. In 2006, the exploration works of LUKSAR resulted in the discovery of a new hydrocarbon field whose estimated resources achieve 85 million tonnes in equivalent fuel. Currently LUKSAR is making an assessment of discovered reserves in order to begin the development of the field. By August 2011 the accumulated investments of the Russian company had achieved 300 million dollars.[37]

As believed by some analysts, during the visit of Prince Bandar, the Saudis decided to use the energy leverage to influence the behaviour of Moscow. Thus, as reported, they allegedly guaranteed that the GCC countries will not create obstacles for Russian gas exports to the EU in exchange for the refusal of Kremlin from the support of Assad. Apart from that, Riyadh promised to start the full-scale imports of Russian arms. However, this information has never been officially confirmed.[38] The visit of Mohammad Nahyan to Mos-

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[36] Naser al-Tamimi, "Saudi-Russian Relations: Between Assad and Sisi", Al-Arabiya, 18 August 2013. http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2013/08/18/Saudi-Russian-relations-between-Assad-and-Sisi.html Last accessed on 5 October 2013

[37] Ludmila Shkvarya, "Rossiya i Strany Zaliva: Investitsionnoye Sotrudnichestvo", Aziya i Afrika Segodnya №5, 2011, pp. 18 – 23.

[38] "Saudovskaya Araviya Obeshchayet i Ugrozhayet Rossii po Sirii", Vesti, 27 August 2013. http://www.vestifinance.ru/articles/31671 Last accessed on 5 October 2013

cow was more transparent. The sides openly confirmed their interest in the development of bilateral economic relations. Being an often visitor to Moscow (the previous visit of Mohammad Nahyan to Russia took place in October 2012), the sheikh declared the intention of the UAE to invest up to USD 5 billion in Russian transport infrastructure. Putin and Nahyan were satisfied with the growth of the trade volume between the two countries which hit the level of USD 2 billion. Subsequently, they expressed hopes that the positive trend in the bilateral trade will continue.[39]

Conclusion

The events of the Arab Spring and their aftermath were a serious stress-test for the Russian foreign policy on the Middle East. The fall of old dictatorial regimes compelled Moscow to adjust its approaches to a brand new political vista which was not always friendly to the Kremlin. If before 2011 the Russian authorities considered the region to be of secondary importance within the framework of their global diplomatic doctrine, the Arab Sprig lucidly demonstrated that in order to secure Russian national interests Moscow needs to be more active in developing its relations with the regional countries. In other words, it was high time to restore, at least, part of Russian influence in the Middle East lost after the fall of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the revolutionary events changed the general Russian perception of the Middle Eastern countries. By 2013, they were not seen as just another trading item in the relations of Moscow with the U.S. and E.U. or a chessboard where Russia and the West were playing their games: the Arab Spring made Kremlin to regard them as independent players on the international arena with their own task and priorities and to deal with them as equals.

On the other hand, the Arab Spring gave the answer to the countries of the region concerning the place of modern Russia within the system of the international relations of the Middle East. Moscow's stubbornness in defending its interests in Syria as well as its readiness to continue the dialogue with new regimes proved that the RF is an important player in the region which should not be either neglected or underestimated. Although the Russian authorities are still periodically making short-sighted and hasty steps (such as the demonstrative evacuation of the Russian embassy from Tripoli on 3 October 2013 in response to the provocation of unknown militias), there are hopes that the diplomacy of Moscow would become more coherent and subtle.

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[39] Aleksey Chesnokov, 'OAE Vlozhat Milliardy Dollarov v Infrastrukturu Rossii' in VestiFM, 12 September 2013. http://radiovesti.ru/article/show/article_id/105871 Last accessed on 5 October 2013

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LÜBNAN'DA SİYASİ İSTİKRAR VE MÜLTECİLER

ÖZ

Bu makale, Filistin ve Suriyeli mülteci krizinin Lübnan'daki siyasi istikrara etkisini karşılaştırmaktadır. Filistin mülteci topluluğunun 1970 sonrasında militarize olmasının yanı sıra bu topluluğun Lübnan toplumuna eklemlenmesi (tawteen) üzerindeki tartışmalar, 1975 yılında Lübnan'da iç savaşın patlak vermesinin temel etkenleriydi. 2011 yılından beri Lübnan'a göç eden Suriyeli mültecilerin sayısının 1 milyonu geçmesi, Lübnan'ın yine siyasi bir çöküş ve sivil çatışmaya tanıklık yapıp yapmayacağı konusundaki benzer endişeleri arttırmaya başlamıştır. Lübnan'daki mevcut mülteci krizi genel olarak 1970'lerdeki ile karşılaştırılabilecek nitelikte olsa da, mevcut mülteci krizinde mülteci topluluğunun profilinin değişiklik arz etmesinin, bunun yanı sıra krizin çok daha geniş bir ölçeğe sahip olmasının farklı dinamikleri ortaya çıkardığı iddia edilmektedir. Özellikle ev sahibi toplumun ve mülteci topluluğunun arasındaki çizgilerin ailesel, kişisel veya diğer bağlantılar yoluyla birbirine girmesi, Lübnan'da bugünkü mülteci siyasetinin dinamiklerini 1970'lerin başındakinden belirgin bir şekilde farklı kılmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, her ne kadar Lübnanlı siyasi aktörler başlangıçta mülteci sorununu siyasallaştırmaya çalışmışlarsa da, krizin ölçeği bunu siyasal değil, ülkedeki siyasi muhalifler arasındaki mesafeyi azaltmaya hizmet eden ulusal bir mesele haline getirmiştir. Bu durum mevcut krizin Lübnan devletine varoluşsal bir tehdit oluşturma ihtimali olmadığı anlamına gelmemektedir. Daha ziyade, bu krizin doğası öyle bir hal almıştır ki, Lübnan iç savaşının öncesinde ve sonrasında olduğu gibi mülteci sorununu tecrit etme çabaları, artık çok mümkün gözükmemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, Rusya, Suriye

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الاستقرار السياسي في لبنان و أزمة اللاجئين :

بينيامين ماك كوين & كايلي باكستر

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خلاصة:

يتناول هذا المقال اثر نزوح اللاجئين السوريين والفلسطينيين علي استقرار الوضع السياسي بلبنان. ان نزوح اللاجئين الفلسطينيين على المجتمع اللبناني بعد عام 1970 كان من اهم الاسباب التي ادت الي نشوب الحرب الاهلية بلبنان عام 1975. كما ان تجاوز عدد اللاجئين السوريين الذين بدءوا بالنزوح الي لبنان اعتبارا من عام 2011 المليون تسبب في خلق حالة من القلق تجاه نشوب نزاعات داخلية جديدة وتدهور الوضع السياسي في البلاد. بالاضافة الي ان ازمة اللاجئين الموجودة في لبنان في حال تمت مقارنتها بالحالة التي وصلت اليها البلاد عام 1970، نجد ان هناك بعض الادعاءات التي تزعم ان الشكل العام للاجئين تغير هذه المرة وتبلور لياخذ شكلا اكثر خطورة . خاصة بعد ظهور حالة من التنافر بين اللاجئين واهالي لبنان نتيجة اسباب سياسية او عائلية وغيرها، وكل هذا ادى الي ظهور ازمة اللاجئين بصورة اكثر وضوحا عما كانت عليه في عام 1970. وعلاوة على ذلك فبالرغم من محاولة السياسيين اللبانين في تسييس مشكلة اللاجئين السوريين والاستفادة منها فانهم لم يجعلوها مسالة سياسية بل انهم جعلوا منها مسالة قومية واستفادوا منها في تقليل حالة الخناق بين قوى المعارضة داخل الدولة. ولكن هذا الوضع لا يعني ان مسالة اللاجئين لا تشكل تهديدا على الدولة اللبنانية. كما ان مسالة اللاجئين في لبنا ان اصبحت امرا مألوفا لدرجة ان كل الجهود التي بذلت من اجل القضاء عليها قبل الحرب الاهلية وبعدها فشلت واصبح القضاء عليها امرا مستحيلا.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: لبنان , سوريا, اللاجئون , الحرب الاهلية.

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REFUGEES AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN LEBANON

ABSTRACT

This article compares the Palestinian and Syrian refugee crises on political stability in Lebanon. Debates over the "implantation" (tawteen) of the Palestinian refugee community, alongside the increasing militarization of the community after 1970 were key factors in the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975. The arrival of over 1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon since 2011 has raised similar concerns of whether Lebanon will again witness political collapse and civil conflict. However, it is argued that whilst the current refugee crisis in Lebanon is broadly comparative to the events of the early 1970s, the scale of the current refugee crisis alongside the different profile of the refugee community has created different dynamics. Specifically, the blurring of lines between the host community and the refugee community through familial, personal, and other links makes the dynamics of refugee politics in Lebanon today markedly different from that of the early 1970s. In addition, where Lebanese political actors had initially sought to politicize the refugee issue, the scale of the crisis has made this a national, not political issue, serving to reduce the distance between political opponents in the country. This is not to argue that the current crisis does not pose potentially existential challenges to the Lebanese state. Instead, the nature of the crisis is such that efforts at isolating the refugee "problem", as took place before and after the Lebanese civil war, are not possible today.

Keywords: *Lebanon, Syria, Confessionalism, Refugees, Civil Conflict*

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Introduction

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, an estimated 2.5 million people have fled the country. Syria's neighbour, Lebanon, has received the highest number of arrivals, with over 1 million refugees registered by the UNHCR as of April 2014. With a population of just over 4.5 million, this massive influx of displaced people has given Lebanon the highest per capita concentration of refugees anywhere in the world.[1] Such a situation, in and of itself, would place massive strain on any state. However, the precarious political situation in Lebanon prior to the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, alongside its history of inter-confessional conflict, raises serious concerns for the stability and viability of the Lebanese Republic. These concerns come into sharper relief through comparison to the impacts of the Palestinian refugee influx after the 1947-48 Arab-Israeli War and the 1967 Six Day War, events that tipped Lebanon's fragile confessional balance into civil war in 1975.

This article compares the impacts of the Palestinian and Syrian refugee crises on the stability and viability of Lebanon's confessional system. In particular, it investigates the assumption that the current crisis is, as some claim, "strikingly parallel to the period preceding the 1975-90 civil war".[2] Overall, despite the centrality of the Palestinian role in the civil war and concerns over "implantation" (*tawteen*) of refugee communities, it is argued that there are important distinctions between the two refugee crises that have significant ramifications for political stability in Lebanon. In particular, this article will compare the size of the refugee communities, arrival and settlement patterns, the contrasting legal status of the two communities within Lebanon, the different spill-over dynamics of the "push" conflicts on the host society, and the particular nature of refugee politics toward the Palestinian community as opposed to the Syrian community highlighting key distinctions between the two events.

The differences between the Palestinian and Syrian refugee crises have had two, seemingly contradictory, implications. First, that the current crisis has the potential to be more of an existential threat to the survival of the confessional political system in Lebanon. Second, the very scale of this crisis has created short-term cooperation between the rival March 8 and March 14 coalitions that has the potential to circumvent this challenge. In other words, the magnitude of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon and the particular relationship between Lebanon and Syria has forced political elites to preserve the system rather than exploit the issue for political gain, moving it from a political to a national crisis. This represents both the severity of the current threat to confessional politics in Lebanon and the potential for its consolidation.

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[1] For the full data-set on the Syrian refugees, see <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

[2] Joseph Bahout, "Lebanon at the Brink: The Impact of the Syrian Civil War", *Middle East Brief* (Crown Center for Middle East Studies), No. 76 (January 2014), p. 5.

Palestinian Refugees and Civil War in Lebanon

The Palestinian refugee community arrived in Lebanon in the wake of the first Arab-Israeli war, numbering over 100,000. With the solidification of Lebanon's confessional system of governance in 1943, this influx of predominantly Sunni Muslims immediately raised critical questions as to how the new state, in which political power was derived from the confessional model, would accommodate the arrivals. Whilst Lebanese attitudes were initially sympathetic to the Palestinian plight, it was the clear expectation on both a political and societal level that shelter within Lebanon was a temporary arrangement.[3] Simply put, the Lebanese government, and by extension the population, responded to the arrival of the Palestinians on the assumption that pending a political solution with Israel the refugees would enact their right of return to their pre-1948 homes.

For the Christian political elite in Lebanon, this view reflected an effort to preserve the country's nascent confessional system of governance. After Lebanese independence in 1943, political posts and representation in the Lebanese parliament were allocated according to religious identity, with a permanent Maronite Catholic President with strong executive powers, Sunni Muslim Prime Minister, Shi'a Muslim Speaker of the House and a division of parliamentary seats according to the 1932 census, administered by the French Mandate authorities, that allocated six Christian members for every five Muslim members.[4] As such, the post-independence government of Bechara el Khoury was wary of the implications of a permanent settlement of non-Christians within the country.

The settlement pattern of the refugee community reflected this view, as a camp system was devised initially to shelter, and then contain the refugees. The United Nations Works and Refugee Agency (UNRWA) was founded against this backdrop through Resolution 302 (IV) in 1949, with a specific mandate to provide 'direct relief and works programmes' to registered Palestinian refugees, to 'prevent conditions of starvation and distress… and to further conditions of peace and stability'.[5] While the creation of UNRWA served a vital humanitarian purpose, literally feeding and clothing people, the organization also had profound ramifications on identity politics within the displaced Palestinian community, serving to strengthen the communal refugee identity. With the establishment of UNRWA, the bulk of the refugee community were sheltered within a system of camps. As a result, the international community effectively assumed responsibility for the humanitarian

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[3] Rami Siklawi, "The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 6, 2010, p. 601.

[4] Benjamin MacQueen, *An Introduction to Middle East Politics*, (London: Sage, 2013), p. 100.

[5] For the full text of UNGA Resolution 302 (IV), 1949, see <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESO-LUTION/GEN/NR0/051/21/IMG/NR005121.pdf?OpenElement>

aspect of the refugee community.[6] While some levels of informal economic and social integration inevitably occurred, the refugees were largely exceptionalized within Lebanon. Between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s, the Lebanese state passed a raft of legislation to ensure Palestinian exclusion from a range of professions and to place strict limitations on land ownership.[7] In the absence of space within Lebanese society, the UNRWA camps evolved to meet more than basic humanitarian needs, operating as sites of economic, political and social community. These camps, and the international approach which underpinned their existence, also operated on the assumption that a political solution to the refugee plight would be forthcoming.[8] Coupled with the Lebanese determination to resist a forced resettlement, this dynamic worked to perpetuate the view both within and outside the camps that the presence of the refugee community was temporary, and as such isolation from the political activities of the Lebanese state was inevitable.

For el Khazen, the 1968-1971 period represented a critical juncture in the Palestinian experience in Lebanon.[9] The phase would see the community move from its insularity and apparent political neutrality toward more direct involvement in Lebanese and regional politics, a development which was critical in straining the fragile political balance in the country. As the Arab states reeled after the comprehensive Israeli victory in the 1967 war, the newly formed Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as well as loosely affiliated groups in the refugee camps in southern Lebanon turned to guerrilla tactics in their confrontation with Israel.[10] By April 1969, the assertiveness of the Palestinian militias in Lebanon had generated conflict with the Lebanese Army and the two forces battled for control of the camps. The inability of the Lebanese government to contain Palestinian assertiveness, alongside significant pressure from Syria and Egypt, led to the signing of the 1969 Cairo Accord that guaranteed Palestinian security control over the camps. This enhanced the right of Palestinians to work within Lebanon and increased freedom of movement, including the right to continue a military campaign against Israel from Lebanese territory, in return for an acceptance of Lebanese sovereignty.[11]

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[6] Milton Viorst, *UNRWA and Peace in the Middle East*, (Washington DC: Middle East Institute, 1984), p. 10.

[7] See for example, Lebanese Decree No. 17561 of 18/9/1962 which effectively prevents Palestinians from working without the express permission of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. This was further strengthened in December 1995 with Ministerial Decision No. 621/1, which lists 50 professions in which Palestinians cannot work. On restrictions on land ownership for Palestinians see: Legislative Decree No. 11614 of 14/1/1969 (amended April 3, 2001).

[8] UNRWA, "Resolution 302" <http://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-302>

[9] Farid el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 132.

[10] Karol Sorby, "Lebanon and the 1969 Cairo Agreement", *Arichiv Orientalni*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2012.

[11] Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival, the PLO in Lebanon*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 201-202.

In effect, the Arab states, most of which sought to reign in Palestinian militancy within their own borders, forced Lebanon to acquiesce to the use of its territory as a primary front in the conflict against Israel.[12] As Peteet asserts, the Accord transformed Lebanon from a place of Palestinian refuge into "a site of revolt against displacement".[13]

The Palestinian experience, similar to broader Lebanese politics, cannot be viewed in a vacuum and the PLO's experience in other regional states had significant ramifications for Lebanon. The Cairo Accord, with its provision of relative autonomy for the PLO, would prove timely as the leadership concurrently moved to confront the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan. By September 1970, the Jordanian regime responded, launching an armed offensive against PLO positions inside the country. The "Black September" confrontation left several thousand refugees dead, and also forced the PLO leadership and fighters to relocate to the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Therefore, the Cairo Accord effectively allowed the PLO to formalize its leadership role amongst the increasingly active and militant Palestinian groups in Lebanon, sharpening tensions with both Israel and the Frangieh government in Beirut. As Rami Siklawi argues, the events of Black September and the subsequent flight of the PLO hierarchy, effectively "turned southern Lebanon into an enduring battlefield in the region".[14] In this way, the tensions unleashed by Lebanon's failure to neutralize Palestinian militancy and its inability to defend its territory against the consequent Israeli incursions, mixed with the regional determination to safeguard the expression of Palestinian militancy within Lebanon, helped precipitate the Lebanese civil war of 1975.

The zenith of Palestinian strength in Lebanon may well have been the Melkart Protocol, signed on May 17, 1973, which reinforced the freedoms granted to the Palestinian community in the Cairo Accord of 1969. Added to Lebanon's own sectarian tensions, the empowerment of the PLO and the expression of regional agendas through the Lebanese environment led to open conflict within the state and civil war erupted in 1975. However, as war broke out, the PLO was crushed in the Syrian intervention of 1976 and in-fighting and cross-confessional conflict marked the remainder of the Palestinian experience in Lebanon. This culminated in 1982 with the Israeli invasion, subsequent siege of Beirut, and the exile of the PLO hierarchy to Tunis.[15] The autonomy secured by the PLO leadership was obliterated and the refugee community was left leaderless and largely isolated within the post-war environment.

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[12] Karol Sorby, "Lebanon and the 1969 Cairo Agreement", p. 66.

[13] Julie Peteet, "From refugees to a minority, Palestinians in post-war Lebanon", *Middle East Report*, Issue 200 1996, p. 28.

[14] Rami Siklawi, "The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon", p. 597.

[15] The Lebanese state unilaterally abrogated the Cairo Agreement in 1987.

In retrospect, the Palestinian impact upon Lebanese stability is evident. The refugee influx drew Lebanon more deeply into the regional political struggle between Israel and the Palestinians. Lebanon was impacted through the physical presence of the Palestinian community, and the increasing determination of militia groups to confront Israel. As powerfully, the Palestinian presence acted as a conduit for broader Arab influence, in which the Arab determination to support Palestinian militancy within Lebanon was played out. Indeed, Arab pressure saw Lebanon cede elements of its sovereignty to the refugee community, a development that acted as a significant catalyst for the outbreak of conflict between Lebanese factions.

The Palestinian and Syrian Refugee Communities in Lebanon

With this heritage of large-scale refugee intake and its connections to the outbreak of full-scale civil war, the current influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has raised similar concerns. Indeed, the sheer size of the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon, well over 1 million by mid-2014, has clear implications for the stability of the historically fragile state. However, the size of the current crisis, as well as differences between the communities in terms of links within Lebanon and the current state of Lebanese politics raises important points of distinction. It is argued here that these differences carry with them particular implications for political stability in Lebanon that, on the one hand, does not make resultant civil war an inevitability but, one the other, raises the stakes for Lebanon much higher should conflict erupt in the current climate. Indeed, the current situation holds within it the possibility of an existential threat to Lebanon's confessional system of governance.

Settlement Patterns and the Legal Status of Palestinian and Syrian Refugees

The most obvious point of difference between the two communities is their comparative size. The original Palestinian refugee community, as registered by UNRWA, was in excess of 100,000 in 15 camps. These numbers have grown to just under 450,000 registered refugees by 2014 with around half of those in the 12 remaining camps.[16] The UNRWA-administered camps are spread throughout the country, Ein el Hillweh and Mieh Mieh adjacent to Saida and Rashidieh, Burj Shemali and El Buss next to Tyre in the south, Nahr el-Bared and Beddawi on the outskirts of Tripoli in the north, with Shatila, Burj Barajneh, Mar Elias, and Dbayeh circling Beirut in the west and Wavel in the east. As Table 1 shows, there is a relatively even spread of numbers across the camps. This can be contrasted with the UNHCR registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon that, as of 12 June 2014, numbered 1,100,486.[17]

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[16] UNRWA, "Where we work" <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work>

[17] UNHCR, "Syrian Regional Refugee Response" <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

The UNHCR has estimated that the number could exceed 1.5 million by December 2014. As Table 2 shows, the majority of the registered Syrian refugees are in the Bekaa region in eastern Lebanon, with smaller but significant numbers in the North and around Mount Lebanon and Beirut, and a growing community in the South.

The Palestinian refugee community formed a largely homogenous group, sharing the religious and sectarian identity of Sunni Muslims. Whilst an estimated 7% of the original Palestinian refugee community were Christians, the religious composition of the refugee community was homogenised with the wide-spread granting of citizenship to the Christian Palestinians in the 1950s and 1960s.[18] This political act, aimed at stabilizing the Maronite Christian hold on power within Lebanon, also served to entrench the Sunni Muslim identity of the Palestinian community. This in turn, sharpened the fears of the Maronite Christian elite that any further attempt to naturalize the Palestinians, or move toward a permanent implantation, would threaten the institutional dominance they enjoyed in the Lebanese political system.

Table 1 Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (UNRWA figures as of June 2014)							
Camps (North)	*Registered Refugees*	*Camps (Bekaa)*	*Registered Refugees*	*Camps (Beirut/Mt Lebanon)*	*Registered Refugees*	*Camps (South)*	*Registered Refugees*
Nahr el-Bared	27,000 (est)	Wavel	8,806	Burj Barajneh	17,945	Ein el Hillweh	54,116
Beddawi	16,500			Shatila	9,842	Rashidieh	31,478
				Dbayeh	4,351	Burj Shemali	22,789
				Mar Elias	662	El Buss	11,254
						Mieh Mieh	5,250
Total: 209,993							
Source: UNRWA <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/camp-profiles?field=15>							

Table 2 Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (UNCHR figures as of June 2014)			
Region	*Registered Refugees*	*Region*	*Registered Refugees*
Bekaa	364,518	Beirut/ Mt Lebanon	279,913
North	274,877	South	128,590
Total: 1,100,486			
Source: UNHCR <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>			

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[18] Kathleen Fincham, "Shifting Youth Identities and Notions of Citizenship in the Palestinian Diaspora: The Case of Lebanon" in Dina Kiwan (ed.) *Naturalization Policies, Education and Citizenship: Multicultural and Multinational Societies in International Perspective*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 175. The small Palestinian Shi'a community in the south of Lebanon was also granted Lebanese citizenship in 1994.

Table 3 Source of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (UNCHR figures as of June 2014)						
Source	*% of total*	*Number*	*% of total*	*Number*	*% of total*	*Number*
Homs	80.9%	5,419	45.7%	75,406	22.4%	235,204
Aleppo	2.1%	141	12.0%	19,800	19.8%	207,682
Damascus	1.8%	121	13.4%	22,110	18.6%	194,991
Idlib	4.2%	281	14.7%	24,255	13.6%	142,260
Hama	6.7%	449	7.1%	11,715	7.3%	76,568
Dara'a	1.6%	107	3.6%	5,940	6.7%	69,855
Ar-Raqqa	0.2%	13	0.8%	1,320	4.8%	50,253
Al-Hasakeh	1.1%	74	0.7%	1,155	2.4%	25,522
Deir-ez-zor	0.3%	20	1.1%	1,815	1.9%	20,273
Quneitra	0.0%	--	0.0%	--	0.8%	8,085
Lattakia	0.9%	60	0.6%	990	0.4%	4,312
Tartous	0.2%	13	0.2%	330	0.3%	3,064
As-Sweida	0.0%	--	0.0%	--	0.1%	659
Others	0.0%	--	0.0%	--	0.9%	9,170
Total		**6,699**		**165,003**		**1,100,486**
Source: UNHCR <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>						

Similar to the Palestinian experience, it was the rapid intensification of a localized struggle that prompted the Syrian refugee crisis. The flight of Syrians began soon after the demonstrations against Assad's government militarized in late 2010 and early 2011. As the situation engulfed the Syrian landscape, Lebanon was impacted almost immediately, most notably with the regime's May 2011 siege of Talkalakh, a town less than 10 km from the northern Lebanese border. As the fighting spread through eastern Syrian from 2011, communities adjacent to Lebanon moved into the country *en masse*. As Table 3 indicates, the vast majority of the early refugees came from Homs, with later numbers from Aleppo, Damascus, Idlib and elsewhere. The arrival of refugees has followed the patterns of conflict, with a first wave in 2011 settling in the north around Tripoli and a second from March 2012 largely from Homs, Qusayr, Hama, and, later, Damascus, settling in the Bekaa.

As suggested by these settlement patterns, the Palestinian community had been largely "quarantined" within or around the UNRWA-run camp structure while the settlement of the Syrian refugee community has been more dispersed. For instance, UNHCR officials have noted that wealthier Syrians have settled in Beirut and around Mt Lebanon, often renting apartments in more affluent areas whilst the poorer refugees, the vast bulk of the community, have settled in the North, the Bekaa and to a lesser extent the South.[19] This

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[19] Anonymous interview with author, May 2014.

is coupled with the extensive familial links that the Syrian refugee community has within Lebanon, where families have either moved in with or close to relatives in the north and east. The Lebanese government fostered this focus on settlement in the east and north. According to the head of the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Lebanon, this was based on a view that the region "is mostly Sunni and, therefore, communities that can receive these displaced people much more easily than in the Bekaa".[20]

Also, there has been a noted demographic shift in the refugees since the 2011/2012 period. Initially, groups were largely women and children, however as the conflict has dragged on an ever-increasing percentage of men have joined the refugee movements. This is also reflected in the changing spread of refugees where the more affluent groups, settling on the coast near Beirut and Mt Lebanon, have come as complete family units whilst those in the camps still are more disproportionately weighted in the favour of women and children.

The Palestinian community entered Lebanon *en masse* seeking refuge from what was in effect a short regional war. In this sense, the influx was sharp and thus the response more immediate. In particular, the camp system established from the early days of UNWRA's presence, served to symbolize the distinct nature of the community. The camp system continues to serve as a physical and symbolic assertion of this difference, despite the inevitable inter-mingling of lives and economies around the peripheries of, in particular, the urban camps. The UNRWA mandate effectively enforced a non-integration stance and affirmed the right of return. This acted in concert with the dynamics of Lebanon's own political system in which the Christian dominated state was inherently uneasy with the implantation of a settler body of mainly Sunni Muslims, and served to further isolate the refugees.[21]

The conflict and resultant refugee crisis from Syria followed a different course, with a rapid devolution into full-scale civil war from 2011, mutating into a regional conflict. The sectarian dimensions of the war, the brutality of both government and opposition tactics and the long-standing sectarian, communal and familial links between the two states dictated that Lebanon was an inevitable destination for those seeking shelter from the Syrian implosion. At this juncture, Lebanon was mired in its own political stalemate with the collapse of the Saad Hariri-led government in June 2011 and political inertia under the caretaker administration of Najib Mikati to February 2014.

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[20] Hala Naufal, *Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions*, (San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute, 2013/13), p. 4.

[21] Muhammad Ali Khalidi, *Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (Beirut: Institute for Palestinian Studies, 2002), p. 2.

The Syrian refugee community that arrived as a result of this conflict is larger, is more divided, has arrived over a longer period of time, has not been encamped, and shares more in the way of familial and personal affiliations with the Lebanese host community. Unlike the Palestinian refugees of the mid-20th century, the Syrian refugee community has a range of sectarian and familial ties upon which it can also draw. In relation to encampment, the initially partisan nature of the response to Syrian refugees in Lebanon saw Hezbollah successfully pressure the Mikati government to refuse the installation of camps in order to "avoid strain on the Bashar al Assad regime".[22] This has fostered the dispersal of the refugee community. Coupled with the vast number of arrivals, this has led the UNHCR to rely heavily on local and international humanitarian and charitable agencies for the delivery of aid. Therefore, where the Palestinian community existed in a highly regulated, UNRWA-run camp environment, the Syrian community has direct contact with the Lebanese community, often staying with family or other associates, is able to move freely around most parts of the country, and is subject to a variety of influences and pressures due to the unregulated environment.

To draw the significance of this comparison into sharper relief, the Palestinian community expelled from their homes in 1948 arrived as a relatively homogenous community. The Palestinian question, imported into Lebanon through the arrival of refugees, was not synthesized into the politics of the state. Without question, the Palestinian presence served to powerfully destabilise Lebanon, especially after the arrival of the PLO leadership and its determination to use Lebanese territory as a staging ground for incursions against Israel. However, the state response of exclusion, backed by societal consensus and strengthened in the aftermath of the civil war, kept the Palestinian problem in Lebanon as a distinctly foreign challenge. The demarcation of political identity, Lebanese or Palestinian, remained clear.

This situation can be contrasted against the social and political response to the Syrian refugees. The division between political identities amid Lebanese and Syrians is historically fluid and, unlike the Palestinians, this refugee community has not arrived *en masse* as a distinct group. Rather the Syrians have tricked, and then flooded, across the border, bringing with them Syria's sectarian challenges enmeshed with Lebanon's own. In the medium to long-term, this presents a much sharper challenge to Lebanon as exclusion is not a viable option. It can be argued that the Palestinian threat to Lebanon, especially after 1990, was literally contained in the camp system. The community today exists in political limbo, alienated from the so-called peace process and still intrinsically foreign after decades in Lebanon. Even as a political symbol, the camps operate as a constant reminder of the difference of the Palestinian

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[22] Hala Naufal, Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions, p. 7.

community. The Cairo Accord, which afforded the Palestinians control of the security situation inside the camps, in effect worked to further draw the distinction between the two communities who viewed each other with distrust. While this dire state of affairs provides little in the way of hope for the Palestinian community, it has offered Lebanon the opportunity to attempt to exert its own national identity. By the exclusion and isolation of the Palestinians, Lebanon has defined itself.[23]

By contrast, the deeper familial and personal links between Syria and Lebanon mean Syrian refugees have not been excluded from Lebanese society to the same extent as Palestinians with mixed outcomes. Whilst Lebanon is still not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees there has been "remarkable solidarity toward the refugee population".[24] Indeed, up to early 2014 the Lebanese government operated largely in concert with the Convention and Protocol as well as adhering to UNHCR standards on granting of at least temporary residence to the refugees as well as extending a range of social services to the Syrian refugee community that have not been granted to the Palestinian refugee community.[25] This has seen the Lebanese government work actively with the UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies such as the ICRC and Caritas in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. However, there is an increasingly 'ambivalent hospitality' emerging due to the strain this has placed on the country, with the prevention of encampment and increasing discussion of limiting any future refugee intakes now a more visible feature of Lebanese political debate.[26]

Laws pertaining to foreigners which have ensured Palestinian disenfranchisement formally apply to Syrians, yet familial networks and the consequent ability to integrate into the non-official labour market are easier to access for the Syrian community. Indeed, where the World Bank has assessed the Syrian refugee influx as "severely and negatively impacting the Lebanese economy"[27], senior Lebanese officials have argued that this view is overstated and the current economic malaise in the country has its roots in the political instability from 2008 and 2011. Further to this, they argue that the negative

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[23] Simon Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon: The Politics of Refugee Integration*, (London, Sussex Academic Press, 2003); Rex Brynen and Roula el-Rifai, *Palestinian Refugees: Challenges of Repatriation and Development*, (London, IB Tauris: 2007).

[24] Roger Zetter, Héloïse Ruaudel, Sarah Deardorff-Miller, Eveliina Lyytinen, and Cameron Thibos, *The Syrian displacement crisis and a Regional Development and Protection Programme: Mapping and meta-analysis of existing studies of costs, impacts and protection* (Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 4 February 2014), p. 3.

[25] Hala Naufal, Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions, p. 12.

[26] Roger Zetter, et.al., *The Syrian displacement crisis and a Regional Development and Protection Programme*, p. 3.

[27] World Bank, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict*, (Washington DC: World Bank, September 2013), p. 3.

economic impacts are isolated, at least in the short term, with some positive effects in the decline of labour and operating costs, the influx of capital in the form of rents as well as consumption of food and other goods.[28] This is clearly not sustainable in the long term, with a growing income-expenditure gap where average expenses for refugee families of USD520 per month are vastly outstripping average monthly incomes of USD250.[29] This has not fully impacted by early 2014, as it has been underwritten by the sale of personal items. Therefore, where both the Palestinian and Syrian communities face the legal hurdles in finding employment, the Lebanese government has provided a slightly more flexible arrangement for the Syrian community where they can renew their residency permit. This is a prohibitively expensive process for the poorer refugees. However, employment options in the unofficial labour market, some 30% of the Lebanese economy, allows for the prospect for some income generation in the short term.[30]

As such, there are key distinctions between the arrival and settlement patterns of each group, that have affected the way they have or have not integrated with the host community. In particular, the size of the Syrian refugee community has overwhelmed the capacity of the Lebanese state to either isolate them, as was the case with the Palestinians, or fully absorb them. In addition, the deep familial and personal links between the Syrian and Lebanese communities fostered the dispersal of the refugees throughout the country. Finally, UNRWA administration of the Palestinian community allowed the Lebanese authorities to isolate and exceptionalize this community whilst UNHCR administration of the Syrian community has made this more difficult.

Refugees and Conflict Spill-Over

The spill-over of conflict serves as another key area of comparison through which the two case-studies can be explored. The reality of the Lebanese experience has been near-perpetual conflict, linked to the instability of the state structure and the state of regional politics. The Palestinian role in Lebanon's civil war is well documented. The determination of the PLO to stage incursions against Israel also -without question- drew Israeli responses, most notably in 1978 and 1982. However, the role that the Palestinians played in regional conflict, as distinct to their role in domestic conflict, is significant.

In this period, Lebanese opposition to Israel spanned the confessional spectrum. The morality of the Palestinian fight was unquestioned. Despite the compromises made in the Cairo Accord, the agreement broadly reflects the shared Lebanese belief in the right of the Palestinians to armed resistance.

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[28] Anonymous interview with author, May 2014.

[29] Roger Zetter, et.al., *The Syrian displacement crisis and a Regional Development and Protection Programme,* p. 14.

[30] World Bank, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict,* p. 6.

This is further strengthened by the regional Arab consensus for armed confrontation. However, while Palestinian militancy did in fact draw Israel into attacking Lebanon this occurred parallel to the experience of internal Lebanese instability and was not a cause of that conflict. In the lead up to the civil war, it was internal Lebanese issues - including the assertiveness of the Palestinian community - which precipitated conflict.

However, in terms of spill-over, it is undeniable that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon triggered the Israeli invasions in both 1978 and 1982. Even allowing for Israel's geo-strategic agenda vis-à-vis the desire for a Christian regime in Beirut, the main catalyst for conflict was the armed Palestinian presence. This culminated with the siege of Beirut and the subsequent (albeit incomplete) Israeli withdrawal in the aftermath of the PLO's departure for North Africa. Moreover, as Hezbollah continued the fight into the 2000s, it was the armed Hezbollah presence which precipitated the 2006 conflict. This clearly demonstrates that the presence of an armed militia movement, determined to attack Israel, will lead to conflict. However, Israel, in these contexts, invaded as a unified state-based military force. It can be argued that this is not strictly spill-over, more a determined action by a neighbour state to invade Lebanese territory in the pursuit of political and military objectives (of Syria in which the internal Syrian issue sucks in Lebanon).

As was discussed above, the instigation of Palestinian political and military activity in Lebanon from the late 1960s saw the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dragged northward onto its neighbour's territory. This has repeated itself in relation to the Syrian conflict with a number of small-scale skirmishes in and around the northern city of Tripoli as well as the targeting of rival groups in the Bekaa and on the border region. This speaks to the broader issue of similarities in the confessional composition of the refugee communities and how this relates to Lebanon's well-documented susceptibility to the machinations of its neighbours.[31] In terms of the relationship between confessional composition and conflict, both refugee communities are largely, and in the Palestinian case now almost exclusively, Sunni Muslim. This raises clear questions over the viability of the confessional system should the Syrian community move toward some form of permanent settlement in Lebanon. Indeed, with little to indicate that the situation in Syria will stabilize, a return to Syria is unlikely. The demarcation between Lebanon and Syria that in the colonial period was in effect premised on the Christian nature of the Lebanese state will be unalterably diluted. This will challenge Christian-Muslim and intra-Muslim power calculations. As the increasing violence inside Lebanon demonstrates, the Sunni/Hezbollah tensions that permeate Lebanese politics are strained by the Syrian refugee presence. As Hezbollah's leadership has committed the

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[31] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

organization to fight alongside Assad's forces in Syria, continued retribution from Sunni militias inside Lebanon is highly likely. This intra-Muslim conflict, a feature of contemporary Lebanese politics, has only been exacerbated by the Syrian crisis.

A clear example of this can be seen in the potential for partisan groups from Syria establishing a presence amongst the refugee community. The border region surrounding the Bekaa has been highly porous, serving as the main corridor for the movement of people out of Syria since 2011. In addition to this, the region had seen the flow of radical Sunni groups from Syria since the 1980s, often pushed by the Assad regime, which had established networks in the north and east of Lebanon.[32] With the outbreak of fighting on the border region, where the North and Bekaa generally have refugee populations more sympathetic to the opposition in Syria, with the vast majority of refugees from Hamah, Homs, Qusayr corridor, the Bekaa region became the major lay station for Free Syrian Army fighters as well as members of a variety of radical Sunni groups. The situation changed with the battle of Qusayr from February to April 2012 when Hezbollah formalised their involvement in the Syrian conflict and, concurrently, started to confront anti-Assad forces in Lebanon.

As such, whilst there has not been a full-scale spill-over of the Syrian conflict into Lebanon as of mid-2014, the ramifications of the conflict are sharply felt throughout all sectors of Lebanese society. This differs, in some respect, to the experience of spill-over from the Arab-Israeli conflict that saw Lebanon drawn directly into the conflict, including two invasions by Israel in 1978 and 1982 as well as numerous armed confrontations between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah since the end of the war. Granted, Syria had occupied Lebanon from the end of the civil war in 1990 to 2005. However, and perhaps counter-intuitively, Lebanon has been able to resist being dragged into the Syrian conflict to date despite the closer links between the Lebanese and Syrian communities as opposed to the Lebanese and Palestinian communities.

Refugee Politics in Lebanon

Perhaps the most important area where the impact of the Palestinian refugee crisis could yield an understanding on how the current emergency could influence the propensity for conflict is the issue of refugee politics in Lebanon. Indeed, one may posit that concern over how the factors relating to demographics, settlement, legal status, and economic impacts are framed within the broader discourse on the confessional political structure of Lebanon. For the Palestinians, this has been a history of exclusion and political exploitation. In the post-civil war period, Lebanese from across the confessional spectrum have shared a consensus that the future of Palestinians will not be in Lebanon. However, this long-standing political challenge is not without its benefits for

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[32] Joseph Bahout, "Lebanon at the Brink: The Impact of the Syrian Civil War", p. 3.

Lebanese politics. As Peteet has argued, 'the Palestinian presence, perceived as a problem, can and does serve as a common denominator in unifying often disparate elements of the Lebanese polity'.[33] This consensus is formally reflected in the 1990 constitution and informally through various surveys of Lebanese attitudes undertaken in the years since. Lebanon's official line has always been that Palestinians cannot be integrated into Lebanese society for a range of inter-related reasons: the original intention was to provide safe haven for a refugee community displaced by war, not to offer a location for permanent resettlement, Lebanon's demographic balance and the consequences of the naturalization of 400,000 mainly Sunni Palestinians, the limited economic resources of the state to absorb a refugee community of this size and, most powerfully, a sense that naturalization of the Palestinian community provides what is seen as an Israeli and international problem with a Lebanese solution. It appears this rejection of forced settlement is often couched as a defence of Palestinian rights, notably the seminal right of return. As Meier points out, the denial of Palestinian rights allows Lebanon to "pretend to guarantee their right of return".[34]

As mentioned, in order to forestall this outcome a significant and restrictive array of rights have been denied to Palestinians in Lebanon. Despite some relaxation in 2005, the Lebanese system is still fundamentally designed to exclude Palestinians. Simon Haddad has conclusively demonstrated that large sections of the Lebanese community favour the granting of basic rights to the Palestinian community in Lebanon. However, full political rights have been a red line for Lebanon, ever aware of the delicacy of its confessional balance and the impact on key voting districts of a mass increase in Sunni voters. As such, the 444,480 registered Palestinians who today reside in Lebanon equal roughly 10% of the population.[35] The 12 camps still houses roughly 53% of the refugee population and according to UNWRA, of its five fields of operations; Lebanon has the highest percentage of Palestine refugees living in abject poverty.[36]

In comparison, there are points of unity and disunity in the response of Lebanese political elites to the Syrian refugee crisis. The most evident difference is the division amongst Christian political elites to the issue, where the Christian members of the March 14 (Lebanese Forces and Kataib) and March 8 (Free Patriotic Movement - FPM) coalitions have taken divergent stances. For members of March 8, their view is shaped by Hezbollah's support for the Assad regime and efforts to resist the extension of the Sunni Future

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[33] Julie Peteet, "From refugees to a minority, Palestinians in post-war Lebanon", *Middle East Report*, Issue 200 1996, p. 23.

[34] Daniel Meier, "Al-tawteen: the implantation problem as an idiom of the Palestinian presence in post-civil war Lebanon", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2010, p. 145.

[35] UNRWA, "Where we work" <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work>

[36] UNRWA, "Where we work" <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work>

Movement's power. This is a somewhat ironic stance given the FPM's leader, Michael Aoun, was exiled at the end of the civil war due to his open confrontation to Syrian occupation.[37] Aoun and the FPM have sought to reconcile this apparent contradiction by arguing that the Syrian regime is essential to protect minority (read Christian) rights against US-Saudi efforts to push for Sunni domination and the eventual naturalisation of the Palestinian population, redrawing the confessional map of the state. March 8 follows the Hezbollah line that the Assad regime is a guarantor of minority rights as well as a bulwark against Israel. For the Lebanese Forces and Kataib, their stance has led to tacit support for the Syrian opposition framed by their opposition to Hezbollah and combined with an effort at keeping Lebanon apart from the turmoil in Syria. As such, they are not openly resistant to the refugee influx, as are members of the FPM, but are not favourable to permanent settlement. This also represents an irony whereby key members of the March 14 coalition, a grouping that ostensibly represents "Western" interests in Lebanon, is either actively or passively supporting opposition groups in Syria that contain al-Qaeda-linked organisations.

The Syrian refugee crisis has therefore put the Christian parties in Syria in a dilemma. On the one hand, they can take the FPM line of backing the Assad regime. However, this raises issues around the marginalisation of the Christian parties during the post-war Syrian occupation of Lebanon (1990-2005) and proximity to a regime that has been alleged to have engaged in serious violations of human rights. On the other hand, they can take the LFP/Kataib position of tacitly supporting the opposition. However, this aligns these parties with a number of groups, from the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through to far more radical and violent groups in both Syria and Lebanon, who have, in the case of the radical groups, openly threatened the future viability of the enshrinement of Christian power in the Lebanese system. This is a critical dilemma for the Christian parties, but one that might have the somewhat perverse outcome of preventing the collapse of the political system where the presence of extremist opposition movements from Syria in Lebanon has created room for compromise between the dominant parties within each coalition during negotiations over the stalled electoral process of 2013-2014. Here, Hezbollah and the Future Movement are able to bring their divided Christian coalition partners along to ensure the exclusion of new political players, shoring up the confessional structure in the country.

This is a surprising development given the political malaise that Lebanon has endured since key events in 2008, 2011, and 2013. The Lebanese government remains in limbo despite the creation of the interim government under independent Tammam Salam in February 2014, almost a year after the

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[37] Benjamin MacQueen *Political Culture and Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Lebanon and Algeria* (Melbourne: MUP, 2009), p. 47.

collapse of Nijab Mikati's government in March 2013. Salam's government is a delicate balance of both March 8 and March 14 members as well as independents, with the former two groups actively working to undermine each other in the lead-up to the 2014 presidential and legislative elections. As such, with the rapid increase of refugees through 2013 and into 2014, the Lebanese state lacked an official decision-making institution and members of the governing institutions seek to destroy the other.

Despite this, the dominant members of the March 8 and March 14 coalitions, Hezbollah and the Future Movement, have to some extent put aside ambitions of political domination in favour of cooperation to prevent the complete collapse of the system of governance in Lebanon. For example, whilst the deadlock over the appointment of a new President remains as of mid-2014, neither group has sought to take advantage of the demographic, political, or economic pressures of the refugee crisis for political gain in this key decision.[38] Heated debate over the candidacy of Samir Geagea and the prospective rival candidacy of Michel Aoun is present, but these have consciously avoided using the refugee crisis for political gain.

From a Political Crisis to a National Crisis

Whilst the impacts of such an overwhelming refugee influx are severe, and the lessons of 1970-1975 are critical in viewing the current situation in Lebanon, there are important differences between the two refugee crises that are important to note. The differences in the size of the refugee communities, arrival and settlement patterns, the contrasting legal status of the two communities within Lebanon, the different spill-over dynamics of the "push" conflicts on the host society, and the particular nature of refugee politics toward the Palestinian community as opposed to the Syrian community have created two related but also contrasting phenomena.

Indeed, it may be argued that the combination of these factors in relation to the Syrian refuge crisis, particularly the scale of the crisis coupled with the intimate links between the Lebanese and Syrian communities, has made this an issue that cannot be politicized. In other words, it has moved from a potential political crisis to a full-scale national crisis. The division of the Christian parties over this issue, but their acquiescence to the directives of the dominant partners in the March 8 and 14 coalitions is a clear example of this. Early flirtations with politicising the refugee issue by both sides were evident, with March 8 taking a hard line against refugee settlement and March 14 seeking to harness their support. However, Hezbollah's securing of the key border area around Qusayr in 2013 and 2014, coupled with an effort to avoid alienating necessary Christian allies has seen them temper their stance whilst the Fu-

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[38] Vidya Kauri, "Lebanon parliament fails to elect president", *Al Jazeera,* 23 April, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/04/lebanon-nominate-president-201442365922519100.html>

ture Movement has backed away from promoting political activism amongst the refugee community as it fears the emergence of unpredictable extremist groups in Lebanese territory as well as acceding to Christian demands to keep Lebanon at arm's length from the Syrian crisis. In short, the severity of the crisis has led to a change from a potentially political crisis to a national crisis, forcing compromise, at least in the short term, amongst Lebanon's political factions.

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NÜKLEER BİR İRAN'A YÖNELİK OBAMA'NIN POLİTİKALARINI ANLAMAK

ÖZ

Obama seçildikten sonra, Bush döneminden kendisine miras kalan ABD'nin imaj sorununu çözümleyecek şekilde ABD dış politikasında değişim ve dönüşüm gerçekleştireceğine söz vermiştir. Obama'nın bu girişimi, çok hararetli bir tartışmanın süregeldiği dönemde ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu tartışma, ABD'nin değişen uluslararası sistemde küresel lider olarak rolünün nasıl bir dönşüme uğradığı konusundadır. Pek çok görüşe göre, Pax Amerikana artık sona ermiştir ve ABD'nin ekonomik gücü inişe geçmiştir. Amerikan hegemonyasını dengeleyen yeni güçlerin ortaya çıkması bir başka tartışmayı; tek kutuplu sistemin yerini çok kutuplu bir sisteme bıraktığı tartışmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu çerçevede, makalede değişen uluararası sistemde ABD'nin halen global bir lider olarak konumunu sürdürüp sürdürmediği sorusuna yanıt aranacaktır. İkinci olarak, Obama dönemi ABD'nin nükleer meseleye karşı izlediği politikalar ele alınarak, İran'a karşı izlenen politikaların genel çerçevesinde bir değişimin gerçekleşip gerçekleşmediği analiz edilecektir. Son olarak, Obama'nın nükleerden arındırılmış yeni dünya düzeni yaratma çabası değerlendirilerek, Geçici Cenevre Anlaşması üzerinde durulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerikan üstünlüğü, tek kutupluluk, nükleer, İran, Geçici Cenevre Anlaşması

فهم وتحليل سياسة اوباما تجاه النووي الايراني
اوزدن زينب اوكتاو
خلاصة

وعد الرئيس اوباما بعد انتخابه بانه سيقوم بحل مشكلة النظرة السيئة للعالم تجاه الولايات المتحدة الامريكية، التي كان قد ورثها عن جورج بوش، وذلك من خلال اتباع سياسة خارجية تعتمد على التغيير والتحول. محاولة اوباما هذه ظهرت عندما كانت تمر الولايات المتحدة بمرحلة حساسة للغاية. هذه المرحلة المليئة بالخلافات كانت متعلقة بالتحول الذي شهده الدور الامريكي باعتبارها القوة العظمى والقائد العالمي في النظام الدولي.

وبحسب العديد من الاراء، فانه قد انتهى عصر باكس امريكانا وان الاقتصاد الامريكي بدا يمر بمرحلة الانحدار. اما بالنسبة لنقطة الخلاف الاخرى التي تخص ضعف قوة امريكا امام القوى الجديدة التي ظهرت لتحد من قوى امريكا، فهي تلك التي نتجت عن الخلاف الذي حدث نتيجة التحول من النظام احادي القطب الي النظام المتعدد الاقطاب.

وفي هذا الاطار سيتم الاجابة في هذا المقال على السؤال الذي يبحث عن مدى امكانية استمرار الولايات المتحدة الامريكية كقوة عظمى في النظام العالمي المتغير... اما بالنسبة للنقطة الثانية التي ستتم مناقشتها من خلال المقال، فهى سياسة امريكا تجاه السلاح النووي خلال عهد اوباما ثم سيتم تحليل سياسات امريكا تجاه ايران وهل شهدت العلاقات تحولا ام لم تشهد.

واخيرا سيتم تقييم محاولة اوباما خلق عالم جديد تم تنقيته من الاسلحة النووية . كما انه سيتم الوقوف ايضا حول معاهدة جنيف المؤقتة.

الكلمات الدالة: التفوق الامريكي, النظام احادي الاقطاب, النووي , ايران , معاهدة جانورا المؤقتة.

UNDERSTANDING OBAMA'S POLICIES TOWARDS A NUCLEAR IRAN*

ABSTRACT

Obama took office promising considerable change in US foreign policy so as to cope with image deterioration stemming from George W. Bush's period. This new foreign policy initiative under Obama came in the midst of a hot debate concerning the evolving role of the United States as a global leader in a changing international environment. According to many, pax Americana has come to an end and US relative economic power is declining. The rise of new powers acting as counterweights to American hegemony brings about another hot debate whether the unipolarity has been replaced with multi polarity. In this context, the article will first question whether the United States still dominates as a global power in a changing international environment with a special emphasis on the impact of systemic constraints on Washington's policies towards Iranian nuclear issue. Second part of the study will focus on Obama's policies towards nuclear problem so as to understand whether general contours of Washington's policies towards Iran have changed or not. Lastly, Obama's efforts to create a global zero will be evaluated. In this context, the interim Geneva Agreement will be one of the main concerns of the article.

Keywords: US primacy, unipolarity, nuclear, Iran, the Geneva Interim Agreement

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In US National Security Strategy (2010), Obama says "we must now build the sources of American strength and influence, and shape an international order capable of overcoming the challenges of the 21st century." This speech of Obama came in the midst of a hot debate about whether the international system is rapidly becoming multipolar and America's relative power is declining. The United States today lives in a world that is far from its golden age beginning with the end of the Cold War. The 2008 fiscal crisis and China's rise both on global and regional level are the two important developments which had a very negative impact on the primacy of United States.

The article will first question whether the United States still dominates as a global power in a changing international environment with a special emphasis on the impact of systemic constraints on Washington's policies towards Iranian nuclear issue. Second part of the study will focus on Obama's policies towards nuclear problem so as to understand whether general contours of Washington's policies towards Iran have changed or not. Lastly, Obama's efforts to create a global zero will be evaluated. In this context, the Geneva Interim Agreement will be one of the main concerns of the article.

Does American Power still Persist?

As George Washington warned about in his farewell address, the United States has long favored internationalism rather than isolationism. The mission of shaping the international order by making the rest of the world believe in the universal validity of American principles, practices, and institutions has become one traditional element of US foreign policy. During the Bush Administration period, it was believed that the roots of Islamic extremism could be cut by promoting democracy in the Arab world not just in a slow gradual way, but with fervor and force.[1] While Bush was overestimating America's ability to export democracy, he did not mention the United Nations in the 2002 national security strategy and presumed that the United States was the sole judge of the legitimacy of its own or anyone else's preemptive strikes in the face of the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. With the Bush period, Washington left internationalism instead, it exalted US thinking. As Dunn notes, "not only does the US regard itself as the indispensable power in the international system, it also believes that the export of its model of government – liberal democratic market capitalism – is a universal good."[2] Following the Bush period during which the United States made two poor choices, invasion of Iraq and fighting in Afghanistan, Washington has come face to face with two important developments imperiling its global primacy. One was the

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[1] Thomas Carothers, "Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror", *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2003, p.92

[2] David Hustings Dunn, "Myths, Motivations and Misunderestimations: The Bush Administration and Iraq", *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 2, 2003, pp. 279-297.

2008 global economic crisis; the second one was the rise of China so as to put an end to the lack of balance in the system.

From 2005 onwards, the image deterioration of the United States especially in the Middle East and limited results of the Bush doctrine urged the United States to return to the more typical pattern of American internationalism[3] and to adopt more forthcoming attitude in its foreign policy.

Obama's extension of hand to Iran in his inauguration speech should be read against this background. He said "we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist" and addressed to the people of poor nations pledging "to work alongside them to make their farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds", and rebuked "the leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict, or blame their society's ills on the West."[4] Most important of all, with the need to change negative image of the United States stemming from the Bush period, he gave the message that the United States would be the protector of the suppressed masses so as to emphasize that it does not need soft balancing any more. Again his speech in the Turkish Parliament and in Cairo also created a sense of euphoria especially in the Middle East. However, the issue is that those speeches were made by Obama at a time when it was debated that the United States as a hegemon power, was in decline and the unipolarity was replaced by multipolarity so as to undermine the primacy of the United States. According to many, Washington's remaining passive in dealing with the Syrian civil war, its efforts to reconcile with Iran on nuclear issue are the only two examples with respect to understanding that Washington has been reluctant to continue to have an overstretched hegemony. This has had a very negative impact on US economy, while other nations such as China has been able to flourish economically.

According to Layne, "three main drivers explain the impending end of the *Pax Americana*. First, the rise of new great powers – especially China – is transforming the international system from unipolarity to multipolarity. Second, the United States is becoming a poster child for strategic over-extension, or imperial overstretch. Its strategic commitments exceed the resources available to support them. Third, the United States' relative economic power is in a decline."[5] The other declinist analysts allege that the weakening of the US economy will also make it increasingly difficult to sustain the level of military commitments that US hegemony requires. However, some analysts like Brooks and Wohlforth defend the idea that current system is unipolar and

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[3] Jeffrey W Legro, "The mix that makes unipolarity: hegemonic purpose and international constraints", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No.2, 2011, p. 189.

[4] "As It Happened: Obama Inauguration*", BBC News*, 20 January 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/obama_inauguration/7840646.stm

[5] Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Exit, Beyond the Pax Ameicana", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No.2, 2011, p.150.

the US poor choices such as invasion of Iraq and fighting in Afghanistan had serious consequences, however, their origins are not systemic and not relevant with the weakening US military and economic position.[6] Moreover, "proponents of the current *Pax Americana* foreign policy believe the debt bomb and the resultant looming fiscal crisis have no implications for America's strategy of global dominance and worldwide military presence."[7] For example, Bromley, citing the views of Brooks and Wohlforth who defend the idea that a hegemon in a unipolar world will not be subject to significant systemic constraints, argues that "the counterbalancing constraint is inoperative and will remain so until the distribution of capabilities changes fundamentally."[8] Legro, on the other hand, emphasizes that, rather than the lack of balance and systemic factors, more attention should be paid on the way that systemic factors in world politics might inspire US domestic opposition to primacy. According to him, "it seems that systemic effects – perhaps other states opposing the United States, a loss of trading privileges, or anti-American sentiment – arguably does mould US domestic resistance to global projects.[9] For example, one of the main reason for the turn of domestic opinion against the policy activism of the 'Bush doctrine' is related to the decline in US international standing.

On the other hand, Glaser who questions value of unipolarity for the US interests, thinks that states are not energetically balancing against the United States. This is mainly due to the fact that the rising powers who already embrace the Western norms, do not believe that the United States poses a large threat to their vital interests. Therefore, according to him, the lack of counterbalancing is not best explained by America's large advantage in power.[10] The analysts like Kupchan view it highly dangerous and unrealistic to presume the newly emerging countries are not challenging the pecking order and the guiding norms of international system. On the contrary, the rising powers like India call for 'new global "rules of the game"' and the 'reform and revitalization' of international institutions. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have increased the voting weight of developing countries; and the United Nations Security Council is coming under growing pressure to enlarge the voices of emerging powers. All of these developments come at the expense of the influence and normative preferences of the United States and its Western allies."[11] In a similar vein, Voeten argues that despite

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[6] Stephen G Brooks & William C Wohlforth, "Assessing the balance", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, no. 2, 2011, p. 207.

[7] Layne, Pax Americana, p. 156.

[8] Simon Bromley, "The limits to balancing", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol 24, No.2, 2011 130.

[9] Jeffrey W Legro, "The mix that makes unipolarity: hegemonic purpose and international constraints", p. 194.

[10] Charles L Glaser, "Why unipolarity doesn't matter (much)", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No.2, 2011, p. 137.

[11] Charles A Kupchan, "The false promise of unipolarity: constraints on the exercise of American power",

the disproportionate power of the United States, neither the US allies nor the rest are in a position of desperate dependence. For example, "European states have sufficient resources to support or even to create institutions they like, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC). After the Asian financial crisis, Asian countries sought to reduce their dependence on the US dominated IMF by creating the Chiang Mai Initiative, aided by the large reserves held by many Asian states. Voeten emphasizes that if US is not appreciated, many states find ways to manage on their own."[12]

Here the question of crucial importance is related to the impact of unipolarity on the rest of the world. Schweller criticizes Brooks and Wohlforth because they only emphasize the relative absence of systemic constraints on the dominant power under unipolarity and seem much less interested in unipolarity's effects on the rest of the world. Schweller's question, "Does unipolarity exert meaningful structural constraints on any state?"[13] is really important in order to understand current policies of Iran on nuclear issue. Moreover, the debates concerning systemic constraints on the dominant power, the United States under unipolarity also seem explanatory for understanding the dramatic change of Washington's attitude towards Iranian nuclear issue under Obama.

What Has Changed in US policies towards a Nuclear Iran under Obama?

Iran whose pursuit of nuclear capability goes as far as back the 1960s, increased its uranium enrichment program in the face of accusations of hiding uranium enrichment at Natanz which first came to the agenda in 2002 with the declaration of Iranian exile opposition group.

At a time when the Bush administration occupied Iraq and threatened Iran and Syria, Iran first announced that it would allow IAEA inspections and in November 2003, suspended its nuclear program although IAEA concluded that there was no evidence of program. However, Washington insistently alleged that Iran's ultimate aim was to be a nuclear power which from Washington's perspective would dynamite some major goals/interests of the United States such as "providing security for the oil and gas supply, eliminating threats from terrorist organizations, preventing the spread of WMDs and maintaining Israel's existence and qualitative military advantage."[14]

Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2011, p. 171.

[12] Erik Voeten, "Unipolar politics as usual", Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2011, p. 121

[13] Randall L Schweller, "The future is uncertain and the end is always near", Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2011, p.178.

[14] Nihat Ali Özcan and Özgür Özdamar, "Iran's Nuclear Program and the Future of US-Iranian Relations", *Middle East Policy,* Vol. XVI, No. 1, Spring 2009, p. 125.

In addition, the three factors "discredited the peaceful nuclear energy argument of Iran. First of all, Iran kept its nuclear program secret until it was discovered in 2002. Secondly, there were alleged military connections and weaponization studies connected to the nuclear program as well as missile development. Lastly, from an economic perspective, indigenous enrichment was not logical."[15]

In parallel with increasing threats of the President Bush who made "clear warnings to Syria and Iran that they were next in his sights in his declared mission to spread democracy around the world,"[16] uranium enrichment program became an important tool in Iranian foreign policy to upgrade its prestige in the world and to show that Iran was not so weak actor .

Beginning with 2007, Washington saw that it would be to the detriment of the United States to continue such arrogant policies towards Iran due to some important reasons. First of all, rhetoric of spreading democracy to Iran did not work, on the contrary, it pushed Tehran to adopt more anti-Israeli rhetoric which addressed to the Arab streets and to demonstrate how Iran was an influential actor in the region. Put differently, the new role which Iran cast itself was the fulfillment of a leading role in a region where Shias consist of the majority; the establishment of Iranian superiority over its Arab neighbors, which dates back to the Pahlavi regime.

This became evident with Hezbollah's triumph in 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon. This had a shower effect on both Israel and the United States since it was very well known that Hezbollah's triumph was to a great extent due to Iranian support to create a Shia crescent in the Middle East. Besides, Iran's meddling with Iraqi Shia groups so as to prevent the stability in Iraq is another threat to American interests in the region. Second, the striking fact is that Iran is an independent actor from US influence when it comes to oil and gas production and transportation. Thirdly, Iran has been capable of making its own energy-export deals with Russia, China and Turkey. Most important of all, Iran has the ability to block the Strait of Hormuz and cut the Gulf's oil traffic in half, a disaster for the region as well as the West.

In sum, Iran has lots of geopolitical advantages such as having access to the world's two energy-rich regions, the Middle East and the Caspian Basin, controlling North-south and east-west control of energy transit lines and having great land mass and inhospitable terrain.[17] Currently, Iran uses all these

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[15] Mark Fitzpatrick, "The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: Avoiding Worst- Case Outcomes" (Adelphi Papers; The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008) in Nihat Ali Özcan and Özgür Özdamar, p. 124.

[16] "Bush Warns Iran and Syria Over Terrorism", *Guardian Co.Uk*, February 3, 2005, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/feb/03/syria.usa

[17] Nihat Ali Özcan and Özgür Özdamar, Iran's Nuclear Program and the Future of US-Iranian Relations, p. 125.

advantages as a leverage against the predominance of the United States in the region. The US-Iranian relations which were entangled in a cycle of distrust and confrontation for about 30 years took a different shape partly due to above-mentioned Iran's geopolitical advantages but primarily to the fact that the US occupation forces in Iraq were confronted with ever-growing instability in 2007. The United States who gradually saw that it needed Iran in Iraq, Afghanistan, energy matters (challenging Russia's leverage over Europe), the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on terror (fighting al-Qaeda as the common enemy) cautiously tried to engage Iran beginning with 2007.[18]

However, there are some basic reasons why Washington and Tehran have not been able to come to a full agreement especially on nuclear issue so far. From Iran's perspective, the driving motive behind the negotiations with the West on nuclear issue has been to get rid of sense of being encirclement since the early years of the revolution. However, the more Iran felt isolated by the international society, primarily by the West and lost its confidence in the sincerity of the West, the more it sought to be a nuclear power.[19] For example, Farhi notes that "the history of Islamic Iran's treatment in international organizations, particularly during the Iran-Iraq war years, led the public to agree that international organizations such as the IAEA were political tools of important international players, such as the United States, in their quest to deny Iranian technological advancement and progress."[20] Another important point worth to be mentioned is the fact that, the pressure on Iranian uranium enrichment is commented as hypocrisy of the United Nations, while Israel never signed the NPT and Washington openly supports Israel on international platforms.[21] Most important of all, the West puts the negotiations into an impasse by asking Iran to give up its principal card (full fuel cycle suspension) before negotiations begin. This clearly shows that Iran is demanded to accept its weak status before the negotiations start. This would, of course,   result in marginalizing the Iranian administration and strengthening the hands of

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[18] Paul Aarts and Joris van Dujne, "Saudi Arabia After US-Iranian Detante: Left in the Lurch?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVI, No. 3, Fall 2009, p. 67.

[19] See Saideh Lotfian," Nuclear Policy and International Relations", Homa Katouzian and Hossein Shahidi (eds*), Iran in the 21st Century, Poltics, Economics and Conflict*, (Routledge, New York, 2008), pp. 158-180.

[20] Farideh Farhi, "Atomic Energy is Our Assured Right: Nuclear Policy and the Iranian Shaping Public Opinion" in Judith Yaphe (ed.), *Nuclear Politics in Iran* , Center for Strategic Research Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, (National Defense University Press, Washington, 2010), p. 6.

[21] For example, when UN approved the declaration calling for 2012 conference on "WMD-free" zone in Middle, East, Ellen Tauscher, the US under-secretary of state for arms control, said "the United States deeply regrets" that the draft pressures Israel to join the NPT. "Israel Under Pressure to Join NPT", *Al Jazeera,* 30 May 2010.

those who advocate a more confrontational stance with the West and the United States who from their perspective, was trapped in a quagmire in Iraq.[22]

Put differently, as Farhi explains "the risky and daring nature of the program, in the face of international opposition and technological hurdles, was an important selling point in generating the pride as well as the zeal necessary to support the program. Indeed, the conflation of Iran's nuclear program and general scientific advancement was an important strategy in the government's attempt to present the nuclear program as the cornerstone of efforts to modernize the country, narrow the technological divide with the West, and frustrate the Western objective of hindering Iran's scientific and technological progress."[23]

From Washington's perspective, Obama, alleging that the countries such as Iran are more likely to want to cooperate than not cooperate, showed more respect for the Muslim world, and started to listen to others.[24] However, because the leitmotivs of Obama's speeches concerning the Middle East are to contain Iran and to secure Israel, his efforts to bring America closer to Iran such as giving Nowruz message marking the Iranian New Year, addressing both the Iranian people and its leaders remained fruitless. For example, in his article Obama says:

The world must work to stop Iran's uranium-enrichment program and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. It is far too dangerous to have nuclear weapons in the hands of a radical theocracy. At the same time, we must show Iran -- and especially the Iranian people -- what could be gained from fundamental change: economic engagement, security assurances, and diplomatic relations. Diplomacy combined with pressure could also reorient Syria away from its radical agenda to a more moderate stance -- which could, in turn, help stabilize Iraq, isolate Iran, free Lebanon from Damascus' grip, and better secure Israel.[25]

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[22] Nader Entessar, "Iran's Nuclear Decision-Making Calculus", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, Summer 2009, p. 32.

[23] Farideh Farhi, "Atomic Energy is Our Assured Right: Nuclear Policy and the Iranian Shaping Public Opinion, p. 8.

[24] "I think the most important thing to start with is dialogue. When you havea chance to meet people from other cultures and other countries, and you listen to them and you find out that, even though you may speak a different language or you may have a different religious faith, it turns out that you care about your family, you have your same hopes about being able to have a career that is useful to the society, you hope that you can raise a family of your own, and that your children will be healthy and havea good education—that all those things that human beings all around the world share are more important than the things that are different". Transcript – "President Obama's Remarks at a Student Roundtable in Turkey," *New York Times*, 7 March 2009 , www.nytimes.com/2009/ 04/07/us/politics/07obama-turkey-transcript. html

[25] Barack Obama, "Renewing American Leadership", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007.

Here the issue is that Obama's goal of containing the "other", Iran (isolating Iran) and securing Israel is not so much different from that of Bush period and even reflects the goal of Truman period whose priority was the containment of the "other", Soviet Union.

However, it should be borne in mind that Truman's idea that "if the United States failed in its leadership the peace of the world can be endangered"[26] has been no more valid due to dramatic economic, political, socio-cultural changes in the Middle East in the 21st century. Here the issue is to what extent Obama "shares common assumptions and bring the assumptions into harmony" [27]with Iran which Habermas defines as "lifeworld." The problem is to what extent Obama's communication share a view of the world with Iran. According to Habermas, language is used for more than just conveying facts and opinions about the world. Rather language is used to establish social relationship with others. To achieve this, one needs to reconstruct the rules that competent agents must follow in order to communicate with each other. Habermas draws attention to universal pragmatics and according to him "universal pragmatics is the ability not just to formulate meaningful sentences but rather to engage to others in interaction, drawing on an awareness of the cultural and physical environment within which they act in order to begin communication and to repair breakdowns in communication."[28]

In this context, Obama did his utmost effort to use universal pragmatics. Put differently, he has tried to strengthen the belief that United States is not a "hegemon defining its strength - in terms of its ability to achieve or maintain dominance over others, but in terms of its ability to work *with* others in the interests of the international community as a whole. American foreign policy is consciously intended to advance *universal values.*"[29] The main rationale behind advancing universal values is – in Habermas's words – to engage others in interaction. However, Obama's efforts to generate a communication to repair breakdowns has been met with a cold response by Tehran due to Bush legacy which widened discrepancy between what was officially said and stated and what was eventually done or pursued. [30]

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[26] Dennis Merill, "The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol.36, No.1, March 2006, pp. 27–37.

[27] Andrew Edgar, *Habermas The Key Concepts*, (New York, Routledge, 2006), p.162.

[28] Ibid, p. 164.

[29] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Super Power", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2, March-April 1999, p. 38.

[30] Rouzbeh Parsi, "The Obama Effect and the Iranian Conundrum" in Álvaro de Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (eds), *The Obama Moment European and American Perspective*, European Union Institute For Security Studies, p. 155, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/The_Obama_Moment__web_A4.pdf

Dramatic shift in American Presidents' rhetoric towards Iran, in other words, a sudden transition from the 'Axis of Evil' to "extending hand" rhetoric did not heal the wounds so as to restore the mutual trust at once. The reasons are manifold. Apart from the Bush legacy, the traditional US bias towards Israel has seriously affected the image of the United States held by the wider Islamic world.[31] This became most evident in the Bush period during which the Islamic world strongly believed that Washington lost its sense of its moral proportion.[32] This not only affected America's relations with uncooperative regimes like Iran and Iraq but also undermined its relations with allies such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia where the governments did not want to give the impression that they were in close relations with Washington in the face of the growing public hostility to America.

Another important point worth to be mentioned is the fact that beginning with 1970s, the United States started to import oil and thus became vulnerable to the Arab oil weapon. In addition, the emergence of Far Eastern and East Asian nations as important consumers of oil strengthened Arabs' as well as Iran's hand against the United States and thus gave Middle Eastern oil weapon a new dimension. Therefore, Washington's insistence on tilting towards Israel and open hostility towards uncooperative regimes like Iran and Iraq reflecting the Cold War style policies has not only antagonized its allies but also undermined its own policy objective of secure oil supply.

In a nutshell, it can be said that US policy on Iranian nuclear issue has not gone through dramatic change. However, when looking closely, Barack Obama who was nominated and finally awarded the Nobel Prize in 2009, had a personal commitment to nuclear elimination. His speech in Prague on the 5th of April 2009, during which he declared: "So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" is therefore noteworthy. [33]

The US Nuclear Policy under Obama and Its Impact on US- Iran Relations

The important steps taken by Washington on the way of eliminating nuclear weapons are congruent with Obama's forthcoming attitude towards Iran on

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[31] For further information see: Trita Parsi, "Israeli-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition From the Power Cycle Perspective" in Homa Katouzian and Hossein Shahidi (eds*), Iran in the 21st Century, Poltics, Economics and Conflict,* (Routledge, New York, 2008), pp 136-157.

[32] Eric Watkins, "The Unfolding US Policy in the Middle East", *International Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 1, January 1997, pp. 3.

[33] President Obama's speech in Prague on 5th of April 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/ cited in Tom Sauer, "A Nuclear Iran: Trigger for a Renewed Emphasis by the Obama Administration on the Goal of Nuclear Elimination", ECPR Standing Group on Interntional Relations Conference, Stockholm, 9-11 2010.

nuclear issue. The US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), released in April 2010 is, forexample, noteworthy because it de-emphasized the role of the US nuclear deterrent. Nonnuclear weapon states that are in compliance with their NPT obligations would not be threatened with US nuclear weapons anymore. "In May 2010, the US for the first time ever revealed the exact numbers of nuclear weapons in its arsenal. This level of transparency is unprecedented for any nuclear weapon state."[34] Obama's Prague speech made in April 2009 is of crucial importance because he, before he became president, hinted that he would seek a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

There are two impetus behind Obama's enthusiasm for his quest for a global zero. One is related to the fact that "the large numbers of nuclear weapons arguably appear to represent a graver threat to the US security in the post-9-11 world than perhaps they did during much of the Cold War."[35] According to Obama, "the Cold War has disappeared but thousands of those weapons have not. In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up."[36] In an interview Obama also emphasized that "the biggest threat that people now confront is probably not an attack from a nuclear weapons state, but from nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation".[37] Put differently, the emergence of rogue states such as North Korea, Iran who acquire or want to acquire a nuclear weapons capability and the probability of the spread of nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorist groups have been quite alarming for US national interests. Therefore, Obama has been spending great effort to reestablish the norm of nuclear non-proliferation with a special emphasis on US being only power having a "moral responsibility to act".

The second impetus behind Obama's efforts for "global zero" is to reduce US reliance upon nuclear weapons and to reconfigure US national security and nuclear weapons thinking to the changing requirements of the post-Cold War world. While doing this, Washington tries to "find a balance between nuclear and conventional weapons that better reflects current US security requirements so as to make a contribution to the international efforts for disarmament."[38]

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[34] Tom Sauer, "A Nuclear Iran: Trigger for a Renewed Emphasis by the Obama Administration on the Goal of Nuclear Elimination", p.3.

[35] Andrew Futter, "The United States after unipolarity: Obama's nuclear weapons policy in a changing world" in Nicholas Kitchen, (ed.*), LSE IDEAS, IDEAS reports - special reports*, SR009, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK.

[36] President Obama's speech in Prague on 5th of April 2009.

[37] David Sanger and Peter Baker, 'Excerpts From Obama Interview', *The New York Times*, 5 April 2010.

[38] Andrew Futter, "The United States after unipolarity: Obama's nuclear weapons policy in achanging world", p.14.

In the light of all these developments, an interim agreement with Iran signed by the P5+1 group of nations – the US, the UK, Russia, China, France and Germany – on November 24, 2013 is quite promising and a positive development for having a world free from nuclear weapons as well as for Iranian integration to the international society both on economic and political level.

The Geneva Interim Agreement

The Geneva Agreement, after negotiations on technical procedures went into force from January 20, 2014 for six months. With the agreement, in return for limited sanctions relief, Iran consented to halt its 20% enrichment program, the output of which is usable for nuclear medicine and can be further enriched to weapons-grade (90%). Tehran also consented to allow frequent access to UN inspectors.[39] The lifting of sanctions on petrochemical products, insurance, gold and other precious metals, passenger plane parts and services will, for sure, keep floundering Iranian economy afloat. Moreover, the US and EU also plan to release USD 4.2 billion in Iranian assets (oil revenues) blocked overseas, in eight installments over six months. The deal permits Iran's six current customers, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey to purchase Iranian oil at current levels. When given the fact that the Iranian crippled economy is getting worse with each passing day[40], the

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[39] Iran also consented to cap uranium enrichment levels at 5 percent for the next six months, ceasing enrichment to the near-bomb-grade 20 percent level, to neutralize its existing stockpile of 20 percent material through oxidation (for use in fuel assemblies) and dilution. (No reconversion line for reversing the oxidation process is allowed), to cap its 3.5 percent low-enriched uranium (LEU) stockpile by oxidizing a portion equivalent to whatever additional amount it produces over the next six months, to freeze current capacity at the Natanz and Fordow enrichment plants by ceasing additional installation and operation of IR-1 centrifuges and agreeing not to operate existing advanced IR-2m centrifuges or install new ones. (Centrifuge production can continue only for repairs to existing machines), not to commission the Arak heavy water reactor (HRW), transfer fuel or heavy water to the reactor site, and not test additional fuel, construct additional fuel assemblies for the reactor, or install remaining components, not to engage in reprocessing plutonium or construct a facility capable of reprocessing. The deal also imposes a much more intrusive monitoring regime on Iran's nuclear program, including:Daily (as opposed to weekly) inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at Natanz and Fordow.IAEA inspections of centrifuge production and assembly facilities and uranium mines and mills. Tehran will make early declaration and information of all new nuclear facilities, provide long-requested design information about the Arak reactor to the IAEA and the conclusion of an IAEA safeguards approach for the reactor. Colin H. Kahl, "A Good Deal in Geneva", *Foreign Policy*, 25 November 2013, http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/11/25/a_good_deal_in_geneva ; "Iran Nuclear Deal Framework 'agreed' in Vienne", *BBC News Middle East*, 20 February, 2014,
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26269092.

[40] For example, "in a television interview to mark his first 100 days in power, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani revealed that when he took office, his government was struggling to pay civil servants because the previous administration had emptied the treasury. In that November 2013 broadcast, Mr Rouhani also said that supplies of basic foodstuffs were alarmingly low, with one province having reserves of wheat for only three days", "Nuclear Deals Keep Iran's Floundering Economy Afloat", *BBC News Middle East*, 22 January 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25849900.

removal of sanctions strangling Iranian economy will be a big relief for Iran. Put differently, the economy will not get worse, if not better.

When looking closely, the deal provides the first meaningful constraints on Iran's nuclear program in more than a decade and buys six months by halting additional nuclear progress. It, at the same time, precludes Iran from using further talks to creep closer to a bomb. Another sensitive issue is related to Iranians' "inalienable right" under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to enrich uranium right. Throughout the talks, the Obama Administration has not acknowledged that Iran or any other country has the right to enrich uranium because the United States does not believe that the NPT contains an explicit right to enrichment. A senior administration official explained on November 24, 2013, that, although the comprehensive solution does envision a possible Iranian enrichment program, "the UnitedStates has not recognized a right to enrich for the Iranian government. The document does not say anything about recognizing a right to enrich uranium."[41]

In a nut shell, according to many analysts, the deal puts Iran further away from a nuclear bomb than it is today, lengthens Iran's nuclear "breakout" timeline (the time required to produce weapons-grade uranium), puts the breaks on the plutonium track, makes it much more difficult for Iran to construct a parallel, covert nuclear infrastructure.[42] However, all those advantages of the deal are far from convincing many circles including some members of the US Congress on the ground that the Geneva deal fails to completely suspend Iranian enrichment as demanded by multiple U.N. Security Council resolution.

Most important of all, some critics believe that the sanctions relief agreed to in Geneva is risky because it will probably undermine the psychology of fear that currently drives investors and companies away from Iran. This, according to many, will be an economic "windfall" for Tehran and a substantial weakening of sanctions efficacy. Indeed, given the fact that Iran ranks second in the world in terms of natural gas reserves and fourth in terms of oil reserves, with a huge market of 76 million people, it is very open that the sanctions relief will contribute to Iranian economy to a large extent. The rush of many delegations from foreign countries including the Turkish one to seek for new business commitments has been quite explanatory for the immediate positive impact of sanctions relief on Iranian economy. For example, "Chinese state-owned Zhuhai Zhenrong Corporation, an affiliate of China's defense authorities, started negotiations with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) for a new crude oil contract in December 2013. France, which

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[41] "Background Briefing By Senior Administration Officials On First Step Agreement On Iran's Nuclear Program," 24 November, 2013 cited in Kenneth Katzman, Pul K. Kerr, "Interim Agreement on Iran's Nuclear program, Congressional Research Service", 11 December 2013, p.9.

[42] Colin H. Kahl, "A Good Deal in Geneva".

opposed the interim agreement on November 9, even dispatched over 100 businessmen in January 2014."[43]

From Tehran's perspective, the deal, in Rouhani's words, "means the surrender of the big powers before the great Iranian nation".[44] However, the other side of the coin is that the Geneva Interim Agreement has become a focus of growing domestic controversy in Iran between the conservatives and Revolutionary Guard on one side, and President Hassan Rouhani, the nuclear negotiating team, and those considered the reformist camp on the other. The harsh criticism among the parlamentarians in Iranian Majlis is also noteworthy with respect to understanding that the Geneva Agreement is generally seen by many in Iran as giving concession to the United States. In addition, the transfer of the nuclear portfolio from the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has been seen as a blow to the nuclear efforts of Iran. [45]

With the Geneva Agreement, the Obama administration wanted to prove that the United States is a global power seeking for cooperation in dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue. In his speech to the 2014 graduating class at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Obama emphasized that with the Geneva Agreement, Washington showed its willingness to act in situations that are of "global concern" in a multilateral way. He stated: "We must do so because collective action in these circumstances is more likely to succeed, more likely to be sustained, and less likely to lead to costly mistakes."

Looking from a different angle, however, multilateralism of the Obama administration has not engendered yet a fertile ground for inducing wide international compliance on a full compromise with Iran over nuclear issue. The main concern of US allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia is that Washington has not been able to transform the Islamic Republic of Iran into a reliable and responsible state actor on nuclear issue. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu even called the interim agreement as "a historical failure." From Israeli perspective, with the Geneva Agreement, for the first time, the international community recognizes Iran's enrichment program and agrees that it will not be rolled back. As Netenyahu stated in Knesset, the only result of the

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[43] Mari Nukii, "New Power Struggles after the Geneva Interim Agreement on the Iranian Nuclear Program", Association of Japanese of Institutes of Japanese Strategic Studies, 19 March 2014. http://www2.jiia.or.jp/en_commentary/201403/19-1.html.

[44] "Iran nuclear deal means 'surrender' for western powers, says Rouhani", *The Guardian,* 14 January 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/14/iran-nuclear-deal-surrender-western-powers-rouhani

[45] Michael Segall, "Internal Iranian Struggle in the Aftermath Geneva Nuclear Agreement", *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, 14 January 2014, http://jcpa.org/article/the-internal-iranian-struggle-in-the-aftermath-of-the-geneva-nuclear-agreement/

agreement should be the dismantling of Iran's military nuclear capability since Iranian leaders are committed to destroy Israel.[46]

In a similar vein, the interim agreement has had a big repurcussion on the Persian Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, and Oman which have generally been aligned with the United States to contain Tehran's influence. Although not reflected in their public statements, as Katzman and Kerr note, "Gulf officials have been quite uneasy about a "double standard" in which Iran would be allowed to continue enriching uranium, whereas the United States insists that civilian nuclear programs in the Gulf, such as that in UAE, not include indigenous production of nuclear fuel."[47]

When it comes to Saudi Arabia, the first reaction of Riyadh is quite positive due to several reasons. First of all, the Saudis and Iranians share some common goals such as demanding peaceful but not too strong Iraq. In addition, despite their diverging interests in Syrian civil war, both sides doubt about the reliability of the United States in different degrees. However, because Iran's nuclear aspirations set Saudi Arabia's alarm bells and it emerges as an existential threat not only by becoming a potential nuclear capable country but also "representing a potential watershed in the political consciousness of the Shia population in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province,"[48] all those common goals and threat perceptions are flouted by Riyadh. President Obama calls the interim Geneva Agreement a "new path" toward a different world. The future consequences of the deal will be evident as time expires in the end of the sixth month. But one thing is certain, the US current allies such as the Gulf states, Israel and even Turkey fearing that they will be marginalized in the region, will be more enthusiastic to have nuclear capability in the future.[49]

Concluding Remarks

The US top officials numerously stated their concern about the probability of Iran's becoming an armed nuclear power. For example, President George W. Bush declared that "the US will not tolerate construction of a nuclear weapon in Iran and later warned that Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons could put the Middle East under the shadow of a nuclear holocoust." [50] During his

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[46] http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Iran/Pages/Israeli-statements-on-Geneva-talks-with-Iran.aspx

[47] Kenneth Katzman, Pul K. Kerr, "Interim Agreement on Iran's Nuclear program".

[48] Flynt Leverett, "Reengaging Riyadh, The Road Ahead Middle East Policy in the Bush Administration's Second Term" in Flynt Leverett (ed.), (The Brooking Institution Press, Washington, 2005), p. 100.

[49] Former US National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft told the Wall Street Journal, "I beleive we are at atipping point. If we fail in Iran, we are going to have a number of countries go the same route Iran has just in self-defense. Egypt will, Saudi Arabia will, Turkey will". Peter Spiegel, "Obama Puts Arms Control at Core of New Strategy", *Wall Street journal*, 15 July 2009.

[50] David Sanger, "Bush says US will not tolerate building of nuclear arms by Iran", *New York Times*, 19 June 2003 cited in Ido Oren, "Why has the United States not Bombed Iran? The Domestic Politics of America's Response to Iran's Nuclear Programme", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol.24,

presedential campaign Obama stated that "we can not allow Iran to get a nuclear weapon. It would be a game changer in the region,"[51] Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton declared that "a nuclear armed Iran is unacceptable."[52] The above-mentioned US foreign policy makers also have made repeated declarations that "the military option is still on the table." However both during the Bush period and Obama's presidency, the United States abstained from attacking Iran and preferred to continue its sanction policy. This policy, according to Oren, has been applied despite "the public opinion polls suggesting that the American public is hardly averse to preventive military action against Iran." [53]

Many analysts made different explanations on why Washington has abstained from a military attack on Iran so far, however, the most inclusive one is related to the decline of US primacy in the international system. Put differently, as some international theorists allege, unipolar world is over. The unipolar world is devolving a three tiered system. There is the resurgence of other powers such as China, Russia who have started to have the capability of counterbalancing the United States, the rest of the world and the United States who still sees itself as responsible for the preservation of the liberal international order.[54]

The US foreign policy towards the Middle East during the Obama period reflects the ambivalence of the United States in a changing international order that is both being recommitted to American exceptionalism and emphasizing American leadership while acting like a straw man. Obama does not favor overreach in foreign policy so as to justify the US blocking itself from being sucked into the military conflict in Syria. He also emphasizes the US choice of diplomacy over military power in dealing with the Iranian nuclear program. Obama's words in his address at West Point's commencement ceremonies reflect the above-mentioned dilemma. "We will use military force, unilaterally if necessary, when our core interests demand it – when our people are threatened; when our livelihoods are at stake; when the security of our allies is in danger." But we are not going to invade every country that harbors terrorists, nor necessarily rush in to every crisis. We're going to enlist partners, and work through international institutions."[55]

No.4, 2011, p. 660.

[51] "The second presedential debate: a transcript", New York Times, 7 October 2008 cited in Oren, p. 660.

[52] "US wants Iran sanctions that will bite, Clinton tells AIPAC", *Haaretz*, 22 March 2010http://www.haaretz.com/news/u-s-wants-iran-sanctions-that-will-bite-clintontells-aipac-1.265171, cited in Oren, 660.

[53] Ido Oren, "Why has the United States not Bombed Iran?...", p. 663.

[54] Stanley A. Renshon, *National Security in the Obama Administration, Reassesing the Bush Doctrine*, (New York, Routledge, 2010), p. 200.

[55] "Obama Signals Reset of US Foreign Policy", *Independent European Daily Express*, 29 May 2014, http://

Obama's foreign policy is defined as "both interventionist and internationalist, but not isolationist or unilateral. In other words, not too hot, not too cold—just right".[56] When looking closely, Obama has been criticized on the ground that his policy to pursue a global war on terrorism seem to stumble from interventionist (Libya) to internationalist (Syria) to isolationist (Bahrain) to unilateral (Israel) all at once in the Middle East. When it comes to US attitude towards Iranian nuclear issue under Obama, it "shifts away from the centrality of great power politics and nuclear rivalry with Russia and China in US policy, towards a greater focus on rogue state and terrorist nuclear threats"[57]

Long story short, if there is one single word which defines current US foreign policy towards the Middle East, it is "withdrawal" or "leading from behind" which, according to many, is defined as America's being left behind. [58] While Obama honestly believes his interim deal with Iran has stopped Tehran's nuclear weapons program in its tracks, Ayatollah Khamenei has declared that "the activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of nuclear research and development won't be halted at all." It is very apparent that Obama has put an end to a war-laden chapter for the US in dealing with Iranian nuclear issue. However, the lack of clear idea about the next chapter makes it difficult to make prediction about an explicit solution to the nuclear issue between Iran and the United States.

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[56] Bob Dreyfuss, "Obama's Goldilocks Foreign Policy", *Middle East Online*, 28 May 2014, http://www. middle-east-online.com/english/?id=66219

[57] Andrew Futter, "The United States after unipolarity…", p. 13.

[58] K. T. Macfarland, "Ukraine, Syria, Iran -- America isn't leading from behind, it's being left behind", *Fox News*, February, 2014, http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/02/28/ukraine-syria-iran-america-isnt-leading-from-behind-it-being-left-behind/

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SİSİ YANLISI İTTİFAKIN KIRILGAN SİYASETİ: NEOLİBERAL BAĞLAMDA NASIRCI DEVLET MİRASI

ÖZ

Mısır'da 26-27 Mayıs'ta gerçekleşen Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimlerini eski general Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi %96.1 gibi yüksek bir oranla kazandı. Eski SCAF başkanı ve cuntanın lideri olan Sisi'nin Nasırcı bir aday olan Hamdeen Sabbahi karşısındaki zaferi, Mısır siyasetinin Mübarek devrildikten sonraki üç yıl boyunca geçirdiği süreçler göz ardı edilerek anlaşılamaz. Mübarek sonrası iktidarı devralan askeri yönetim, arkasından Mursi'nin Cumhurbaşkanı seçilmesi ile oluşan hayal kırıklığı ve akabinde gelişen darbe, Mısır siyasetini Müslüman Kardeşler ve karşıtları olarak kutuplaştırmakla kalmadı. Bu süreç 1952'de iktidar olmuş Nasırcılığın kurumları ve ideolojik mirasıyla farklı düzeylerde siyasette belirleyici olduğunu gösterdi. Ekmek, sosyal adalet ve eşitlik taleplerinin yerini alan güvenlik talebi nostaljik bir Nasırcılık ikonografisiyle Sisi'nin teröre karşı mücadele vaadine eklemlendi. Eski rejim unsurlarının, generallerin ve laik-milliyetçik formasyonuna dayanan orta sınıfların oluşturduğu Sisi yanlısı ittifak, devrimin başlangıcından beri sokak ve işyeri mobilizasyonunun esas motoru olan ana talepler karşılanmadıkça kırılgan bir zemin üzerinde hareket etmeye devam edecekler. Müslüman Kardeşler'in idam, tutuklamalar gibi baskı araçları karşısında zihinlerde kazandığı mağduriyet kaynaklı meşruiyet, Mısır işçi sınıfının ve yoksullarının karşılanmamış talepleri ve ekonomik kriz, Mısır'da bugün baskın bir biçimde hakim görünen Sisi fenomeni için yıkıcı bir dinamik yaratabilir. Bu makale Mısır'da var olan kutuplaşmanın ve olası kırılmaların dinamiklerini Nasırcı mirasın etkilerini ve kısıtlarını sorunsallaştırarak tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Doğu, Ordu, Darbe, Devrim, Mısır, SCAF (Silahlı Kuvvetler Yüksek Konseyi), Al-Sisi, Nasırcılık, Hamdeen Sabbahi.

سياسة التحالف الهشّة الموالية للسيسي: ميراث الدولة الناصرية من منطلق النيوليبرالية
جانان شاهين خلاصة

فاز الجنرال عبد الفتاح السيسي في الانتخابات التي تم اجراؤها في مصر في الفترة بين 26_27 مايو بنسبة 96.1%. كما ان القائد الاسبق للقوات المسلحة عبد الفتاح السيسي حقق هذا الانتصار امام حامدين صباحي المرشح الممثل للفكر الناصري. هذا بالاضافة الى انه يصعب فهم السياسة المصرية دون الرجوع والنظر الى الثلاث سنوات والمراحل التي مرت بها الدولة خلال هذه الفترة بعد خلع الرئيس مبارك. علاوة على ان القيادة العسكرية التي تولت رئاسة البلد بعد خلع مبارك وخيبة الامل التي تلتها بعد انتخاب الرئيس محمد مرسي والانقلاب الذي نفذ بعد ذلك. فلم يقف الأمر عند الانقسام الذي حدث بين مؤيدي الاخوان المسلمين ومعارضيهم فحسب، بل واثبتت هذه الفترة ان الميراث الايدولوجي والمؤسسات الناصرية التي تولت رئاسة البلاد منذ عام 1952 لعبت دورا واضحا وفعالا في تشكيل السياسة المصرية. واضيف هدف محاربة السيسي للارهاب الي مطلب تحقيق الامن وحب الوطن الذي ظهر كواحدة من مبادئ الفكر الناصري واحتل محل مطالب العيش والعدالة الاجتماعية والمساواة. كما ان التحالف الموالي للسيسي الذي يتمثل في عناصر النظام السابق والطبقة المتوسطة من ضباط الجيش وممن يعتنقون مبدا العلمانية والقومية كلما عجزواعن تحقيق المطالب التي تم رفعها في الشارع المصري وفي اماكن العمل منذ ان بدات الثورة، سيستمرون في محاولة البقاء والتحرك بالاعتماد على ارضية هشة. اما عن الشرعية التي اعتمدت على الغدر بالاخوان المسلمين واعتقالهم والحكم عليهم بالاعدام ، اضافة الي عدم تحقيق مطالب الشارع والتي تتمثل في مطالب الفقراء وطبقة العمال وكذلك الازمة الاقتصادية ، كل هذا من الممكن ان يشكل الية يمكنها ان تهدم نظام السيسي هذا الذي يعتمد في حكمه على الظلم والطغيان. وسيتم في هذا المقال بحث ومناقشة الوضع العام لمصر بصفة عامة وكذلك الانقسام واليات سقوط نظام السيسي المتوقعة ، بالاضافة الي الآثار المتبقية من الفكر الناصري وتاثيرها على تشكيل سياسة مصر الحالية .

الكلمات الدالة: الشرق الاوسط، الجيش، الانقلاب، الثورة، مصر ، المجلس الاعلى للقوات المسلحة، السيسي، الناصرية، حامدين صباحي.

FRAGILE POLITICS OF THE PRO-SISI ALLIANCE IN EGYPT: NASSERIST STATE LEGACY WITHIN NEOLIBERAL CONTEXT

ABSTRACT

Former general Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi won the presidential elections held on 26-27 May with 96.1%. The electoral victory of Sisi, the former head of SCAF and the leader of the coup d'etat, against Hamdeen Sabbahi, a Nasserist candidate, cannot be fully grasped without an analysis of the three-year period ensuing the overthrow of Mubarak. The SCAF-supervised transition period after Mubarak, Morsi's presidency with an accompanying disillusionment and the coup preceded by a massive popular protest not only contributed to the polarization of Egyptian politics along the Brotherhood and anti-Brotherhood lines but also provided evidence for the resilience of Nasserism with its institutional and ideological legacy. Replacement of demands for bread, social justice and equality with that for security was reflected in the pro-Sisi campaign with a nostalgic Nasserist iconography. The pro-Sisi alliance, composed of the remnants of the old Mubarak regime, the military and middle-class laicist-nationalists, seems to be residing on a rather fragile ground unless the first cluster of demands for justice and equality are met. The political legitimacy that Muslim Brotherhood seems to be gaining due to its victimized position, the unmet demands of the working classes and the economic pressures might produce a destructive dynamic for the seemingly prevalent Sisi phenomenon. This article discusses the dynamics of the polarization as well as the potential lines of fracture in Egyptian political scene with a special emphasis on the impact and the constraints of Nasserist legacy.

Keywords: Middle East, Military, Coup, Revolution, Egypt, SCAF (Supreme Council of Armed Forces), Al-Sisi, Nasserism, Hamdeen Sabbahi.

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Ascension of el-Sisi

Saudi King, Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, was in Cairo on 20 June to congratulate Egypt's new President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on the electoral win he got and his inauguration. For the monarch, Sisi symbolized reversal of what he labeled the "strange chaos" of the Arab Spring.[1] Two days later, Secretary of United States, John Kerry, paid a personal visit to Egypt, voicing strong support for Sisi with the promise of constant influx of military aid, half of which had got frozen after 3 July coup.[2] What Egypt has turned into in three and a half years after the January 25 revolution seems pretty similar to what the Egyptians revolted against. Like Mubarak's Egypt, today's Egypt is an increasingly repressive security state with a former general, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi as its president. Since Morsi was removed, the regime's crackdown has surpassed those of Mubarak's regime. "Security" has been a catch phrase that Sisi's electoral campaign was based on. With the anti-protest law passed in April 2014, demonstrations require police permission.[3] In addition to over 40.000 detainees, the courts issued over 600 death sentences. Dwelling on a wave of extreme-nationalism, the assault launched after the coup has also been aimed at secular revolutionaries like Ahmed Maher, Alaa Abdel Fattah and Mahinour al-Masry[4] in addition to dozens of university students of Islamist-leaning on the grounds that they opposed the coup.

Since the advent of the revolutionary movement in Egypt in 2011, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) has always been the determining force in critical moments. In February 2011, when the security forces of the Mubarak regime failed to defeat the crowds in Tahrir, the SCAF intervened and generals declared commitments "to protect the people, and to oversee their interests and security…to protect the nation, and the achievements and aspirations of the great people of Egypt."[5] The army had addressed the key demand of the uprising by ousting Hosni Mubarak; at the same time, it had gained formal control over "the nation". The generals acted on claims to authority relying on the historic legacy of Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers. They tapped resources of great importance in Egyptian society evoking

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[1] Bruce Riedel, "Saudi king's short victory lap in Egypt," *Al-Monitor,* 22 June 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/saudi-arabia-egypt-king-abdullah.html#ixzz35UnT7gU9.

[2] Jay Solomon, "John Kerry Voices Strong Support for Egyptian President Sisi," *The Wall Street Journal,* 22 June 2014, http://online.wsj.com/articles/john-kerry-arrives-in-egypt-on-unannounced-visit-1403426551.

[3] "Activists defy Egypt's anti-protest law," *Al-Jazeera,* 24 April 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/04/activists-defy-egypt-anti-protest-law-2014426232020322134.html.

[4] Ahmed Maher is the founder of April 6 Movement. Alaa Abdal Fattah is a famous blogger. Mahinour Al-Masry is a leading member of the organization of Revolutinary Socialists.

[5] Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, "SCAF Statement," *New York Times,* 10 February 2011, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/02/10/world/middleeast/20110210-egypt-supreme-council.html?_r=0.

official histories and popular memories of the Nasser era in which the army is an embodiment of common interests. During the early weeks of protests and of clashes with police and Mubarak's thugs, protesters had chanted: "The army and the people are one hand!"[6] The SCAF-supervised transition period over the next 12 months, on the other hand saw many fights between military troops and demonstrators, the most memorable ones of which were the clashes during the Maspero protests and Mohamed Mahmoud attacks of October and November 2011 respectively, when some 80 people were killed.[7] These clashes led to a change in the mood of the protestors. On the first anniversary of the 25 January uprising the demonstrators who assembled in Tahrir Square chanted a new slogan: "The army and the police are one filthy hand!"[8]

SCAF's Preemptive Moves: Surviving the Regime

The generals retreated after the presidential elections which brought to power Mohammed Morsi in June 2012. What was lying behind this low profile was the fact that SCAF had struck deals with the Brotherhood in the early weeks of the revolution. The stipulation for the electoral participation of the Brotherhood was to restore public order. In other words, economic and political order in which the military and security apparatus had their own stake was to be protected by the SCAF's coalition with Brotherhood. The maneuvers SCAF adopted illustrate Marx's understanding of state as written in *18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*. Marx defines state as an autonomous apparatus whose action ranged between balancing the existing interests in the society and promoting the "parasiting" interests of the state personnel themselves.[9] Hazem Kandil interprets the coalition between the Brotherhood and SCAF as following:

> *The 2011 uprising left the security apparatus intact, and the military regained the autonomy they had lost under Mubarak. But the question of who would hold political office was open to negotiation, and the generals didn't mind trying out the power-hungry Islamists. They were more organized than the activists who sparked the revolt and less embittered than the remnants of the old regime. They didn't pose a threat to military privileges and deferred amiably to the security forces that set out to crush the revolt. And they had no intention of dismantling the infrastructure of dictatorship and submitting*

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[6] Malika Bilal, "The army and the people are one hand," *Al-Jazeera,* 26 November 2011, http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/middle-east/army-and-people-are-one-hand.

[7] Sarah Carr, "A firsthand account: Marching from Shubra to deaths at Maspero," *Egypt Independent*, 10 October 2011, www.egyptindependent.com/news/firsthand-account-marching-shubra-deaths-maspero.

[8] Philip Marfleet, "Egypt: after the coup," *International Socialism,* 2 April 2014, http://www.isj.org.uk / index.php4?id=965&issue=142.

[9] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Maryland: Wildside Press LLC, 2008), p. 62.

themselves to the volatile moods of a democratic process; they just wanted to take Mubarak's place at the top.[10]

The Egyptian military acted to preserve its own interests and the regime that provides the safeguard for its privileges. General Sisi had been appointed by Mohamed Morsi as Defense Minister in August 2012.[11] However, Morsi and the Brotherhood failed to impose the order they had promised. Their partisan policies and failure to deliver promises caused massive demonstrations. They also failed to control working class activism, which in the early months of 2013 reached very high levels, an expression of frustration at power cuts, fuel shortages and price rises.[12] In this climate el-Sisi looked for a new strategy to discard Morsi in order to safeguard institutions of the state and restabilize Egyptian capitalism. He placed himself at the head of protests against Morsi and the Brotherhood, declaring that the "patriotic and historic responsibility" of the armed forces obliged them to intervene to "stand up firmly and strictly to any act deviating from peacefulness."[13] The officers moved behind *Tamarod* (Rebellion), a street-based initiative that had already called on the president to stand down.[14] Businessmen like Naguip Sawiris, *feloul* ("remnants" of the Mubarak regime), prominent figures in the state bureaucracy and the judiciary, and most political parties established since 2011 stood behind the campaign.[15] Talad Asad argues that anti-Brotherhood opposition consisted largely of an elite that was still in power:

> *[…] the rich businessmen who established themselves during Mubarak's neoliberal regime; high court judges that maintained close links with the army; ambitious politicians and ex-politicians; television directors and show hosts; famous newspaper journalists; the Coptic Pope and the Sheikh of al-Azhar; and so forth. The fact is that the senior army officers are very much part of these elite […].[16]*

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[10] Hazem Kandil, "Revolt in Egypt," *New Left Review,* No. 68, March-April 2011, http://newleftreview. org/II/68/hazem-kandil-revolt-in-egypt.

[11] "Morsy sends Tantawi to retirement, appoints Sisi military head," *Egypt Independent,* 12 August 2012, http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/morsy-sends-tantawi-retirement-appoints-sisi-military-head.

[12] Ahmed Aboul Enein, "Labour strikes and protests double under Morsi", *Daily News Egypt*, 28 April 2013, www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/04/28/labour-strikes-and-protests-double-under-morsi/.

[13] General Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, "Transcript: Egypt's army statement," *Al Jazeera,* 3 July 2013, www. aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/201373203740167797.htm.

[14] Yasmine Saleh, "Activists who backed Mursi's fall turn against military", *Reuters*, 20 February 2014, www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/20/us-egypt-politics-tamarud-idUSBREA1J1E420140220.

[15] Edmund Blair, Paul Taylor, and Tom Perry, "Special Report: How the Muslim Brotherhood lost Egypt", *Reuters*, 26 July 2013, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/26/us-egypt-mistakes-specialreport-idUSBRE96O07H20130726.

[16] Talal Asad and Ayça Çubukçu, "Neither Heroes, Nor Villains: A Conversation with Talal Asad on Egypt After Morsi," *Jadaliyya,* 23 July 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/13129/neither-heroes-nor-villains_a-conversation-with-ta.

Demonstrations of massive size took to the streets with a demand for Morsi's resignation on 30 June 2013. The radical movement built from below against both the old regime (epitomized with Mubarak) and the anti-democratic and pro-capitalist agenda of the Brotherhood was gradually incorporated into a polarized confrontation, which culminated in the intervention of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), as the "guardian of the public will." Since the removal of Morsi, Al-Sisi has become the supreme figure in Egyptian politics and has been widely supported to run in the presidential elections. On March 26, Sisi formally resigned[17] from the Security Council of the Armed Forces and announced his candidacy to run for presidency.

General Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's ascension to presidential palace came with a landslide win with 96.9 percent of the votes, leaving his only challenger Nasserist Hamdeen Sabbahi far behind. Nevertheless, Al-Sisi was not able to get the popular consent at the scale he was expecting, evident in the low turnout at the polls standing at 37 percent within the allotted days. As Al-Sisi seems to be enjoying this limited political legitimacy in his civilian garments, the political sphere in Egypt seems rather polarized, with almost no dissenting voices in the streets or Tahrir square, where it all began.

This polarizing policy framework conceals the fragile coalition around Sisi. Pro-Sisi bloc is not monolithic, ranging from the remnants of Mubarak-era (*feloul*) acting on a desire to maintain their networks of privilege to secular-nationalists feeling threatened by Islamism to those suffering due to economic instability. While the security forces, state bureaucrats and elites are likely to lend their support to Al Sisi on a long-term basis, those consisting mainly of impoverished Egyptians as well as the sections of the middle class hit hard by Mubarak's privatization programmes seek an improvement of their economic conditions and, therefore, offer a conditional loyalty to Sisi's presidency. In other words, the loyalty of this category hinges upon Al-Sisi's performance in achieving stability and economic improvement.

Nasserist Legacy

Corporatism

The major factor underlying this economically vertical and politically diverse coalition is the Nassserist legacy, which is evident in the analogies made between 1952 Free Officers' coup and 3 July 2013 coup. This analogy is even furthered by drawing parallels between Al Sisi and Nasser. There is a growing literature attempting to address this parallelism. Nasserist legacy can be traced back in two realms: institutional and ideological, between which there is a symbiosis. Institutional legacy is mostly related with the state, which had

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an amalgamated form of 'corporative' state and a 'gendarme state'[18] over the course of half a century from Nasserite period to Mubarak.

Corporative state became the political instrument that Nasserist political system enacted not only to implement a diluted form of socialism, a populist etatism[19], which created corporatist mechanisms whether it be political bodies or state controlled trade unions but also to prevent the masses from acting independently from the state surveillance. This bargain was the backbone of the social pact Nasserist authoritarianism rested on. That is, economic inclusion of the middle and lower classes was accompanied by their political exclusion from the policy-making structures. Therefore, corporatist structures were locations of political exclusion through manipulation.

In 1953 Nasser set up a single legal political organization called *the Liberation Rally*. He stated: "The Liberation Rally is not a political party. Its creation was prompted by the desire to establish a body that would organize the people's forces and overhaul the social set-up."[20] Baker depicts Rally as 'an instrument for depoliticizing public life,' a means of preventing trade union activism, peasant activism in rural collectives that had emerged in response to land reform and the activities of communist and Islamist organizations.[21]

It was replaced by *the National Union* in 1956, which was an instrument of solidarity constitution against Britain, France and Israel during the Suez crisis. In 1962, this was replaced with *the Arab Socialist Union* (ASU), a body which at first sight looked like a conventional party, with mass membership and branches in villages, city districts, workplaces and educational institutions. However, the Union was also controlled autocratically by the military elite and by senior bureaucrats: in 1965 Nasser admitted, "The fact is we have no internal organization, except on the books."[22] The ASU did, however, provide mechanisms for co-opting dissidents who survived Nasser's intensive repression. The clearest example was the Egyptian Communist Party, which dissolved itself in 1964.[23]

ASU was meant to be a representation of the "national alliance of working forces" consisting of workers, peasants, intellectuals, national capitalists, and soldiers. "While the five parts of the alliance were far more a rhetorical device

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[18] Carl Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 39.

[19] Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler, (eds.), *Rethinking Nasserism: Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2004), p. 12.

[20] Derek Hopwood, *Egypt, Politics and Society 1945-1990,*(London: Routledge, 1993), p. 87.

[21] Raymond William Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution Under Nasser and Sadat* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 26.

[22] Ibid.*,* 96.

[23] Philip Marfleet, "State and Society" in P. Marfleet and R. El-Mahdi (eds.), *Egypt: The Moment of Change*, (London: Zed Books, 2009), p. 26.

than an organizational reality," wrote Waterbury, "they served to focus attention on social categories that cut vertically across strata of income and privilege."[24] Corporative structures of the regime were designed as reinforcements to Nasserist rhetoric, aiming to provide evidence to the feasibility of their narrative "National Unity." However, these efforts were put into practice in an authoritarian top-down manner, which also involved the accompaniment of physical coercion to cooptation strategies.

Post-Morsi period also witnessed attempts to create corporatist political initiatives if not structures. Within domestic politics, the SCAF adopted the long-lasting authority consolidation policy of the Nasserist regime: cooptation by offering a wider representation of social democrats, working class leadership and some prominent Nasserists in the constitutional committee and the Cabinet. Prominent Nasserist figures became members of the 50-member committee after 3rd July coup. These include Sameh Ashour, the head of the Lawyers' Syndicate and of *the Nasserist Party*, Mohamed Sami, head of *Al-Karama* and Mahmoud Badr, co-founder of the anti-Morsi *Tamarod* movement and member of the Nasserist-leaning *Popular Current*.[25] The last organization is particularly important since it was built around a civil Nasserist figure, Hamdeen Sabbahi, following his surprising success in 2012 presidential elections. His campaign had received the support of left-wing organizations and independent trade unions. However, his support for the army after the coup discouraged many around him. The percentage of the votes he got in latest presidential elections (3 percent) indicates the decrease in his support base. An opportunity to create an independent movement from both the military and the Brotherhood was missed by entering the coalition involving right-wing parties and figures.

The SCAF called for the establishment of an interim-government after the coup, headed by Hazem El-Beblawi, the founder of *Egyptian Social Democratic Party*.[26] The members of the government consisted mainly of liberals, technocrats and Nasserists. Al Sisi could not only depend on ministers drawn from among *feloul* and post-revolution officials but also, crucially, upon party leaders with their own constituencies among revolutionary activists. The design of such a government was essential to create a picture in which the armed forces were the servants of the civilian representatives of the opposition, marking a continuation with the Nasserist methods of cooptation and incorporation. The most striking example of this policy was the appointment of Kamal Abu-Eita as the Minister of Manpower.[27] Abu-Eita was the president of the

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[24] John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 315.

[25] Leyla Doss, "The past return," *Mada Masr,* October 27, 2013, http://www.madamasr.com/content/past-return.

[26] "Who's who: Egypt's full interim Cabinet," *Ahram Online,* 17 July 2013, http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/76609.aspx.

[27] "Cabinet ministers sworn in," *Daily News Egypt,* 16 July 2013, http://www.dailynewsegypt.

Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU), a co-founder of *Al-Karama*, a popular figure in the *Egyptian Popular Current* and a member of *the National Salvation Front*. Since Morsi's ouster, however, he has been openly supportive of the "30 June revolution" and called on members of EFITU to end labor strikes.[28]

Militarism

In February 2014 the government formed by el-Sisi disintegrated, as ministerial resignations were followed by dissolution of the whole cabinet. Corporatist methods seemingly failed to create corporatist structures which could provide the military with a greater control over the lower strata of the Egyptian society. Another aspect of the Nasserite institutional legacy lies in the militarization of the regime with the 1952 coup. Egyptian political sphere witnesses a revival of the appraisal of the military for its role as a savior. This revival owes much to the position of the armed forces within the system since Nasserite period. The scale of power the armed forces attained in governance, politics and economy render this institution a significant power holder with a stake in the regime survival. Therefore, despite the corporatist mechanisms explained above, Egyptian state has been a "fierce state" aiming to preserve itself resorting to coercive measures when it fails to forge a historic social bloc that accepts the legitimacy of its rule.

The studies of Mills,[29] Nassif[30] and Abdel-Malek[31] show how the armed forces gradually turned into a "power elite" with their appointment to civilian positions and ministries during Nasserite period. Nassif suggests Nasser provided officers with a stake in the regime by encouraging their private interests.[32] After the 1952 coup, the members of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the body formed consisting of the Free Officers, stipulated that officer would control the work of one or more ministries.[33] Nasser and his colleagues became the supervisors of every ministry. So as to establish loyalty and create clientele inside the military, RCC members appointed their fellow officers as advisors and representatives in the new administration. By 1953, officers occupied scores of prestigious and highly-paid civilian jobs that were unattainable under the monarchy. Anouar Abdel-Malek maintains that 1,500

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com/2013/07/16/cabinet-ministers-sworn-in/.

[28] "Strikes under control", *Ahram Weekly*, 17 December 2013, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Print/4970.aspx.

[29] C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

[30] Hicham Bou Nassif, "Wedded to Mubarak: The Second Careers and Financial Rewards of Egypt's Military Elite, 1981-2011", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 4, Autumn 2013.

[31] Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Egypt:Military Society; The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser* (New York: Random House, 1968).

[32] Ibid., 513.

[33] Ibid., 92.

former officers were appointed to top nonmilitary positions between 1952 and 1964.[34]

Nasserism, to summarize, placed military in the center of its regime building and regime survival project assigning the army a nationalistic ideological mission, a populist reformist appeal and a growing political power. While Nasserism interpreted the ideas through the prism of nationalism, the popular masses viewed Nasserism as an ideology radiating from the centrality of the military in governance and rule. As the state embarked on comprehensive development programs under Nasser, it relied on the military to provide technological expertise and bureaucratic supervision.[35] The Egyptian military became the symbol of the efforts to restore national dignity and achieve economic prosperity. The ideational link between liberation, development and the military was the main source of legitimacy of their residing the regime for the masses.

Nasser was succeeded by two other military presidents: Anwar Sadat (1970-1981) and Hosni Mubarak (1981-2011). As for the position of the military during Sadat period, he carried out a "demilitarization" project by lessening the number of army officers in administrative positions to a great extent in an attempt to make the army focus more on war-related issues.[36] However, Mubarak installed back the military influence on Egyptian society by allowing key officers to create economic enterprises and occupy high-level government positions.[37]

Under Mubarak, the military enjoyed great leverage in politics through its maintenance of a close relationship with the US and its military-industrial complex. As part of the 1979 peace agreement with Israel, the Egyptian military receives USD 1, 3 billion in annual aid from the U.S. This includes training of Egyptian officers in U.S. war colleges, and sales of weapons to Egypt, such as F-16 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, and M1A1 Abraham tanks. The aid programme fostered close relationships between Egyptian generals and their counterparts in the Pentagon.[38]

Mubarak did not have a nationalistic mission to offer to the officers. The armed forces were neither the heroes of the poor nor the liberators of occupied land.[39] During Mubarak rule the system of control was built on a prom-

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[34] Ibid., 92.

[35] Ibid., 512.

[36] Mark N. Cooper, "Demilitarization of Egyptian Cabinet," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 14, No. 2, May 1982, pp. 204- 210.

[37] Robert Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 95-133.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Nassif, "Wedded to Mubarak," 514.

ise of the accumulation of rewards and post-retirement career opportunities for officers who were considered to be loyal throughout their career.[40] Senior officers expected appointments in high-rank positions in the state bureaucracy. They could also receive direct cash payments, or if they were involved in the arms trade, they received commissions.[41]

In addition to being appointed in the bureaucracy in large numbers[42], retired officers held managerial positions in what Robert Springborg designates "Military, Inc.," i.e. the armed forces' economic empire.[43] The main military bodies involved in economic activities are the ministry of military production, the Arab Industrial Organization (AIO), and the National Service Projects Organization (NSPO). They run 35 factories and farms in total. According to Zeinab Abul-Magd, a historian writing articles on the Egyptian Armed Forces' economic power, 40 percent of the goods manufactured by the Ministry of Military Production are nonmilitary products. The NSPO exclusively manufactures nonmilitary equipment.[44] Some of the retired senior military officers who were deemed loyal to the regime were gradually co-opted into the presidential system of Hosni Mubarak's double attributes of "privilege and patronage". In the words of Yezid Sayigh, the officers' corps did not disappear from the scene but, rather, "became invisible by virtue of its ubiquity." Sayigh adds that the officers' role in the civilian sphere "became as pervasive as to be deemed normal and natural, not only by others but also, crucially, by its members." Egypt, in Sayigh's words, has become an "officers' republic."[45]

The power of the SCAF stems from its economic, political and institutional power. During the transition period from February 2011 to June 2012, SCAF consolidated its dominance over state institutions. First, SCAF issued a law which provided army officers with immunity from prosecution in civilian courts. Moreover, it opened a chemical industrial complex to produce fertilizers and a cement factory in North Sinai. In 2012 constitutional amendments, the economic, political and juristical privileges of the armed forces were kept. 2014 constitution drafted after Sisi-led coup formed a committee even extended some articles entrenching the position of the armed forces. Article 197 of 2012 constitution kept the military budget from civilian scrutiny. Its coun-

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[40] Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 95–133.

[41] Nassif, "Wedded to Mubarak," 516.

[42] Zeinab Abul-Magd, "The Egyptian Republic of Retired Generals," *Foreign Policy*, 8 May 2012, http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/05/08/the_egyptian_republic_of_retired_generals.

[43] Nadine Marroushi, "US Expert: Leadership of 'Military Inc.' Is Running Egypt," *Egypt Independent*, 26 October 2011, http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/us-expert-leadership-militaryinc-running-egypt.

[44] Zeinab Abul-Magd, "The Egyptian Republic of Retired Generals."

[45] Yezid Sayigh, "Above the State: The Officers' Republic of Egypt," *Carnegie Endowment*, 1 August 2012, http://carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=48996.

terpart in 2014 constitution, article 203, maintains this immunity.[46] It gives the authority to oversee the military budget to the National Defense Council, a governmental institution consisting of seven civilians and seven military officers. Parliament is obliged to consult the council on any prospective laws concerning the armed forces, before they are introduced. The constitution also ensures that the Minister of Defense should always be chosen from ranking officers.[47]

Secularist Nationalism

Having looked at the militarist institutional legacy and corporatist public administration methods in a comparative manner, core ideas that the regime relies on can be visited briefly. According to Gramsci, state is an entity comprised of "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules."[48] After 1952 coup installed Gamal Abdel Nasser as the first military president, the whole set of practices were imbued with ideological configurations. The political system formed with the Free Officers' coup, therefore, was based on major ideological premises, which can be referred to as Nasserism and whose core ideas can be summarized as, firstly, Egyptian nationalism embedded in pan-Arabism, which elevates Egyptianism by reinventing its authenticity and commonalities in relation to its Arab geo-political context and by aspiring to lead the anti-colonial and anti-Israeli struggle in the Arab world[49]; Arab socialism, which positions the state as a medium of industrial development in a populist manner and sustains itself in the political economy of state capitalism[50]; and finally secularism with a rhetorical religiosity[51]. In today's political scene, pro-Sisi campaign seems to be based on supra-nationalism with a poignant hostility against Brotherhood. A brief comparison between the nationalisms of the two periods might reveal the linkages and discontinuities.

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[46] "The 2014 Egyptian Constitution:Without accountability, checks or balances," *Daily News Egypt,* 24 March 2014, http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/03/24/2014-egyptian-constitutionwithout-accountability-checks-balances/.

[47] Dr. Zeinab Abul-Magd, "The Egyptian military in politics and the economy: Recent history and current transition status" October 2013, No: 2, CMI Insight, http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/4935-the-egyptian-military-in-politics-and-the-economy.pdf.

[48] Antonia Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 244.

[49] Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[50] Shahrough Akhavi "Egypt's Socialism and Marxist Thought: Some Preliminary Observations on Social Theory and Metaphysics," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Apr. 1975.

[51] Joel Gordon, "Secular and Religious Memory in Egypt: Recalling Nasserist Civics," *Muslim World,* Vol. 87, No. 2, April 1997.

The Nasserite period was marked with both a strong sense of Egyptian nationalism and pan-Arabism. Although the latter seems to negate the territorial connotations of the first, the case was the opposite. Although pan-Arab discourse of the Nasserite period was a reflection of the anti-colonial, anti-western and anti-monarchical mood of the middle and lower classes, it was the national interests of Egypt that determined the alliances and conflicts during the period. Egyptian nationalism was, in other words, built upon the regional anti-colonial mood and placed itself in the center of the anti-western independence struggle. The concept of Arab identity entered Egyptian intellectual discourse in the early 1930s, gradually amounting to an influential political particularity in Egyptian society.[52] The identity built on Arab-Islamic origin was adopted as a sort of defense mechanism against Western cultural hegemony. However, this nationalism was replaced by an exclusivist Egyptian territorial nationalism that began to be voiced more loudly and this orientation also contended that Egypt was a member of a greater Arab community with which its destiny was intertwined. Egypt's Arab policies under Nasser displayed continuity with the nature of nationalism that had marked previous decades.[53] The leadership of the Egyptian revolutionary regime viewed Egyptian involvement in Arab nationalism through the Egyptian prism.[54] Regional alliances of the time served the purpose of placing Egypt at the heart of Arab politics rather than erasing the contours of its territorial interests. Nationalization of the Suez Canal Company and the political merge with Syria under the political title United Arab Republic (1958-1961) were all strategic steps to further Egypt's national interests against the colonial domination within a political geography consisting of countries transitioning through a similar course of regime building experiments.

It can be argued that up until the Tahrir uprising, anti-authoritarian, anti-corruption and anti-war movement was on rise without an explicit pronouncement of Egyptian nationalism. Preceding the Tahrir revolution, this mood was reflected in anti-war movements against Mubarak's collaboration with US's invasive policies and in labor strikes against IMF-driven economic policies. In other words, anti-western sentiments of the 1950s were substituted with anti-neoliberal mood against the agenda of Western institutions like IMF, while anti-colonial sentiments of the Nasserite period were replaced with an anti-occupation mood against USA intervention in Middle East. It was this shared motive that made a great variety of people from different organizations, whether it is Nasserist or Islamist, take to Tahrir square three years ago. However, in the course of protests, Egyptian nationalism with a patriotic

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[52] Gershoni and P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation,* pp. 7-11.

[53] Ibid., p. 182.

[54] James P. Jankowski, "Nasserism and Egyptian State Policy, 1952-1958" in James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, (New Yok: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 166.

tone came to be articulated more loudly. Ahmad Shokr observes how the pop-
ular mood and dominant ideas changed from 25 January up to 11 February
when Mubarak resigned:

> *People arrived demanding free elections, regime change, and an end to
> police brutality, improvements in their economic lot, or all of the above. As the
> days passed, the discourse was slowly taken over by expressions of patriotism.
> The people's art in every corner of the square became less and less visible in a
> staggering mass of Egyptian flags. The consensus against Mubarak developed
> into a jubilee of national pride. Following Mubarak's resignation on February
> 2011, Tahrir erupted in joy. "Hold your head high," chanted hundreds of
> thousands. "You are Egyptian!" Smaller groups demanding "civilian, not mil-
> itary rule" were drowned out.[55]*

Shokr's observation reveals that the masses calling for more freedom and
social justice expressed their grievances in a nationalistic vocabulary placing a
special emphasis on Egyptian identity. The slogan Shokr quoted belongs to a
speech delivered by Nasser[56]. This shows how the myth of Nasserism can be
translated into slogans addressing the contemporary concerns. However, this
patriotism was then incorporated into the official nationalism of the SCAF
for the sake of regime survival.

Today, Egyptian nationalism seems to be pronounced against the threat
of Islamism. This nationalism is coupled with a notion of secularism, spon-
sored by the SCAF and promoted by the predominantly middle and upper
class pro-Sisi alliance. Islamism, on the other hand, is represented by the as-
pirations of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which projects itself as one of
the leaders of the initiatives challenging the status quo and part of the Arab
Spring. In other words, Islamism of MB can be situated in a cross-border
context. While the pan-Arab nationalism of Nasserism involved cooperation
with the concurrent movements of Ba'athist tendency sharing the same affili-
ation with military cadres and the same policy framework epitomized with a
state-led industrialization project, Brotherhood's Islamism rests on the civilian
cadres, urban and rural poor and disadvantaged segments of the bourgeoisie
with an Islamist agenda. Today's Islamist movements resemble the secular an-
ti-colonial movements of the Nasserite period in that both have a supra-Egyp-
tian notion. However, Islamist agenda of these movements as well as their
class configurations differ significantly from the anti-colonial movements of
the 50s. Therefore, secularist nationalism against Brotherhood mostly refrains
itself from the anti-establishment movements in the Middle East and tends to
relate Islamist movements to terrorism and US plots. Sinai conflict, tunnels

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55 Ahmad Shokr, "The Eighteen Days of Tahrir" in Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing (eds.), *The Jour-
ney to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt*, (London: Verso, 2012), p. 45.

56 Gad Silbermann, "National Identity in Nasserist Ideology, 1951-1970," *Asian and African Studies*, Vol.
8, 1972, pp. 57-68.

to Gaza, issue of refugees from Syria and Palestine are presented as the factors serving to strengthen the sense of Egyptian nationalism which portrays the country threatened by a foreign plot. There is a strong belief that Egypt is the target of many pernicious schemes from hostile nations and entities. Once Muslim Brotherhood started to be perceived as an agent of the USA plans, similar oppositional currents Middle Eastern countries like Syria and Palestine, where the opposition consisted of a considerable number of Islamist organizations were thought to be the part of the same plot played in Egypt. Samih Naguib, a leading member of Revolutionary Socialists in Egypt says in an interview:

> *There's a campaign of fear saying that the Syrians and the Palestinians are all part of a plot to destabilize Egypt, to create enough paranoia in Egyptians so that they begin to feel that Syrians, or anybody who has paler skin and who might be a Syrian, might be planting a bomb somewhere. The Americans are involved, the Europeans are involved, the Israelis are involved, the Syrians are involved, the Palestinians are involved, the Qataris are involved… you know this big international plot to dismember Egypt, and to have a kind of Syrian scenario in Egypt, to dismantle the state and to tear it apart.[57]*

This common sentiment can be interpreted as both continuity and discontinuity from the Nasserist framework of Arab nationalism. It marks continuity in that Western powers were still considered to be responsible for the instability, reactionary movements and insecurity in the Arab geography. However, it also signifies a radical break away from the Nasserist line of thinking in that Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Egypt started to be seen as unfriendly intruders. The reason for that seems to be the fact that although Arab nationalism was an important component of the Nasserist mental framework, it was wedded to civic secularism from the beginning. Therefore, Arab solidarity and unity is today redefined depending on the ideological tendencies of the oppositional movements in the region. In short, the notion of nationalism in Egypt is situated in opposition to Brotherhood's Islamism and rests on secularism as its concomitant.

Secular nationalism provided the SCAF with an ideological mission in its reconsolidation of the ruling power blocks in domestic field and in its attempt to resume the international state of affairs inherited from the Mubarak era. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were strong supporters of the military-sponsored interim government. They offered eight billion[58], and Kuwait

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[57] Rana Nessim, Rosemary Bechler, And Sameh Naguib, "Sisi's Egypt," *Open Democracy,* 8 November 2013, http://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/sameh-naguib-rosemary-bechler-rana-nessim/sisi%E2%80%99s-egypt.

[58] Lee Jae-Won, "Saudi Arabia and UAE to lend Egypt up to $8 billion," *Reuters,* 9 July 2013, http://rt.com/news/uae-saudi-egypt-loan-849/.

granted four million dollars.[59] Saudi Arabia has been very close to the Salafists and not to the Muslim Brothers. The United Arab Emirates like Saudi Arabia were afraid of a populist Islamist movement, which could threaten its international and domestic benefits and privileged status. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries were not only very strongly against the Morsi government, but they have also been very close allies of the United States.[60]

The nature of the international solidarity for the SCAF intervention shows the contradiction between today's nationalistic perceptions and that of the Nasser period. While the former bases its nationalistic discourse against Islamisation and Brotherhoodisation of the Egyptian identity, Nasserism employs a highly anti-colonialist and pan-Arab rhetoric. Despite the pursuit of a pro-American and pro-Israeli international policy, the defense of the military coup tried to create legitimacy through a discourse of independence and the right of the Egyptian to mould their future without any foreign intervention. Yet, such an emphasis on independence was tactical rather than a long-term shift in international policy, evident in John Kerry's visit to Egypt declaring the US endorsement for the military "road map."[61]

Today's secularist-nationalist currents in Egyptian society display continuity with the Nasserist understanding and practices. Nasser saw necessary for the officers' group to keep its independence.[62] Therefore, when the Free Officers came to power in July 1952, they immediately avowed their autonomy, acting against the independent trade unions and then the left, and later against the Muslim Brotherhood.[63] By 1954, 450 members of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested, and by the end of 1954 the organization was banned.

This repression on Muslim Brotherhood was accompanied by the attempts to incorporate religion in 1956 constitution, designating the Egyptian state as 'Islamic'.[64] Nasserist ideology treated religion both as a marker of Arabness and as a potentially dangerous field to be exploited, resulting in efforts to contain its popular appeal as well as oppress its political configurations. Today, the constitution still views *sharia* as the main source of its jurisdiction. At the

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[59] "Arab aid to Egypt reaches $12 billion, after Kuwait pledges $4 billion," *Egypt Independent,* 10 July 2013, http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/arab-aid-egypt-reaches-12-billion-after-kuwait-pledges-4-billion

[60] Rod Nordland, "Saudi Arabia Promises to Aid Egypt's Regime," *The New York Times,* 19 August 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/20/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-vows-to-back-egypts-rulers.html?_r=0.

[61] Michael R. Gordon "Egyptians Following Right Path, Kerry Says," *The New York Times,* 3 November 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/04/world/middleeast/kerry-egypt-visit.html.

[62] Khaled Mohi El Din, *Memories of a Revolution: Egypt 1952* (American University in Cairo Press, 1995), p. 25.

[63] Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 105-106.

[64] Ibid., p. 2.

same time, 2013 constitution prohibits formation of political parties based on religion.[65] The same containment and coercion efforts seem to prevail.

Challenges Facing Sisi

Lack of a Political Party

Despite its institutional and economic power and substantial legitimacy among the Egyptian society, the military faces serious challenges. So far, the military managed to keep the mass mobilization behind its "road map," but how far this support can be sustained remains to be a puzzle. Hegemony and coercion seems to be kept in a rather fragile balance. For Gramsci, the state constitutes hegemony protected by the armor of coercion of the state.[66] A class, he argues, establishes hegemony in two ways: by 'leading' and 'dominance'. He explains "the state leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies."[67] Today, Sisi bloc tries to create a political body to "lead the allies" and continues to issue death sentences for the "enemies."

Ayubi argues that Nasser's state was an authoritarian-bureaucratic state, consisting of three layers: a boss state, a security state, and a party state that dominated most associations in society, while the civil bureaucracy was directed and controlled by all three. The mobilization of the people within the system, Ayubi contends, "was partly charismatic (via the boss), partly ideological/political (via the party) and partly organizational (via the bureaucracy and sometimes the army)."[68] Today, Sisi serves as the means of "charismatic" mobilization, the fronts or blocs such as National Salvation Front serve as a medium of political mobilization and the SCAF serves as the instrument of organizational mobilization. Among these, the political party seems to be the most fragile and hard to be designed in such a way that potential contenders of the regime can be contained.

Ayubi contends that Nasser aimed to mobilize the loyalties of the common people by implementing corporatist organizational principles without allowing an accompanying increase in their political power. Today, Sisi's main challenge appears to be creating such a mechanism. In other words, today Sisi does not have a political body similar to *the National Rally* of Nasser, *the Arab Socialist Union* of Sadat or *the National Democratic Party* (NDP), which served as Mubarak regime's parliamentary front and ruling party.

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[65] Hicham Mourad, "Sharia and the new Egyptian constitution," *Al-Ahram,* 19 December 2013, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/4/0/89336/Opinion/Sharia-and-the-new-Egyptian-constitution.aspx.

[66] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 263.

[67] Ibid., pp. 55-57.

[68] A Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1995), p. 203.

Currently, there are certain attempts to form a bloc called *the National Alliance*, which aims to secure the diverse segments of coalition for Sisi. The alliance already includes the *Congress Party*, *Free Egyptians Party* (founded by businessman Naguib Sawiris) and the branch of the *Tamarod* movement led by Mahmoud Badr. It is also likely to include *Al-Tanami, the Arab Nasserist Party* and also *the National Movement* Party founded by former presidential candidate Ahmed Shafik. Anti-Brotherhood bloc is an alliance of negation rather than construction. Therefore, apart from preventing MB from re-entering the political sphere, there is little agreement on how to address the challenges for the basic demands of the Tahrir uprising: freedom, bread, social justice.

Before the presidential elections, *National Salvation Front*, which had been launched against Morsi's initiative to concentrate power in his hands, accounted for the political body securing the same bloc. In November 2012, Morsi had issued a constitutional declaration centralizing a massive amount of authority in his hands.[69] All anti-Brotherhood political currents had been drawn to a new coalition which involved figures from the old regime. Hamdeen Sabbahi of the nationalist *Karama Party*, together with Mohamed El Baradei of the liberal *Destour Party*, had welcomed Mubarak-era foreign minister Amr Moussa into *National Salvation Front*, which brought together liberal *Wafd*, right wing party *Free Egyptian Party*, *Social Democratic Party* and the Nasserist-leaning parties including *Al-Karama*, *Tagammu* and *The Nasserist Party*.[70] This bloc then formed the transitional government after the 3 July coup; however, it was not able to act as a coherent body because although the mass movement supporting Brotherhood was suppressed with full-fledged state violence, industrial struggle was still in place. In January 2014, there was a widespread strike action across the country, focusing on demands for a minimum wage, for delivery of promises made and broken by employers and by government, and for *tathir*, which means cleansing of corrupt managers and officials associated with the Mubarak regime. In the face of this crisis, in February 2014 the government appointed by el-Sisi disintegrated. A new prime minister was appointed and in his first speech new Prime Minister Ibrahim Mehleb urged: "Stop all kinds of sit-ins, protests and strikes. Let us start building the nation."[71] Therefore, the new political body built around an anti-Brotherhood campaign is likely to suffer disintegration similar to the preceding blocs.

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[69] "English text of Morsi's Constitutional Declaration ," *Ahram Online,* 22 November 2012, http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/58947.aspx.

[70] "Profile: Egypt's National Salvation Front," *BBC News,* 10 December 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20667661.

[71] Hamza Hendawi, "Egypt's New Premier Calls for Protests to End", *ABC News* [*Associated Press*], 2 March 2014, http://world.time.com/2014/03/02/egypts-new-premier-calls-for-protests-to-end/.

Entrenched Authoritarianism: A By-Product of Neoliberalism in Egypt

A corporatist political strategy is only possible when the incorporated parties are economically included. Otherwise, the state is obliged to implement coercive measures at an increasing scale, which might be hard to sustain. As often reported there has been a long-standing disregard for socioeconomic rights which creates poverty and worsening in standards of living for the middle and lower classes. The most recent official statistics reveal that over a quarter of the population lives in poverty, a third of young people are unemployed, and three out of five children are malnourished. These problems mainly driven by corruption, unemployment, and failing public services are the same ones that triggered Hosni Mubarak's removal three years ago.[72]

Hazem Kandil argues that neoliberal policies which require the shrinking of social benefits, an increase in prices and high unemployment among public and private sector workers result in social unrest, whose control compels the ruling strata to resort to constant repression. Therefore, neoliberal project which started with Anwar Sadat did not diminish the coercive nature of the Nasserite institutions; rather, this project rested on coercion. In the same line as Kandil, Mitchell argues against the advocates of neoliberalism who suggest that "repression is an unforeseen, unfortunate, intermittent, and probably temporary side effect of the shocks that accompany the expansion of the global market." She objects to that proposition arguing that "violence is a common instrument of capitalist development, in particular the penetration of capitalist relations into new territories."[73] Michael Mann maintains a similar view about the coupling of authoritarianism and neoliberalism. He argues that authoritarian regimes especially have a tendency to introduce policies which result in "short-term economic misery for the sake of some dubious neo-liberal vision of the long term" because they are not concerned about winning elections.[74] Sisi might not be worrying too much about the elections, but Tahrir uprising and long-lasting waves of protests in Egypt provide reasons for worry if their basic demands are not delivered.

Nasserite regime was based on a bargain that involved the delivery of social rights in exchange for political ones. In that bargain, the state offered employment opportunities, free education, free health care, and subsidies for goods and services. In return, it asked the citizens to sacrifice their right to participate in politics. Yet, with the advent of neoliberalism from Sadat period onwards, another policy framework was put into practice. To be able to receive IMF and WB loans, Sadat put into effect new economic policies that

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[72] Allison Corkery and Heba Khalil, "Egypt must Stop Penalizing the Poor", *Foreign Policy*, 23 May 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/05/23/egypt_must_stop_penalizing_the_poor.

[73] Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 297–98.

[74] Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* (New York: Verso, 2003), p. 70.

reduced the amount of public spending and lift certain subsides.[75] Under these new policies the government lessened the financial support for public education and health care services, removed rent control and subsidies on food and clothing, and ceased the building of low cost housing.[76] In brief, the government abandoned the policies and attributes which constituted Nasser's social contract. The *Infitah* policies caused a large amount of social disillusionment and dissatisfaction. These policies produced a rift between the government and the population.[77] There were huge protests called as 'food riots' that took place against Sadat's attempts to remove subsidies on staple foods and fuel as part of the loan deals with IMF.

As for Mubarak, he launched structural economic reforms, privatized public companies, and passed laws to introduce incentives for local and foreign capital entrepreneurs.[78] Even one of the greatest achievements of Nasserist rule, the September 1952 Agrarian Reform, was eradicated in a new Land Act (Act 96, 1992)[79], which cancelled the forceful control over land-lease fees that Nasser had set up. [80] The act gave the landowners the right to determine leasing fees according to market prices.

The economic framework of Mubarak era was associated with the term 'Crony capitalism,' which is used to describe "privatized economies in which rent-seeking bureaucrats were closely linked to businessmen, and their mutual interest and patronage were reflected in economic policies" by Sadowski.[81] This strategy was designated as 'productive *Infitah*', which he promised could bring the developmental benefits of privatized capitalism without the expenses of the Sadat period. However, this 'well-balanced' strategy turned into a "missionary zeal"[82], in Springborg's terms, as a result of the pressure from Western advisers and officials over Egypt to pursue a faster and broader program.

In the wake of a deepening debt burden and with a significant encouragement from the business lobby Mubarak accepted to implement most of the IMF's demands without sacrificing the interests of "his bedrock support – the

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[75] Bjorn Olav Utvik, *Islamist Economics in Egypt* (Boulder CO.: Lynne Rienner, 2006), p. 4.

[76] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat: The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 269-270.

[77] Marfleet, "State and Society," p. 20.

[78] Robert Springborg, *Political Structural Adjustment in Egypt: A Precondition for Rapid Economic Growth?* (San Domenico: European University Institute, June 1999), pp. 22–26.

[79] Ray Bush, "The land and the people," in *Egypt: The Moment of Change*, eds. R. El-Mahdi and P. Marfleet, (London: Zed Boooks, 2009), p. 52.

[80] Hatina, "Egypt," *MECS*, No. 21, 1997, pp. 321–22.

[81] Yahya M. Sadowski, *Political Vegetables? Businessman and Bureaucrat in the Development of Egyptian Agriculture* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1991), p. 139.

[82] Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, p. 257.

officer corps and the cadre of senior officials which have continuity with the Nasserist era."[83] Consequently, the state evolved into an entity which concentrated centralized control over economic and political issues in its hands with a special promotion for private capital at the highest level. By the mid-1990s, Henry and Springborg contend, Egypt came to be a country "in the grip of a nexus of cronies, officers, bureaucrats and public sector managers."[84]

The entangled nature of private and public interests led to seemingly contradictory consequences. Mitchell argues US aid enterprise and the ostensible encouragement of 'pluralism' actually reinforced the position of the state. The military maintains its position in the state with the maximum benefits, accessing a larger share in production, agriculture and construction. Kandil points to the emergence of new billionaires who occupied the highest political positions in the cabinet and in the party along with the increasing power of the security forces and the military. It was these high-profile businessmen, he writes, who designed policy rather than middle or rural classes. For the first time since 1952, he adds, economic elites were manipulating the state rather than being manipulated by it during Mubarak's rule.[85] Increasing authoritarianism, growing economic power of the military, rising impact of the business elite on policy desing, culmination of economic embitterment and corruption in an authoritarian regime gave rise to Tahrir uprising. Therefore, today's authoritarian initiative is also vulnerable to a challenge from below.

Postscript

The new faces of the ruling strata in Egypt have to strike a balance between the demands of economic elites for stability and those of the middle and working classes for employment, higher salaries and social justice, which is the paradox of neoliberal framework. Within neoliberal context, creating resources by introducing IMF-designed economic policies means the working class will pay the price, which might lead them to take up another turn of mass movement this time challenging Sisi and his supporters from the business circles and *feloul*.

All in all, in Egypt the Armed Forces seem to maintain their status quo as the major factor in the political process. The SCAF mostly undertook a preemptive strategy, removing Mubarak and then Morsi to abort a deeper revolutionary change and protect itself. In its intervention, the SCAF made use of the Nasser's heritage, invoking the memory of calls for national unity, fierce crackdowns on Islamists, and development of the country. Nasser's institutional and ideological legacy might have strengthened the hands of the status quo for the time being, but without a new social pact, ideologically loaded

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[83] Marfleet, "State and Society", p. 22.

[84] Henry Clement Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Developments in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 155.

[85] Hazem Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 239.

discourses are highly likely to be short lived. Today's heroic figures might be challenged from below, leading to a new mass movement and new political bodies to be born outside Sisi and Brotherhood dichotomy.

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İŞGÜCÜ PİYASALARININ ARAP BAHARINDAKİ ROLÜ

ÖZ

Bir ekonominin işleyişinin anlaşılabilmesi için işgücü piyasalarının nasıl işlediğinin doğru anlaşılması bir zorunluluktur. Ayrıca, işgücü piyasasının ve kurumlarının yapısı politik ekonomide değişimi açıklamamızda da bize yardımcı olur. Literatürde MENA ülkelerinde ortaya çıkan kalkışmalara yönelik analizlerin çoğunun yanlış varsayımlar üzerine kurgulandığı ve Arap Baharının sonuçlarına ilişkin yanıltıcı önermeler yapıldığı görülmektedir. Bu nedenle bu bölgede ortaya çıkan olayların daha dikkatli bir analizi hem bu varsayımların hem de Baharın beklenen sonuçlarının neden gerçekleşmediğini açıklaması gerekmektedir. Bu sorulara verilecek yanıtların da doğal olarak Baharın temel nedenlerinin neler olduğunu ortaya koymakla başlaması gerekmektedir. Bu çerçevedeki bir analiz ise işgücü piyasalarını dikkate almak zorundadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, Arap Baharında işgücü piyasalarının oynadığı rolü ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Baharı, İşgücü Piyasaları, İşsizlik, Yoksulluk, Ekonomik Yapı, Ekonomik Dönüşüm

دور سوق العمل في الربيع العربي
هارون اوزتوركلر خلاصة

مما لا شك فيه ان فهم الاداء الاقتصادي و اداء سوق العمل ضروري لفهم كيفية تشغيل سوق العمل بصورة صحيحة. اضافة الى ان بنية المؤسسات وسوق العمل ستساعدنا على فهم وتوضيح التغير الطارئ على الاقتصاد السياسي. كما ان معظم التحليلات التي اجريت بصدد الانتفاضات التي ظهرت في الدول النامية بنيت على افتراضات زائفة ومضللة. ومن الواضح ايضا ان المقترحات المتعلقة بنتائج الربيع العربي كانت مضللة هي الاخري. ولهذا السبب فان علينا توضيح سبب عدم اجراء تحليل دقيق للاحداث التي ظهرت في المنطقة بالاضافة الي سبب عدم تحقيق هذه التوقعات والنتائج المتوقعة للربيع. وبطبيعة الحال من اجل الاجابة على كل هذه التساؤلات، علينا البدا اولا بتوضيح الاسباب التي ادت الي حدوث الربيع. وفي هذا النطاق علينا ان ناخذ في عين الاعتبار سوق العمل وذلك من اجل تحقيق تحليل اكثر مصداقية. ولهذا السبب فان هذه المقالة تهدف الي توضيح الدور الذي يلعبه سوق العمل في الربيع العربي.

الكلمات الدالة: الربيع العربي، سوق العمل، البطالة، الفقر، البنية الاقتصادية، التحوّل الاقتصادي.

THE ROLE OF LABOR MARKETS IN THE ARAB SPRING*

ABSTRACT

Understanding the working of labor markets is crucial to understand the functioning of an economy. In addition, the structural nature of labor market and its institutions allows us to explain how changes occur in the political economy. Most of the analysis in the literature on the uprising in MENA countries has been on failed assumptions and the promises of the Arab Spring have been hugely hyped. Therefore, more careful studies of the events taking place in the region must explain both why the basic assumptions have failed and why the promises of the Spring have not been realized. Any answer to these two questions must start with finding what the root causes of the Spring were. A complete explanation of the Arab Spring must take the role of the labor markets into account, and therefore this paper attempts to weigh up the role of labor markets in the Spring.

Keywords:Arab Spring, Labor Markets, Unemployment, Poverty, Economic Structure, Economic Transformation

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*For this article please note the JEL Codes: E24,J40,053,P48

Introduction

After more than three years passed, now one can look at socio-economic and political conditions prevailing before the Arab Spring and evaluate the causes, the progresses, and directions of events since the beginning. We must emphasize that Arab Spring is not an isolated event on a point in time for the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries, but it is a rather long process involving economic, social, cultural, and political restructuring of those countries. However, we must also stress that a complete explanation of the Arab Spring must take the role of the labor markets into account, and therefore the main motivation for this paper is to assess the role of labor markets in this long restructuring process.

This article addresses two questions: What had been the labor market outcomes' effects on provoking the events leading to the Arab Spring? Does the Arab Spring have the mechanisms to transform the labor markets so as to contribute the development process in the region? These questions are addressed mainly from the perspective of politic, social, and economic transformations in those countries. However, it must be kept in mind that in these countries the politic, social, and economic organizations of the societies give a different role to the labor market than we observe in developed world with efficient labor markets. In addition, the ability to enforce labor market policies in these countries is limited, and efforts to enforce such policies often do not reach all segments of the market. This fact weakens the link between labor markets and the rest of the economy.

On the other hand, as underlined by Calderon and Chong[1], labor market regulations are at the cornerstone of the economic policy and political economy debate in many countries. Because labor markets are segmented, and therefore there are protected and unprotected groups, changes in labor market policies and outcomes have, at the very least, different consequences for particular social groups. Furthermore, the direct link between labor market institutions and income distribution, and income distribution and social tensions necessitate a comprehensive inquiry into the role of labor markets in the Arab Spring.

In capitalist economies, labor, goods and services, and financial markets constitute the three major pillars of the economic system. In these countries markets are the channels through which resources and incomes are distributed to the alternative uses and different segments of the society. In economics this mode of distribution is assumed to be based on a manner of decision making by "Homo Economicus". However, as pointed out by Plaut[2], "Homo

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[1] C. Calderon and A. Chong, "Labor Market Institutions and Income Inequality: An Empirical Exploration", *Public Choice,* Vol. 138, No.1/2, 2009, pp. 65-81.

[2] S. Plaut, "Misplaced Applications of Economic Theory to the Middle East", ", *Public Choice,* Vol.

Economicus lives in the West. He may also live in Japan and some other places". But he does not live in the MENA countries. It does not mean that markets fail to work in these countries; it means that, at the national level and at the "public" level of decision making, pursuit of prosperity and welfare of the lower segments of the society are not taken into account very much. As mentioned by Kuran[3], it also means that transplanting western institutional structures shall not appropriate the entire social system that produced it. Furthermore, market mode of social and economic organization of a society requires the existence of a political system guaranteeing property rights. However, as expressed by Rosen[4], by contrast to the West, where property is primarily seen as the relation of a person to things, in the Arab world the emphasis is more clearly on ownership as a focus of the relations between persons as they concern things.

It must be remembered that there is no single labor market neither in MENA taken as whole nor each country in MENA. For instance, Fine[5] demonstrates that there is no single labor market but rather a multiplicity of sub-markets, each with their own unique characteristics. Complex institutional constructions are the sources of differences in labor markets. As we will discuss further in the following section, labor segmentation/ dualism is the main characteristic of the labor markets in MENA. As explained in detail by Dickens and Lang[6], according to segmented labor market theory, the labor market can be usefully described as consisting of two sectors: a high-wage (primary) sector with good working conditions, stable employment, and substantial returns to human capital variables such as education and experience, and a low-wage (secondary) sector with the opposite characteristics. Furthermore, primary jobs are rationed, that is, not all workers who are qualified for primary sector jobs and desire one can obtain one. Under this theoretical setting, segmented labor market model is simultaneously a description of the income distribution, a claim about the absence of market clearing, and a radical departure from the assumptions of mainstream economics, which postulate fully rational actors and exogenously determined preferences.

On the basis of this background, this paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we describe the main characteristics of the labor markets in MENA taken as a geographical region. Following this part, we explore the role of labor markets in Arab Spring. In this section we focus on the Arab

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118, No.1/2, 2004, pp. 11-24.

[3] T. Kuran, "Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol.18, No.3, 2004, pp. 71-90.

[4] L. Rosen, "Expecting the Unexpected: Cultural Components of Arab Governance", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 603, No.1, 2006, pp. 163-178.

[5] B. Fine, *Labour Market Theory: A Constructive Reassessment*, (NY: Taylor and Francis, 1998).

[6] W. Dickens and K. Lang, "The Reemergence of Segmented Labor Market Theory", *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 78, No.2, 1988, pp. 129-134.

Spring countries; Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria. Then, the following part concludes the study.

Labor Markets in MENA Countries

The institutional setting under which labor services and compensations are exchanged between employees and employers is called labor market. Ehrenberg and Smith define labor economics as the study of the workings and outcomes of the market for labor.[7] The most important outcome of the functioning of labor market is the wage rate. Wage rate in turn determines the incomes of employees. The labor income determines employees and their families' welfare. However, the interaction among wages, income, and welfare also determine the decision to work. More generally, this interactions affect occupational choice, and therefore, investment on education and training. Investment on education and training determine the labor for characteristics, and most importantly, the productivity of the labor force, which is one of the most important factors for economic growth and development in each country. In this section we shall examine, labor force characteristics, labor force participation, employment, productivity, unemployment, and other aspects of labor markets in MENA countries. In the following section we shall discuss these aspects of labor markets in the Arab Spring countries in comparison with each other and with MENA countries.

The causes of the recent uprisings in the MENA countries are numerous and complex, and certainly cannot be attributed to one factor. However, one can argue that a complete explanation of the Arab Spring must take the role of the labor markets into account. To a significant extent, labor market structures are shaped by the demographic features of the countries. The main characteristics of the MENA countries' demographic trends are high population growth, youth based age structure, rapid urbanization, unprecedented levels of international migration, and significant forced displacement. These demographic characteristics also point to the importance of adopting a long view of where the Arab Spring can lead.

Graph 1 shows the average annual population growth rates for the world and sub-regions for 2000-2012 period and predictions for 2012-2025 period. As it can be seen from the graph, MENA countries stand second after Sub-Saharan Africa for both periods. Although the population growth rate is expected to decline slightly for 2012-2025 period for MENA countries, it is going to be 1.5 times of the world average and more than 10 times faster than Euro Zone. The population growth rate together with labor force participation determine the supply side of the labor market, and the higher the population growth rate is the higher the labor supply. According to World Bank (WB)

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[7] R. G. Ehrenberg and R. S. Smith, *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Policy, (*NY: Prentice Hall, 2011).

World Development Indicators 2014 (WDI 2014)[8], MENA's population is 339.6 million and expected to be 413.3 million in 2025. Such a development in population size is assessed differently by different theoretical approaches of political economy of population: while neo-Malthusian approach holds that rapid population growth dooms any attempt at development to failure, Marxist approach revers this causality and maintains that poverty and underdevelopment cause rapid population growth.[9] In any case, such a high population growth rate imposes a huge burden on labor markets in terms of creating jobs for the new comers.

Graph 1: Average Annual Population Growth Rate (%)
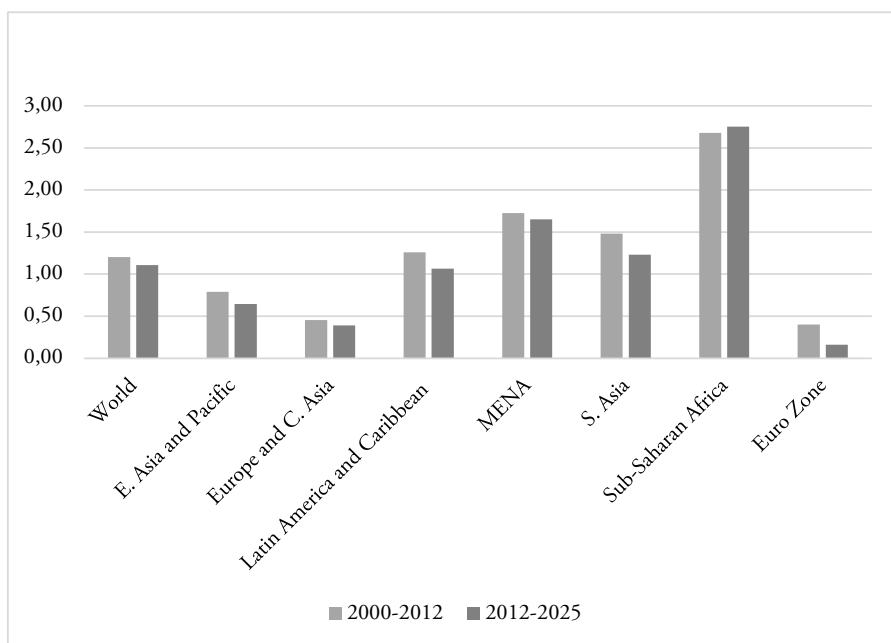
Source: World Bank, 2014 World Development Indicators: Population Dynamics, http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.1.

Another demographic aspect that shapes labor market's features is the age structure for it not only determines today's labor supply structure but also future birth rate and labor supply. Graph 2 reflects age structure for the world and sub-regions for 2012. As it can be seen from the graph, together with South Asia, the MENA countries have the highest youth population. The

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[8] World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, http://wdi.worldbank.org/ Access Date: 16 Nisan 2014.

[9] A. Richards and J. Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2008).

higher the share of youth in the population is, the higher the population growth rate is. Furthermore, the higher the share of youth in the population is, the higher the labor supply in the near future is. These specifics serve to underline the fact that economic policy in these countries needs to focus all the attention on job creation.

Graph 2: Age Structure of the Population (%), 2012
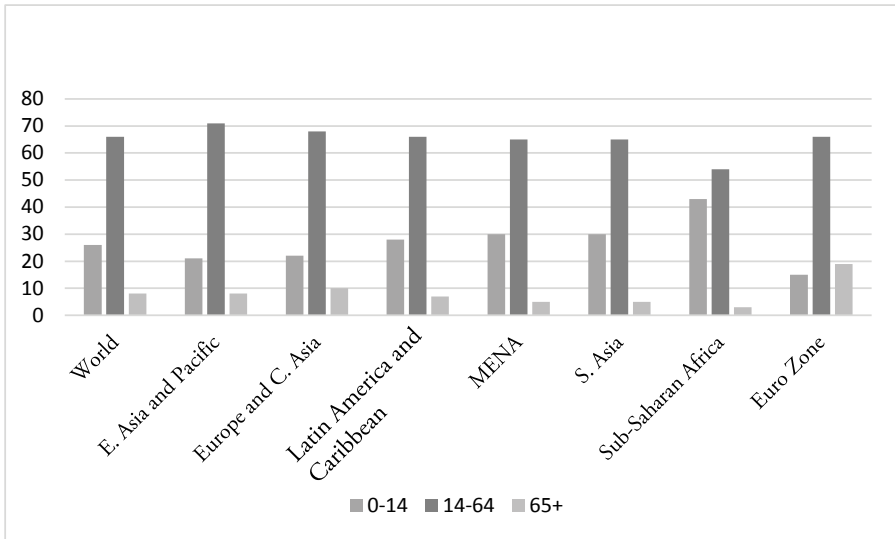
Source: World Bank, 2014 World Development Indicators: Population Dynamics, http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.1.

The urbanization rate is one other important demographic feature that affects labor market greatly. Urbanization has many implications for it reflects internal migration, and as a result, it leads to social, economic, and political instabilities. Graph 3 illustrates the urbanization rate for the world and sub-regions for 2012. Because most of the MENA countries have limited agricultural land, it is natural that these countries have high urbanization rate. From the perspective of the labor market, fast and high urbanization leads to increase in unskilled labor force in urban centers. In this case, the challenge for the labor policy is not only to create new jobs for the new comers, but also it must be able to provide those new comers with appropriate skills.

Graph 3: Urbanization Rate (%), 2012
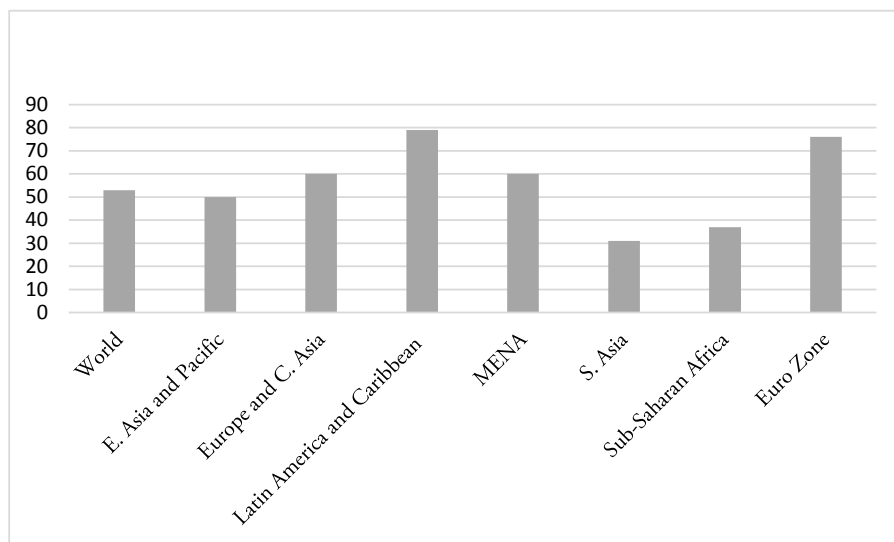
Taking this demographic background into account, we can now provide a deeper analyses of the labor market in MENA countries. Assad argues that a deep and persistent dualism characterizes Arab labor markets throughout the post-independence period[10]. The dualism constitutes public sector with lion share of employment in most of the substantial sectors and private sector with employment in mostly informal sectors. This dualism is primarily due to the use of public sector employment by authoritarian regimes as a tool to pacify the groups predisposed to insubordination and to provide privileged groups with well-compensated jobs in the bureaucracy and the security forces. Assad also points out the fact that this labor market dualism continues to motivate labor market expectations and choices regarding what type of human capital investments to make that lead to excessive unemployment among youth population.[11] On the other hand, the youth unemployment problem is not unique to MENA countries; in fact, world faces a soaring youth unemployment predicament with young people three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. However, as stressed by Mirkin, the Arab region stands out in terms of its overall unemployment problem. Furthermore, youth unemployment has been at very high levels for decades in this region.[12]

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[10] R. Assad, "Making Sense of Arab Labor Markets: The Enduring Legacy of Dualism", *IZA Discussion Paper,* No.7553, 2013.

[11] Ibid.

[12] B. Mirkin, "Arab Spring: Demographics in a Region in Transition" *United Nations Development*

There are two sides of a market; demand side and supply side. The demand for labor stems from economic activity. At a macroeconomic level, economic activity can be classified into three sub sectors; agriculture, industry, and services. The shares of subsectors in employment in 2008 are depicted in Graph 4 below. As it can be seen from the graph, the service sector provides slightly over 50 percent of all employment. About 1 in 5 of the employment is created by the agricultural sector. According to WB DataBank figures for the same year, the share of agriculture in European Union (EU) is mere 5 percent. On the other hand, the shares of industry and services are 27 percent and 68 percent, respectively. These figures have four major implications: Firstly, on average in MENA countries agriculture is still an important activity. Secondly, service sector will continue expanding as these countries develop, requiring a structural change in the skills of labor force. Thirdly, there is still room for urbanization in these countries, which will mean further transfer of agricultural labor to industry and services. Since the skill levels required in these three sectors differ considerably, this transformation will necessitate appropriate training, education, and job creation programs. Finally, this sectoral structure of employment together with transformation and urbanization processes provides hints for the explanation of the upheavals that led to the Arab Spring. Because long run growth rate in agriculture is below that of industry and service sectors, the demand for labor has been growing at a slower rate than it would have been with larger shares of industry and service sectors in employment. Furthermore, education systems in these countries do not provide labor force with skills required for sectoral transformation in employment. Moreover, agricultural activity depends on natural conditions, and therefore, it fluctuates prominently with changes in climate conditions. As a result, employment changes significantly in agricultural sector from one year to another. In addition, most of the agricultural activity does not continue yearlong. Therefore, most of the agricultural employment is temporary employment. This means that employees in agriculture do not have stable jobs with social security benefits, and therefore, stable incomes. If we take into account the fact that rural population growth rate is more than urban population growth rate, this sectoral distribution of employment will continue to exist in the near to medium run. One other problem this distribution of employment poses is that high population growth and low income in agricultural sector also affect the investment in human capital, specifically in education, and therefore, the skill level in agricultural labor force.


Program, Regional Bureau for Arab States, Arab Human Development Report Research Paper Series, 2013.

Graph 4: Employment Shares of Sub-sectors (%), 2008
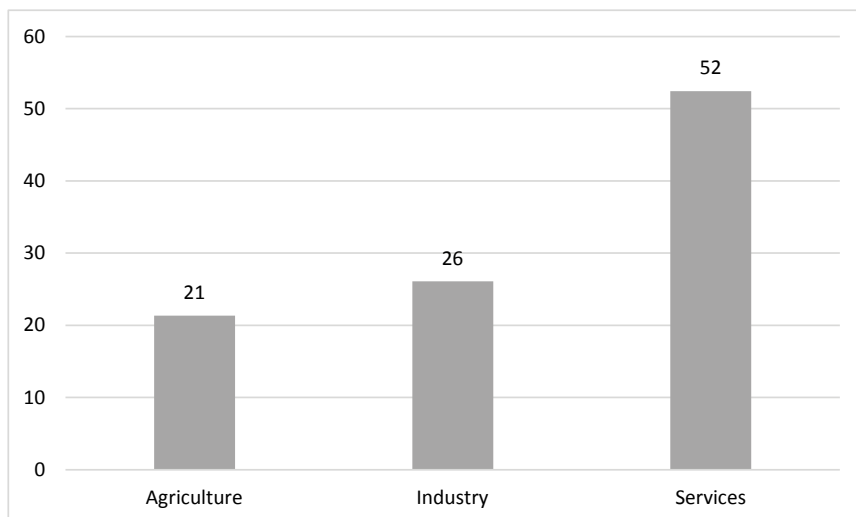
Source: World Bank, World DataBank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx, 2014.

Another important feature of labor market from the perspective of labor demand is the gender division in employment. Graph 5 below provides gender division of labor in major subsectors in MENA countries. Gender shares of sectoral employment reveal that agriculture and service sectors provide relatively more jobs for the female population when compared to industry. However, in both sectors, jobs held by female employees are at the low segment of job spectrum, that is, they are mostly the jobs that require little or no specific education and training.

Graph 5: Gender Division of Employment in Sub-sectors (%), 2008
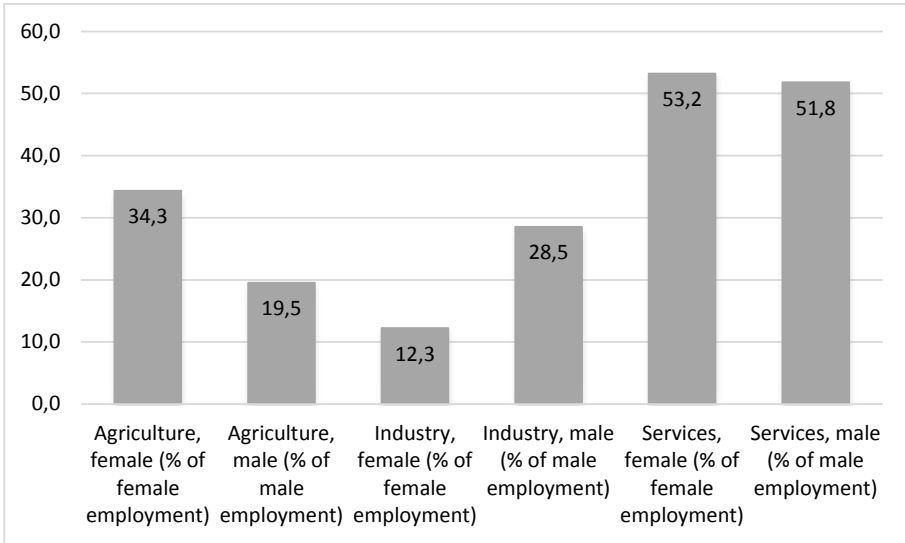
On the other hand, the share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector as a percent of total nonagricultural employment in MENA countries increased slightly from 18.5 in 2001 to 19.3 to in 2009. However, as mentioned above, not all employment is made up of secure formal sector jobs. Vulnerable employment is an important labor market characteristics of MENA countries and it is a good measure of labor market segmentation. Vulnerable employment is unpaid family workers and own-account workers as a percentage of total employment. Graph 6 depicts total and gender division of vulnerable employment for MENA countries for 2012. As it can be seen from the graph, almost one third of the total employment is vulnerable. The vulnerable employment share for female employees is 9.3 percentage point higher than that for male employees. This employment structure by itself can be considered as a source of socio-economic instability.

Graph 6: Total and Gender Division of Vulnerable Employment (%), 2012.
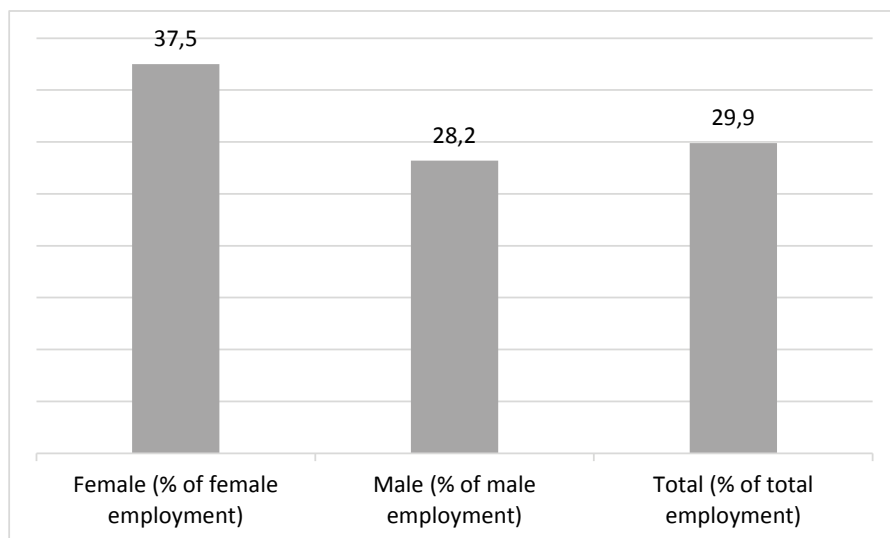
Productivity of employment is crucial for economic growth, and capital accumulation. Changes in the productivity of employment is also an important source of output fluctuations. Hirata, Kim, and Köse find that domestic productivity shocks explain close to 40 percent of cyclical variation in aggregate output in the MENA region.[13] In addition, while economic growth determines immediate welfare level of the society, capital accumulation determines future welfare level by enhancing productive capacity and job creation capability of the economy. Graph 7 shows how employment productivity evolved between 2000 and 2012. The dotted line represents the productivity trend for 2000-2012 period. As it can be seen from the graph, the productivity of employment is below the trend between 2001 and 2006. Productivity is above the trend only for 2007 and 2008. For the MENA countries to have high growth rates, high per capita income, and high job creation capacity, productivity of employment must be increased. An increase in productivity necessitates investment in physical capital, human capital, and technology. At a practical level, it necessitates the matching of labor skill with job requirement. Such a matching requires macro level education and training policies designed to provide labor with skill needed in the labor markets. MENA

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[13] H. Hirata, S. H. Henry, and M. A. Köse, "Sources of Fluctuations: The Case of MENA", *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 2007, pp. 5-34.

countries need an education and training strategy that designs labor requirements not for today but also for future.

Graph 7: Productivity of Employment

GDP per person employed (constant 1990 PPP $)
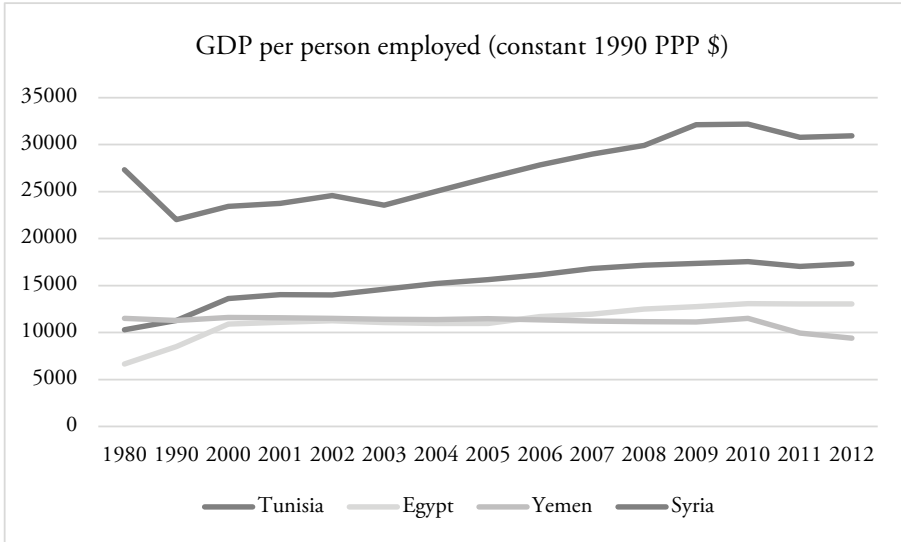
When labor supply is not met with equal size of labor demand, the result is unemployment. The development of unemployment for 2000-2012 period is depicted in Graph 8 below. This graph reveals an important sign of upheavals in the region. Overall unemployment rate for the first four years of the period under investigation is approximately 13 percent. It then starts declining and drops below 10 percent in 2008. However, it starts increasing again and reaches approximately 11 percent in 2011. For the males, overall unemployment for 2000-2004 period is above 10 percent. It drops below 8 percent in year 2008, but increases to 11 percent in year 2011. For the females, on the other hand, situation is worse. Overall unemployment for females is above 20 percent for 200-2003 period. It drops to 16.8 percent in 2008, but reaches to 19.1 percent in 2011.

Graph 8: Unemployment, %, 2000-2012.
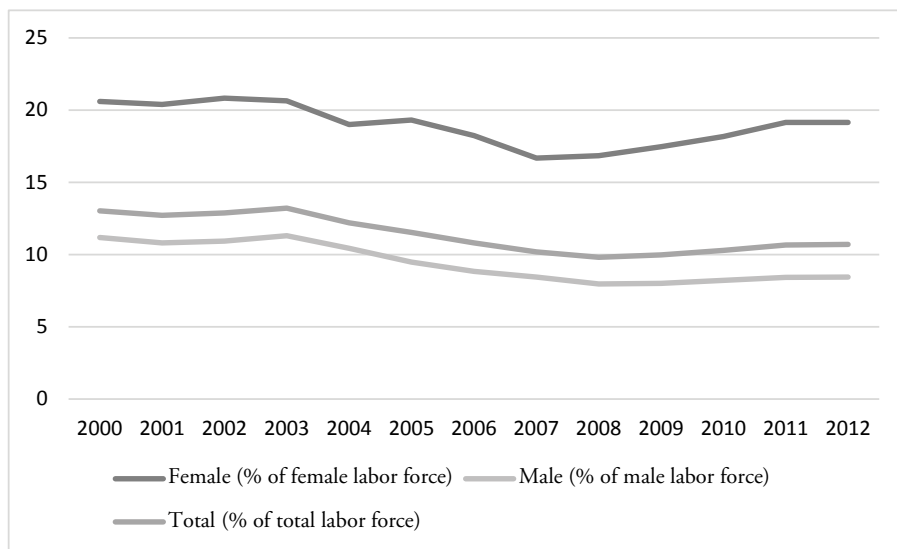
Nevertheless, the real issue in terms of unemployment in MENA countries is youth unemployment. Ansani and Daniele emphasize that the combination of youth demographics, high unemployment rates, and high educational levels, coupled with an unrepresentative political system increases the likelihood of social unrest.[14] Graph 9 depicts the youth unemployment in MENA countries for 2000-2012 period. As it can be seen from the graph, the already very high youth unemployment in MENA region rose sharply in the wake of the Arab Spring and was hovering at 27 per cent in 2011, the highest in the world and twice the global rate for youth. Furthermore, the youth unemployment is almost three times higher than unemployment rate for the working age population in the region. Additionally, for the period under investigation, the youth female unemployment rate (40.7 percent) is 1.8 times the youth male unemployment rate (22.7). We now turn our focus on the Arab Spring countries; Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria.

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[14] A. Ansani and V. Daniele, "About a revolution. The economic motivations of the Arab Spring", *International Journal of Development and Conflict*, Vol. 3. No. 3, 2012.

Graph 9: Youth Unemployment, %, 2000-2012.

Female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)

Male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)

Total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)
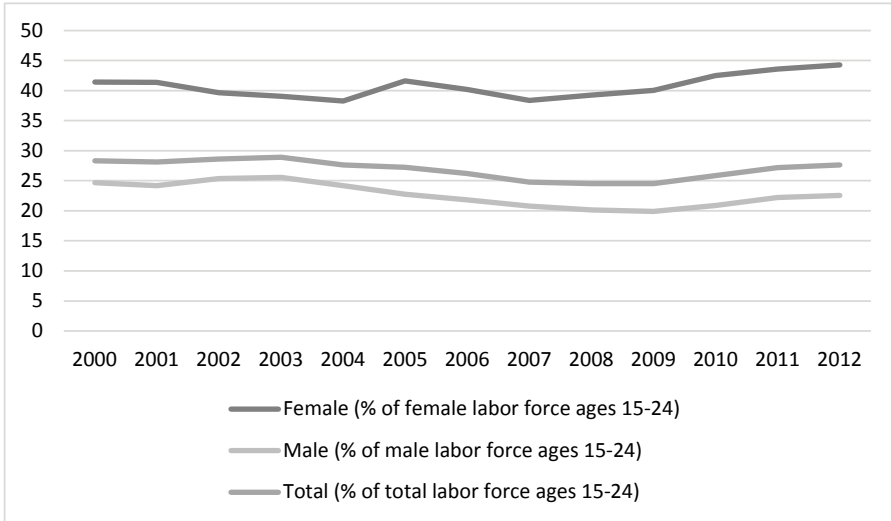
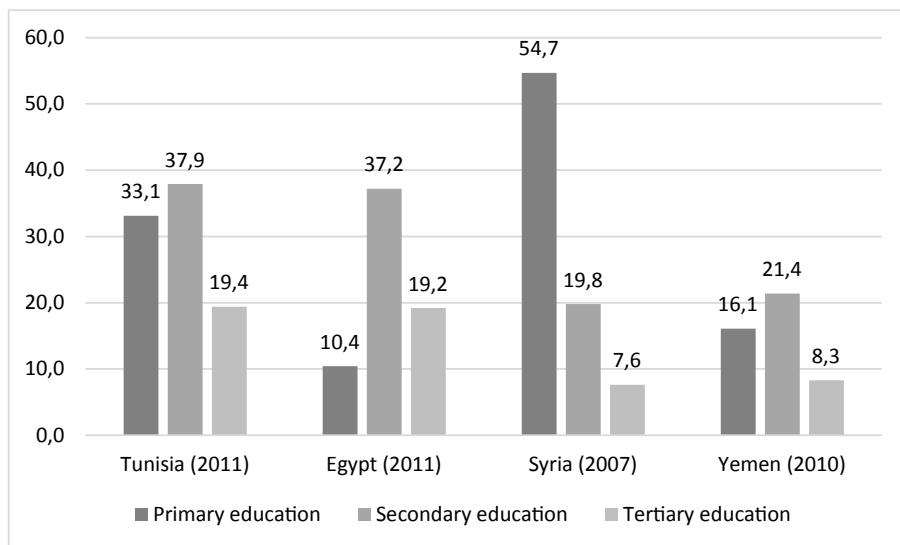**Source:** World Bank, World DataBank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx, 2014.

Labor Markets in Arab Spring Countries

We start this section by discussing labor force characteristics in Arab Spring countries, namely Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. We focus on the period after 2000. This period corresponds to the deepening of globalization. As Rama emphasize, different aspects of globalization have different consequences for the labor market; in the short run wages fall with openness to trade and rise with foreign direct investment.[15] In addition, foreign direct investment increases the returns to education. The first labor force characteristic we attempt to analyze is the education level. Graph 10 depicts education level of labor force for Arab Spring countries. We do not have data for Libya. On the other hand, as it can be seen from the graph, one third of labor force in Tunisia has only primary level of education. Since workers with primary education work at the lowest level of work spectrum, they earn the least wage level. About 38 percent of Tunisian labor force has secondary education. The latest data available for Syria is for 2007. In 2007, more than half of Syrian labor force had only primary education. While the share of labor force with tertiary education is the highest, the share of labor force with primary education is the lowest in Egypt. More than one third of labor force in Yemen has either primary or secondary education. The share of labor force with tertiary

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[15] M. Rama, "Globalization and the Labor Market", *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2003, pp. 159-186.

education is 8.3 percent. It is natural not to expect a productive employment with this labor force education structure.

**Graph 10:** Education Level of Labor Force, %, Latest Data Available

Source: World Bank, World DataBank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx, 2014.

It is true that productivity of employment depends not only on the education level of labor force but also on other factors such as capital per labor, volume and quality of natural resources, and technology. As mentioned above, we take GDP per person (constant price) as a proxy for the productivity of labor force, which is to a great extent determined by the resources the country has. In fact, Pamuk argues that in the twentieth century, the most important single factor contributing to increases in per capita incomes in the Middle East was oil.[16] Nevertheless, if we take the progress of GDP per person, not the level, education level can be used as a pointer for the productivity level. Graph 11 below illustrates the developments of productivity levels in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria. As it can be seen from the graph, the productivity in Yemen had been stagnant for three decades between 1980 and 2010, and in fact it declined in 2011 and 2012. The Syrian case is even more striking. Productivity in Syria declined 19 percent between 1980 and 1990. It increases about 7 percent between 1990 and 2000. Between 2000 and 2003 it appears to be stagnant, but after 2003 it picks up again. However, compared to 2010,

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[16] S. Pamuk, "Estimating Economic Growth in the Middle East since 1820", *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 66, No. 3, 2006, pp. 809-828.

productivity declines about 4% in 2011. For the case of Egypt, there are sharp increases from 1980 to 1990 and from 1990 to 2000; 27 percent and 29 percent, respectively. In the first half of 2000 it was mostly stagnant and started increasing slightly only in the second half of the decade. In Tunisia, productivity increased 10 percent from 1980 to 1990 and 21 percent from 1990 to 2000. Increase in productivity was even shinier between 2000 and 2010; it rose 29 percent. However, it declined in 2011by about 3 percent.

Graph 11: Productivity of Employment
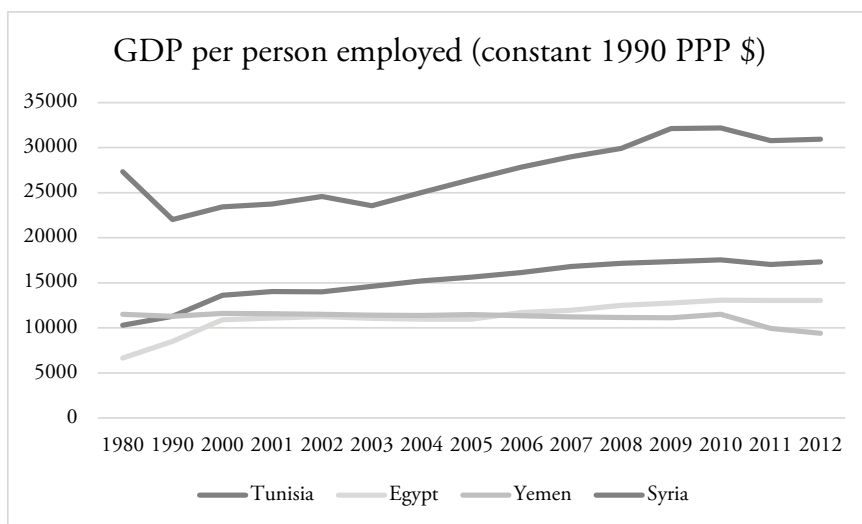
Source: World Bank, World DataBank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx, 2014.

Kremer argues that globalization has had different implications for the domestic labor markets.[17] One of the mostly agreed upon implications is the rise in labor market segmentation. As mentioned above, labor segmentation is the most important issue for most of the developing world today. A good indicator of the labor segmentation is the share of wage and salaried workers. Graph 12 depicts the shares of wage and salaried workers for the Arab Spring countries for 2010. For the same year the wage and salaried workers for the EU as a percent of females employed, males employed, and total employed are 87.4, 79.6, and 83.1, respectively. When we compare these figures with Arab Spring countries' figures, we can clearly see how segmented labor markets are in these countries. When we specifically take total employment into

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[17] M. Kremer, "Globalization of Labor Markets and Inequality", *Brookings Trade Forum: Global Labor Markets*, 2006, pp. 211-228.

account, the share of wage and salaried workers in Arab Spring countries are on average 25 percentage point below than it is in the EU.

Graph 12: Wage and Salaried Workers: % of Females Employed; % of Males Employed; and % of Total Employed, 2010.
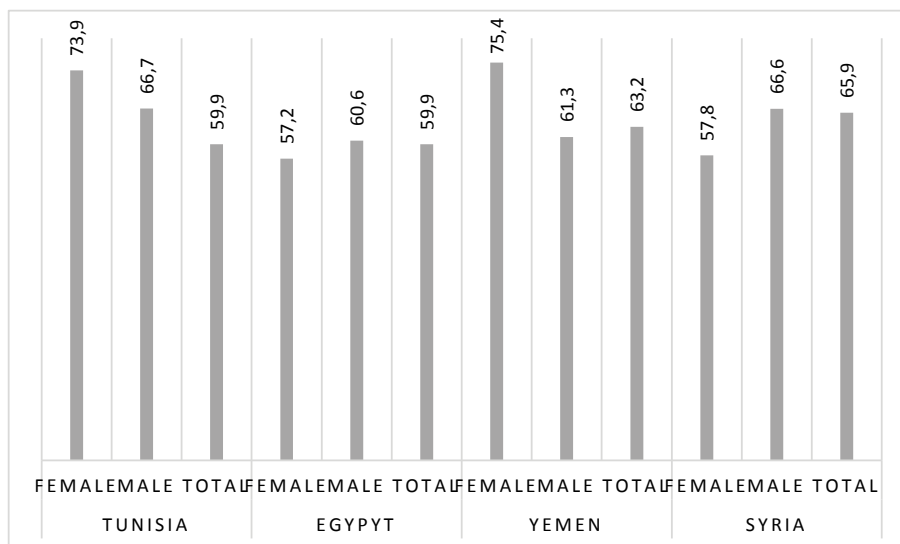
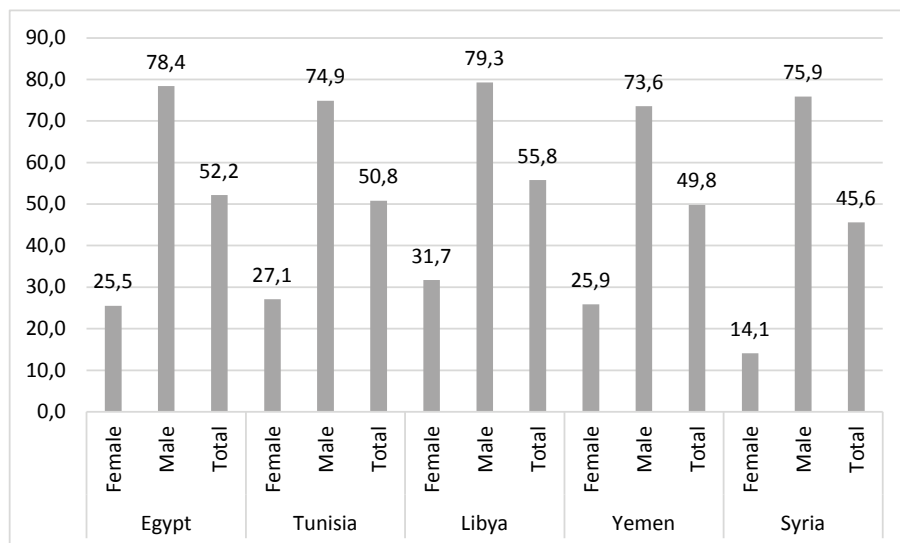

Source: World Bank, World DataBank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx, 2014.

As highlighted above, the sub-sectoral distribution of employment is also an important labor market feature. Graph 13 illustrates sectoral division of labor for the Arab Spring countries. The shares of sub-sectors; agriculture, industry, and services, for the EU in 2011 were 5.5 percent, 25.2 percent, and 69.1 percent, respectively. When we compare these figures with the figures in the graph, we see how large the share of agriculture in Arab Spring countries is when compared to the EU. Since agricultural jobs are mostly informal jobs, it explains the vulnerability of employment in these countries. Industrial employment is the lowest in Yemen, however, classification of economic activity in sub-sectors are not uniform across countries. In terms of sectoral distribution of employment an important issue is child employment. For example, in Egypt approximately 53 percent of economically active children ages 7-14 work in agriculture, while this figure for Yemen is above 70 percent.

Graph 13: The Shares of Sub Sectors, %, 2011.
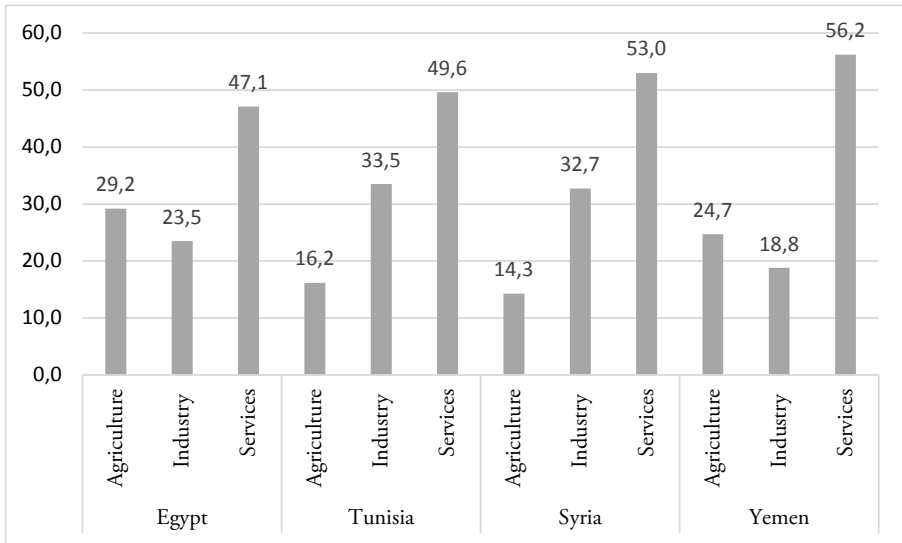
The supply side of the labor market is shaped by the size and growth rate of population and labor force participation rate. Graph 14 reflects labor force participation rates in 2011 for the Arab Spring countries. As it can be seen from the graph, for the males the participation rates are close to the EU average of 78 percent for the same year. On the other hand, while the average female participation rate in 2011for the EU is 65 percent, the highest female participation rate observed in Arab Spring countries is in Libya with approximately 32 percent. This very low level of female labor force participation rate pulls overall rate to around 50 percent, which is approximately 20 percentage point below the EU rate. This picture implies that labor supply in Arab Spring countries is below the potential level. While this fact is good news for the unemployment prospects, it also means that these countries underutilize their human factors.

Graph 14: Labor Force Participation, 15-64, %, 2011.

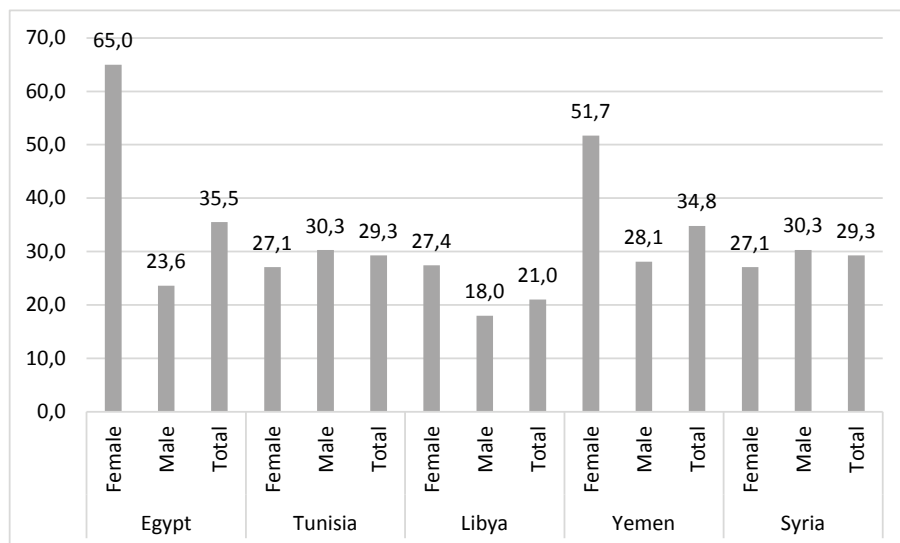**Source:** World Bank, World DataBank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx, 2014.

Labor demand and labor supply together determine the unemployment rate. Graph 15 and Graph 16 reflect unemployment rates of adults and youths together with gender divisions for both groups. The first observation is high unemployment rates in all Arab Spring countries. However, the case for female is even worse: as it can be seen from Graph 15, female unemployment rates in Egypt and Yemen are over 25 percent. This rate for Syria is 23 percent. The lowest female unemployment rate is observed in Tunisia with 15 percent.

Graph 15: Unemployment, 15-64, %, 2011.
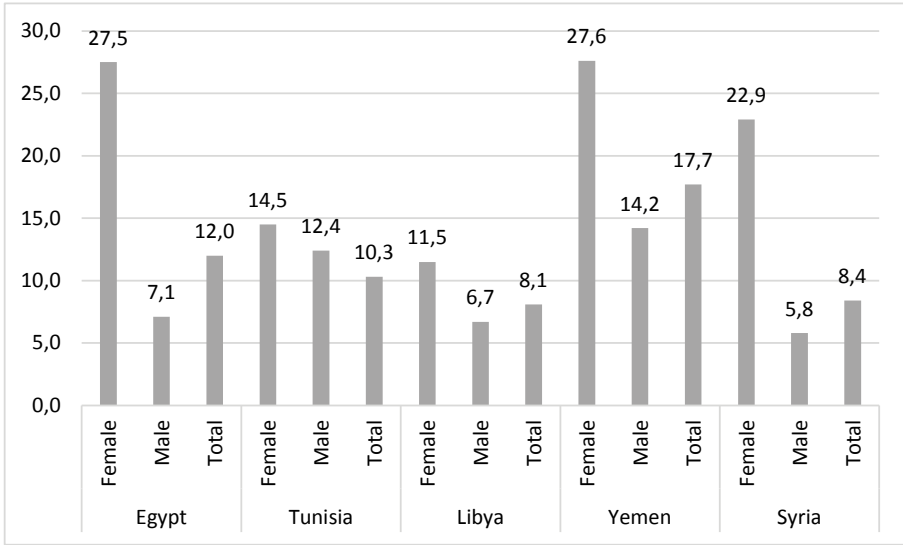
As aforementioned, the youth unemployment in MENA countries is higher than it is in any other region of the world. Specifically for female youth the problem is excruciating: female youth unemployment rate in Egypt is 65 percent and it is above 50 percent for Yemen. In Tunisia, Libya, and Syria, one out of every three female youth is unemployed.

Graph 16: Unemployment, 15-24, %, 2011.

The decomposition of unemployment into education level is also a measure of the degree of the problem. Graph 17 portrays the decomposition of unemployment in Arab Spring countries into education levels. As it can be seen from the graph, in Egypt and Tunisia, every one out of three with a tertiary education level is out of work. On average over half of the labor force with secondary education is out of work. These figure imply that labor markets in Arab Spring countries create jobs basically for the low education end of the labor force.

Graph 17: Unemployment, Education Level, % of Total, Latest Data Available.
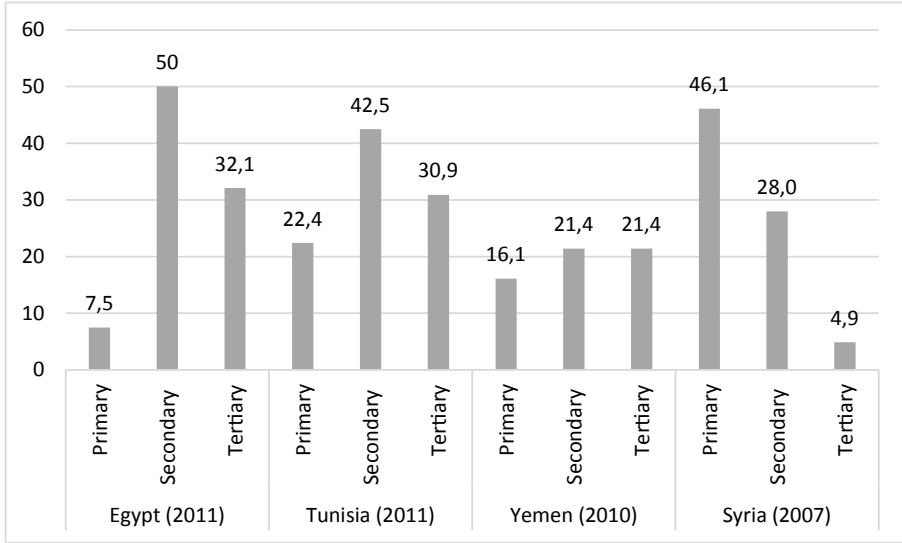
Conclusion

Arab Spring has resulted in dramatic political, social, and economic changes in the MENA region, specifically in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. One of the root causes of the Arab Spring is economic failure with a strong link to the labor market structures in MENA countries. The output of labor market is employment, and employment is the only way to secure economic future, specifically for the youth. A country can generate enough employment for its labor force through sustained economic growth rates. There is pressing economic and social need for higher economic growth rates in every each of MENA countries regardless of their level of economic development. Establishing appropriate institutions and infrastructure for secure, high wage and productive jobs also require financial resources raised through economic growth. It is certain that policies aiming at short term employment creation do not solve employment problems in these countries. The main issues in MENA countries' labor markets are low labor force participation rate. Although male labor force participation rate is high, a very low female labor force participation results in a low overall participation rate. Demographic structure also reflects itself in the labor market structure. Dominantly young population creates a lopsided balance between labor supply and labor demand for the youth segment of the labor market. In addition, preference for public

sector jobs deter youth from pursuing employment in private sector, which determines also their choice of education. Since education required for public jobs are significantly different than that in private sector, it creates a skill mismatch problem in these countries. Governments in these countries must focus on long term policies to create labor markets that will provide enough jobs. To this end, governments must increase investment in education necessary for skills required in the labor market, raise investment in infrastructure, provide self-employment projects and job search assistance, create employment offices and institutions for the dissemination of information for an efficient functioning of the labor markets, and establish an appropriate legal framework. Political and social transformations are inseparable from economic transformations, and in fact, economic overhauls will determine the directions and fate of political and social reforms. However, in spite of cultural, political, social, and economic similarities, countries of the region also differ significantly in their substructures and institutions. Therefore we should be cautious in both reaching general conclusions and offering solutions regarding current problems of the region.

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THE ARAB SPRING: THE END OF POSTCOLONIALISM

The events of the last 3 years in the Middle East, which is commonly referred as the "Arab Spring" have been momentous not only for the politics of the region and the world in general, but also for the academic studies of the Middle East region. Countries from Morocco to Yemen have experienced a wave of demonstrations with broad participation of different segments of their societies which resulted in the ouster of the leaders in some cases. One of the central questions of the last 3 years has been how to frame these events. Professor Hamid Dabashi, a well-known scholar of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, engages in a theoretical discussion on the "Arab Spring" throughout his latest book *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*. Hamid Dabashi states that he had two aims in writing this book. First of all, he attempted to build a theoretical perspective to assess the revolts in the region. Secondly, as the events were still unfolding during the writing and publishing process of this book; Dabashi considers his book as his way of showing solidarity with the "Arab Spring" (p. 235). In both ways, Dabashi's book is a highly critical work. He does not aim to grasp the entire relevant theoretical discussion, but to engage with a new way of interpreting world politics in which the developments in the Middle East lie at the center. Thus, this book is recommended to anyone who is interested either in politics of the Middle East, or contemporary world politics on a theoretical basis.

The book is composed of ten chapters each of which poses different but inter-related and equally-important arguments. Instead of a country-by-country discussion of the "Arab Spring", Dabashi prefers to deal with the cases within the framework of a theoretical debate. Only in the first chapter he gives a chronology of the events in each country in the region that has been influenced from the wave of protests. This chronology is also accompanied by a brief discussion of the possible reasons of the unrests in each case. In the rest of the book, Dabashi mainly provides his

analysis of the "Arab Spring", and its effects on world politics. The "Arab Spring", for Dabashi, is not only revolutionary for the region, but it has also changed the course of international politics in general.

One of the main arguments of the book which is also the basis of all other discussions is Dabashi's claim that, all of our terminology needs to be rethought. The meanings that are attributed to them no longer correspond to reality. He argues that we need a new mode of knowledge production in order to grasp the changes that are brought by the "Arab Spring"(p. 2). Furthermore, he argues that the "Arab Spring" and the Green Movement signal such a mode of knowledge production that transcends colonial and postcolonial boundaries (p. 164). Dabashi argues that postcoloniality created an illusion of emancipation for the formerly colonized countries, however it only fixated the existing relations of domination (p. xvii). The "Arab Spring" signals the end of postcoloniality in two terms. First of all, it will bring an end to the "colonial oppression" which was only preserved by postcoloniality. The old binaries such as "West and the Rest", "East and West" or concepts such as "oriental", "colonial", or "postcolonial" which only contribute to the reproduction of the colonial domination will cease with the "Arab Spring". It will bring about a cosmopolitan culture in which other worlds that are suppressed by the false binary of "West and the Rest" come to the forefront (p. 159). Secondly, the "Arab Spring" necessitates and produces a new ideological formation and mode

of knowledge production (p. 119) since the old one represents the domination within coloniality and postcoloniality. These two processes constitute the end of postcoloniality.

In another book named *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest*, Dabashi discusses the term 'delayed and deferred defiance' in the history of Shi'ism which he also adapts to the context of the "Arab Spring"[1]. By "delayed defiance" he means that a new understanding of liberation movement emerges which is not within the realm of postcoloniality, and thus creates a different revolutionary geography which he designates as the "liberation geography" (p. 44). Benefiting from the thoughts of Bakhtin, Dabashi argues that the revolutions of this era resemble not an epic, but a novel (p. 232). Thus, he offers the concept of "open-ended revolutions" which are slower but more permanent than total revolutions. This kind of a revolution is able to break both the political and ideological domination of colonialism. For Dabashi, the "Arab Spring" symbolizes such a revolution that holds the potential to create an "open-ended dynamic" (p. 97), which would translate into not only politics but also art through the "cosmopolitan culture" it generates (p. 73). Dabashi considers the "Arab Spring" in general and Tahrir in particular as the nucleus of this comprehensive revolution (p. 2). Dabashi also points to the relationship between the Green Movement and the

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[1] Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 67.

Arab Spring which he also highlighted in his earlier writings. According to Dabashi, all these movements signal a new world in which different worlds live together in a cosmopolitan wordliness in which former modes of domination and knowledge production do not exist anymore. This will be an era when the world will transcend postcoloniality by actually realizing the features that are attributed to it.

In *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* Dabashi furthers his arguments that he discusses in his other works such as *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in Time of Terror* (Transaction Publishers, 2008), *Iran, The Green Movement and the USA: The Fox and the Paradox* (Zed Books, 2010), *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest* (Harvard, 2011), *The Green Movement in Iran* (Transaction Publishers, 2011). In other words, this book is in a theoretical harmony with Dabashi's line of thought. The reader engages in a multi-dimensional discussion with reference to several influential thinkers and scholars of the last 200 years. Karl Marx, Max Weber, Hannah Arendt, Edward Said, Hardt & Negri, Mikhail Bakhtin, Talal Asad, Asef Bayat, and Bernard Yack are only some of these theorists that have a central place in the book. Although I do not have enough space to discuss Dabashi's reflections on all these thinkers, it suffices here to say that the reader finds a fruitful and a profound theoretical discussion not only on the "Arab Spring" and the latest social movements in the region, but also on postcolonial politics, ori-

entalism and postcolonial knowledge production.

Dabashi's literary writing style and theoretical depth makes our reading a delightful journey. There are valuable discussions in the book which will probably occupy the scholarly agenda in terms of the debates on postcoloniality and its interaction with the recent social movements around the globe. However, when we try to see the analysis behind the text, Dabashi does not provide satisfactory answers to the questions that may come to minds while reading the book. Dabashi is highly optimistic about the radical changes that the "Arab Spring" will lead to in national, regional and international domination. However, it is unclear whether this optimism is merely "wishful thinking" or a result that is reached through an analytical inference. He prefers to use the term "Arab Spring" not because of a theoretical positioning, but because he argues that it symbolizes "hope" (p. xviii). In another part of the book, he argues that the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" can only be used as proverbial since it is only a part within the entire transformative geography which experiences not only a regional, but also a "global reconfiguration". On the other side, he attributes the "Arab Spring" such a power as a trigger of the liberation geography that it is able to destroy the dominant political discourse on a global scale. For Dabashi, the "Arab Spring" can shatter all the discursive binaries and the unequal power structure in the world. In this way, postcoloniality will also be transcended. Howev-

er, he does not explain why it is only the "Arab Spring", and the Tahrir in particular that holds such a potential, and not the other movements in the world. He does not explain in which part of the movements he sees the symbols of such a potential: in the techniques, in the discourse, or in the aims? Secondly, even if the "Arab Spring" would eventually topple the postcolonial regimes, why does it necessarily mean the end of postcoloniality itself?

One of the main arguments of the book was the need for a reconsideration of our terminology while understanding social movements and politics in general. He argues that even the word revolution is needed to be rethought in order to be used in the discussions on the "Arab Spring" and the course of politics after that. However, he does not present a theoretical basis for the relationship between this need and the "Arab Spring". In other words, why does Arab Spring in particular necessitate such a reconsideration? He himself rightfully criticizes the scholars who try to see the "Arab Spring" as only a youth movement by saying that "thus the class composition of dissent has been cloaked by a new imaginary homogenous construct called 'youth'" (p. 66). However, he keeps referring to the "people" as the actors of the "Arab Spring" without discussing the composition of the participants. In the end, all these points raises the doubt that Dabashi cannot provide an analytical ground for his arguments.

In the conclusion section, Dabashi objects the binary between interpretation and change that Marx had put in his work "Thesis on Feuerbach". Yet accepting the responsibility of both interpreting and changing the world, Dabashi argues that we change the world by the act of interpreting it. The optimism of the book may have a relationship with Dabashi's interpretation of Marx's thesis. Maybe for Dabashi, by way of interpreting the Arab Spring in a certain way, we may have the potential to change it in that direction. In any case, *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* presents a very different and radical reading of the developments in the Middle East and the world in general which students of the region do not encounter occasionally. In that sense, it is certain that Dabashi's book will open new windows to the people interested not only in Middle East politics but also in revolution theories, world politics and the theory of postcolonialism.

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SOLDIERS, SPIES AND STATESMEN: EGYPT'S ROAD TO REVOLT

The so-called Arab Spring came as a surprise to many academics and policy makers. Scholars have tried to understand the nature of the protests and the motives behind the uprisings. Likewise, the Egyptian revolution is now among the most studied cases. Hazem Kandil's ambitious project is only one of them, but it is unique with its institutional historical approach. In *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt,* Kandil simply/mainly traces the political power struggle of actors/institutions within the Egyptian authoritarian regime structure during the last 60 years. It is a well-organized account of the complex relationships and shifting positions of the institutions that have been the major actors of the political and economic life in Egypt. Such an attempt is important for three reasons: (1) to understand the nature of Egyptian political life; (2) to explore the survival methods of different power bases within the regime in Egypt; and (3) to explain the structural causes of the Egyptian revolution.

To give a brief summary, the book divides the Egyptian political power three major parts. The first part is the militarist state where Free Officers ruled the country with the support from officers within their ranks. Secondly, there is a police state where interior ministers and their bureaucratic ties became more influential in political life, particularly during the last years of Anwar Sadat's presidency. This has continued throughout Hosni Mubarak's rule. Thirdly, it is the capitalist state where businessmen became the most powerful group in politics. They utilized bureaucracy/*statesmen*, security/*soldiers* and the intelligence/*spies* forces to sustain their premiership. In all these political settings, the group that suffered the most were the people of Egypt. Kandil argues that people suffered to the extent that they no longer had the patience to stay silent. This, he argues, explains when and why the uprising in Egypt started. In order for the reader to grasp today's events successfully, Kandil gives a lengthy review of the civil-military relations in Egypt.

Kandil's compelling historical account discloses how the power struggles between different groups have consumed the wealth and resources of Egypt. According to him, the blame for Egypt's current political hardships goes to every leader since Nasser. Mubarak, Sadat and Nasser have all contributed to the failure by expanding the role of intelligence, giving privileges to businessmen, planning backdoor settlements to topple rivals and by forgetting the real problems which inflicted on the Egyptians.

Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen provides a comprehensive historical account of the political history of Egypt in six chapters. Developing chronologically, Kandil's narrative begins with the 1952 Coup and Nasser's rise to power which led the Egyptian political arena to be filled by military cadres. At the outset, the book explains the competition for power between Nasser and other leading groups within the military (pp.31-38). The book shows how military coups have played a crucial role in Egypt's political life since 1952. Since then, Nasser and other leaders have faced coup attempts (pp.87-89). Such plans against Sadat are also explained in the book (pp.102-103). Kandil successfully hints at the tradition of coups and its danger for the post-revolutionary political leaders, particularly those of the Muslim Brotherhood. Since the political history of Egypt is very much entwined with military coups, it is interesting to witness how Morsi ruled out such possibilities against himself, yet still faced a military coup in 2013.

An important aspect of the book is that it points to quite a number of similarities between different practices in the political life of Egypt. For instance, the book puts forward an interesting and obvious similarity between the way Naguib was forced out of office and that of Morsi (p.35). Another such example is the pressure from the military cadres against the Islamic movements, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood. Just like Abdel Fettah El-Sisi is nowadays doing in Egypt, Nasser exerted very harsh pressure against the Muslim Brotherhood by arresting thousands of members and even killing them (p.40).

As an insider, Kandil's work presents useful observations for those studying Egypt's military history as well. This is crucial in understanding the country's military failures against Israel. It explains how Nasser bluntly went into war with Israel despite the reports from the military ranks of a lack of preparation for such a confrontation (pp.71-72). A similar situation took place when Sadat did not take seriously the warnings by the military officers during the 1973 War. Kandil also elaborates on how the US supported Israel against Egypt in 1967 (pp.93-97). Just days before the 1967 War, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, American Secretary of Defence, Chairman of Joint Chief of Staff and the CIA director convened at Pentagon and discussed the strategy against Egypt. The United States telegrammed Nasser promising him that Washington would help negotiating a peaceful settlement (p.94). American hypocrisy was at its highest level, when state

officials asked Egypt's Ambassador to Washington to assure Nasser that "Israel would never begin hostilities". Kandil points out this situation by stating that "the United States not only betrayed Nasser but also tried to make fool out of him" (p.95). Secret negotiations and plans between the US and Israel prior to 1967 War are clear indicators of US's betrayal against Egypt. It was a total humiliation of a nation which was then supposed to have far-reaching consequences. However, when Nasser died and Sadat came into power, the past had been forgotten and Egypt's policy makers tried to satisfy US as much as they could. That is why Egyptians have always felt unease with Sadat as his funeral attended by a very small crowd shows.

It has to be noted that Kandil directs harsher critique towards Anwar Sadat than towards Mubarak and Nasser. Sadat is pictured as an incompetent figure; knotty and fragile for political leadership. This negative approach towards Sadat is based on his wrong decisions during the war times (pp.127-129) as well as on his backdoor negotiations with Henry Kissenger, the then US Secretary of State (pp.130-142).

Kandil's work also provides important statistical figures on the Egyptian military's economic influence. Following the establishment of military-economic complex during the last years of the Sadat era, military spending started to decrease. Mubarak followed the suit in order to give way to newly created business tycoons to boost their share in the economy. Kandil notes that "While military spending in the mid-70s represented as much as 33 per cent of Egypt's GDP, it fell significantly afterward, to 19.5 per cent in 1980 and further down to 2.2 per cent in 2010" (p.183).

Another striking observation the author makes is about the geopolitical alliance between Egypt and the USA. In exchange of political power domestically, Sadat made great concessions to America and tried to sustain support from Washington. A quite similar strategy was followed during the Mubarak era as well. However, Kandil argues that America's alliance has never been based on mutual interest but rather favoured the interests of America and Israel. That's why he argues US's help to Egypt was always under one condition, that is, the Israel's security. For this reason, despite the fact that Egyptian regime received great amount of military aid from US, they were never allowed to be more equipped than the Israel's army. In a letter from President Ronald Reagan to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin in 1986, American leader ensured Tel-Aviv for "guaranteeing Israeli superiority in armaments over all the Arab states combined" (p. 185). Another important aspect of the US policy toward Egypt during Sadat and Mubarak eras was that Washington never allowed Egypt to exert its influence over Arab nations. As a superpower that is defending its interests in the Arabian peninsula the US helped Arab countries to remain as divided and weakened as possible (p.187).

The Mubarak era witnessed a security state in its strict sense, forcing citizens to cease all kinds of opposition against the regime. Mubarak's tough policies against dissent as well as formidable intelligence and security agencies created an environment of "total fear". Kandil's numbers about Egypt's interior security agencies are horrifying as they show the level of suppression in the country. During the final decade of Mubarak's rule, Egypt had around two million security officials (including police, intelligence and other related persons) in a population of 83 million. In Kandil's words "to grasp the enormity of this figure, one should remember that the Soviet police force under Stalin in the 1930s was a mere 142.000 men; that today 142 million Russians manage with a 200.000-strong security force; that the entire Chinese army in 2009 numbered only 2.3 million in a population of 1.3 billion and that Egypt's own army in 2010 was no more than 460.000" (p.194). Accordingly Interior Ministry's expenditure increased from 3.5 per cent to almost 6 per cent of GDP between 1988 and 2002 (p.195).

It was not only the numbers but the methods and practices of security forces that were hated by the Egyptians. Police-connected thugs were harassing citizens indiscriminately and helping police to create an environment of fear. Torture in detention was a widespread practice, sometimes resulting in deaths with no further investigation. Endemic police violence continued despite heavy criticism from both citizens and international human rights organizations (p.196).

The numbers and practices above by any means show that the Egyptians have been living under heavy pressure of the regime despite new technological developments that allowed them to see the wider world. As a result of increasing internet use, satellite TV channels as well as regional and international people exchange, the Egyptian youth could no longer stay silent about the oppressive policies of Mubarak's regime.

Kandil also explores the economic performance of the Mubarak regime. During the initial years the economy was struggling because of the heavy debt inherited from the Sadat's era. Deteriorating statistics led Egyptian economy to collapse in 1989. Two years after the collapse, the country started running again with the help from the US in exchange for Egypt's involvement in the Gulf War against Iraq. Bush administration forgave half of Egypt's debt, when Mubarak agreed to send troops to Iraq (p.205).

Mubarak initiated a new strategy on economy by creating a new wealthy class through such sectors as real estate, construction and media. Lands were allocated to government-friendly companies and certain businessmen who were supported by the state were allowed to build luxury hotels. To the surprise of any analyst who studied political economy, Egypt was paving over its arable land while its people were forced to import their food need from the West (p.206-207). Despite the deteriorating economic situation of Egyptians, Mubarak continued to support businessmen loyal to the regime. During

his era, through regime-friendly businessmen, Egypt sold gas to Israel at a reduced price leading the country to lose up to 11 billion dollars but making loyal tycoons richer. Another shocking figure given in the book is that the land which Mubarak allocated to loyal businessmen is bigger than the size of Palestine, Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain combined (p.214-215). Because of all these irregularities and corruption, Mubarak's policy of creating state-supported newly elite resulted in heavy unequal distribution of wealth. Because of this injustice there were only two classes in Egypt: the well-off who have dominated more than 90 per cent of the economy and the poor who barely survived. Both economic constraints and political oppression led Egyptians to rise up and topple the regime.

Kandil's main argument is that the Egyptian regime's decisions have been shaped mainly by military cadres as well as police forces, security institutions, political figures and business tycoons. In brief, he concludes that all of these different power bases aimed to maximize their share in the power structure and this led to the collapse of the state and forced its citizens to take to the streets.

Finally, an interesting aspect of Kandil's work is its timing. In Kandil's own words, this is "a book about history caught unexpectedly in real time" (p.1). What distinguishes *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen*'s from other studies on the Egyptian revolution is that this book is the product of a longer research that somehow pre-

dicted what happened in 2011. Due to this fact, the book is not only important for those who study Egypt, but also for others doing research on social transformations.

Overall, *Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen* is a well-structured analysis of Egypt's recent history. Kandil's work, however, has one shortcoming. The book puts so much focus on the institutions to the extent that the actors and the people are rarely discussed in the analysis. One would like to see the role and the position of the social movements during this historical period, for they played a crucial role in the power struggles. Groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafis, liberal organizations and the socialists have persistently opposed to the regimes of Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. Therefore, the struggle between these groups and the political power should have been included in the analysis. This would have granted the reader a better understanding of the dynamics that shaped the power struggle in the country since the WWII.

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