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The Arab Uprisings: An Assessment of the Roots and Implications of Contemporary Mobilization in the Arab World

Autoosa Elizabeth Kojoori-Saatchi
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, asaatchi@unlv.nevada.edu

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**THE ARAB UPRISINGS: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROOTS AND
IMPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY MOBILIZATION
IN THE ARAB WORLD**

By

Autoosa Elizabeth Kojoori-Saatchi

Bachelor of Arts-Political Science
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2005

Master of Arts-Political Science
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2010

A Doctoral Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

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College of Liberal Arts
The Graduate College

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Autoosa Kojoori-Saatchi

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Doctor of Philosophy – Political Science
Department of Political Science

Mehran Tamadonfar, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Chair

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.
Graduate College Interim Dean

John Tuman, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Dennis Pirages, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

John Curry, Ph.D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative

Abstract

Much of the existing theories of mobilization appear to focus on either micro or macro level elements that lead to mobilization, very few seem to focus on fusing the two; specifically psychological dynamics with macro structural components. This dissertation seeks to synthesize the two together to explain how psychology, specifically the perception of deprivation exacerbated by heightened social interaction through technology has introduced a new element to politics in the Middle East and North, which has furthered awareness of the exploitative nature of neoliberalism and the impact that the system has on the greater Arab populace. This dissertation explains how heightened social interaction has enabled Arab public to understand and mobilize more easily against oppression and inequality (whether real or perceived) in an effort to bring about change that cannot take place through institutional means. I argue that heightened social interaction through technology serves as a catalyst for seeking change in authoritarian systems that are facilitated by the structure of the global system.

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This is dedicated to those who challenge inequality, injustice and oppression. Your heroic efforts to alter this world are not ignored...

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Introduction

In 2010, the Arab world began to experience what would be considered just one of a series of mass violent protests that would take place over the coming years.¹ What initially began as a Tunisian man's struggle to highlight corruption in the Tunisian bureaucracy, transformed into a broader movement aimed at overthrowing Arab leaders throughout the region. This wave of mobilization has since spread throughout much of the Arab world, toppling the leaders of three Arab states and challenging the authority of many more. Because of these circumstances, studies of Arab politics have considerably increased, as the Arab world has inadvertently positioned itself to be at the center of contemporary discussions of public mobilization. This has led to an emergence of numerous studies pertaining to the origins of contemporary Arab mobilization. Much of the existing research, however, focuses either exclusively on domestic factors or wholly on international factors, without considering the entirety of the variables in these countries. Therefore, the findings account for only a portion of the factors responsible for mobilization. The majority of literature on mobilization fails to account for the complex, multifaceted nature of contemporary Arab uprisings that stem from both internal and external dynamics. This study attempts to provide a broader illustration of the roots and implications of contemporary Arab mobilization by using a multilevel approach that synthesizes the foundations of paradigms derived from both the comparative and International relations fields of political science. It relies on a fusion of macro and micro level dynamics of mobilization, which as a combination, appears to have been overlooked in much of the existing literature. The theory borrows from neo-Marxist based approaches because it regards Arab mobilization as a response

¹ This dissertation focuses on Arab states. These states are predominately inhabited by Arabs who are Semitic people, speak Arabic, and subscribe to the Islamic worldview.

to domestic circumstances brought about by macro-economic conditions that are externally driven.

A vast amount of the unrest currently taking place in the Arab world can be attributed to the structure of the global system, the economic role the region plays in the larger system, and the social and political circumstances that result from that economic role. Arab states are plagued with underperformance as a result of colonialism, persistent wars, civil violence and heightened competition between superpowers.² They are rentier-based economies that lack the capacity to diversify and become globally competitive. Most Arab economies are largely based on the export of raw materials and the location of strategic trade routes, such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz, make the Middle East and North Africa of particular importance to the global economy. States that have little to export, however, are often interest to global powers for their geo-strategic significance. Because of this, much of the Arab world is caught within the web of a global economic hierarchy that sustains the political and social apparatus of Arab states. Arab leaders have little incentive to respond to domestic demands because of the security that oil rents provide to them. International reliance on oil prevents and largely dissuades any foreign interference that could potentially hamper the production and delivery of the valuable commodity. Western political and economic interests in the region have led to the peripheral role that Arab states have taken globally; the prevalence of authoritarian regimes in the Arab world can therefore be partially attributed to Western interests in the region and the West's desire to safeguard its political and economic interests.

The Arab world is plagued with patrimonial autocracies. For this reason there is a great deal of dysfunction in what little institutional apparatus that does exist within Arab states. Arab

² Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Arab Awakening : America and the Transformation of the Middle East* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2011)67.

leaders maintain absolute control by allowing only friends and family within the decision-making apparatus. Nepotism and cronyism prevent qualified individuals from gaining access to political power and therefore prevent meaningful change. The tribal characteristics of Arab culture can be found throughout most aspects of the Arab state. Because of the security that Arab leaders are afforded through oil rents, Arab nations largely remain in a patrimonial state. Arab leaders are known to use state resources to buy loyalty and then use oppression as a tool to preserve the corrupt patron-client centered relationship that the state is structured around. Oil rents and profits from state resources are used as a tool for buying regime support rather than being utilized for building much-needed state infrastructure. This often leads to a hierarchal social structure consisting of a small regime-affiliated upper class, and a large lower class with limited upward mobility.

Arab states are unable to meet the social, political and economic needs of their populations because of the misallocation of state funds. State funds are often used for the personal pleasure of those affiliated with the regime rather than the needs of society. Leaders therefore respond by oppressing the population. This tactic appears to be designed to instill fear and prevent activism among citizens. The Arab world's internal and external problems, as a result of the social, political and economic factors mentioned earlier, are what largely contribute to its role in the global system. Awareness, spurred along by the use of social media among the Arab people, appears to be leading to anti-systemic mass mobilization. This mobilization is geared largely towards overthrowing the dictatorial leaders that maintain the Arab world's role in the global system. The anti-imperialist rhetoric that was once largely associated with the anti-imperialist revolutions in Algeria and Iran, is now common throughout much of the Arab world.

It is now apparent that the Western world selects which Arab states are friend and which are foe, purely on short-term political and economic interests. The United States and much of the Western world largely ignore human rights violations in Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab regimes because of the interests of elites in both the Eastern and Western worlds. The policies pursued as a result of these interests therefore help maintain oppression.

A vast amount of the literature on the roots of this phenomenon appears to be focused on the elements of repression and economic instability, rather than deeper psychological dynamics as potential triggers for mobilization. This is perhaps because scholars have faced difficulty in terms of connecting the authoritarian nature of a given regime with the behavior of its populace. While the political authority's conduct has indeed played a significant role in contemporary case studies of Arab mobilization, existing studies have failed to illustrate how anger towards the regime is converted on a psychological level to mobilization.

Most theories of this phenomenon are focused on the internal features of the state, such as the ideology and configuration of the regime, as the central trigger for uprising. While this may be appropriate for micro level studies of the Arab Spring, it omits the external elements that framed the current structure of the Middle East. Although some scholars have tried to attribute the uprising to religious or cultural features, there is little evidence to indicate that values (religious or cultural) are responsible for the oppressive approach that Arab leaders have adopted. Authoritarianism in the Arab world stems from a series of issues that must be studied on multiple levels. To construct a comprehensive explanation of the uprisings in the Arab world, scholars must focus on building a link between the internal and external factors that have inspired mass anti-systemic mobilization in the region.

Prior to the widespread emergence of text messaging and social media, scholars were largely unable to build theoretical bridges that could properly illustrate mass reaction to a given regime. Today, however, there is a vast amount of qualitative and quantitative data on social media use in the Arab world that enables us to study how the global political atmosphere impacts societal behavior. While it is evident that domestic institutional dynamics have greatly contributed to the ongoing conflict in the region, much of the literature appears to overlook the anti-imperialist nature of the ongoing uprisings by largely centering on the authoritarian structure of the regimes themselves. For the Arab people, the state is often perceived as an extension of Western control and a tool for maintaining the status quo. Therefore, the uprisings, while centered on overthrowing domestic dictators, are largely anti-imperialist and anti-systemic in nature.

Although there has been a significant increase in literature pertaining to Arab politics, much of it has lacked a thorough conceptual and theoretical account of contemporary Arab mobilization. Most of the existing studies focus on constructing narratives rather than providing an accurate background of Arab discontent that could be used to build a theoretical framework for mobilization. In addition, much of the literature appears to use the term revolution to describe events that lack the transformative characteristics of genuine revolutions. Much of these conceptual flaws can be attributed to discussing mass political behavior outside of a proper framework. In order to construct a proper theoretical explanation for what is taking place in the Arab world, it is critical to begin by discussing mobilization within a context of political change.

The first chapter of this dissertation familiarizes the reader with existing theories of public mobilization by discussing concepts, theories and methods employed in the broader literature on social mobilization. It will begin by defining public mobilization and social change

and a brief comparison of mass political protests and revolutions to further distinguish the dynamics that differentiate them. This chapter will also discuss the leading theories of public mobilization and the limitations they have when attempting to explain mobilization from both a comparative and International Relations perspective. It will include a discussion on the foundations of classical works on anti-systemic mobilization by reviewing the central components of Marx's literature on revolution. The chapter will then move on to discuss the emergence of some of the more contemporary theories of anti-systemic mobilization that are relevant to studies of the Arab uprisings. These include World Systems Theory and Frustration-Aggression/Relative Deprivation. The remainder of chapter one will consist of a brief outline of the methodological approach used for this study. It will discuss the challenges of studying developing nations and why a qualitative approach is generally employed for studies of the Arab world.

Chapter two explains the internal foundations of Arab mobilization by discussing domestic historical factors that have enabled the global system to keep the Arab world in a dependent role. This chapter will explain the sudden rise of public mobilization by discussing the social, political and economic complications brought about by this dependent relationship. It will also discuss how internal factors such as the lack of institutions, lack of state services, and the authoritarian nature of the political authority foster internal opposition, result in state sponsored oppression. Additionally, it will investigate the role of social media in the mobilization process and how heightened social interaction, as a result of new forms of communication, is providing Arabs with an outlet for voicing their grievances with the state. It is also a tool that enables them to rapidly organize anti-systemic anti-imperialist movements.

Chapter three focuses on external dynamics, specifically how imperialist/ neo-colonialist policies aid in maintaining the Arab world's dependent role in the global system. This chapter illustrates the impact that economic dependency, resulting from global imperialist/neo-colonialist policies, has on development in the Arab world. This chapter largely focuses on the exploitative nature of global institutions such as the United Nations and World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund and how these institutions maintain the neoliberal agenda that American imperialism is founded upon.

Chapter four contains an explanation of the impact that the uprisings are having in these states by examining the social, political and economic consequences of the Arab Spring. This chapter is largely centered on discussing the domestic changes that have taken place as result of what is happening in these states and what these changes can lead to in terms of political freedom, safety and wellbeing of the citizens. It will also discuss the role that Islamist groups have on mobilizing regime opposition, why they have such a strong presence, and how their rise to power has largely impeded true revolutionary change. The chapter will also examine the political-structural changes that have emerged as a result of these uprisings and how they have altered the state and institutions. Chapter four will also examine the Arab uprisings from a regional perspective by discussing what can be interpreted as the advent of an unconventional proxy style war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It also examines how contemporary mobilization has brought attention to the ideological conflict that exists in the Middle East and how it has altered the political dynamics of the wider region by largely highlighting elements of the Sunni-Shi'a divide. The chapter will explain what the Arab uprisings mean for the region and why Arab leaders will have to become more responsive to the needs of the populace if they intend to stay in power. It will include a discussion about Islamists and how they will shape the political

atmosphere if they remain in power. The chapter will conclude with what the rise of Islamist groups will mean for minorities that continue to live in the region.

Chapter four will conclude with an explanation of the challenges of managing instability and why the United States will have to reevaluate its approach to the region. It will discuss the political ramifications of supporting Arab autocracies and the potential costs of a more autonomous Middle East. Also, will also touch over the economic and political implications of mass migration as a result of instability, particularly in regards to Syria and the nations that are receiving them. It will also touch on the role of China, its shift towards being the largest importer of oil, and what this will mean for future relations with China. It will also discuss the role of Russia and its growing influence on this region.

Chapter One

Mass Political Mobilization: A Framework for Analysis

Conceptualization

The term popular/mass-mobilization refers to the practice of rallying/organizing the public for a particular purpose or in response to a specific phenomenon that is often associated with some form of contention. It is a phenomenon that has exceedingly high levels of public involvement.³ The occurrence is marked by a visible increase in participation that is centered on bringing attention to various dynamics that may not be gaining sufficient attention. The process is characterized by increased social interaction, group formation, and heightened public involvement that is often geared around challenging or bringing attention to existing social, economic, or political factors.⁴ Robert S. Jansen describes it as “...a political means that can be undertaken by challengers and incumbents of various stripes in pursuit of wide socio-political and economic agendas”.⁵ Mass mobilization is a prerequisite, a step that occurs prior to any social movements or revolution, it is a necessary step required of any successful bottom-up, populace-based transformation.

Mass mobilization can take on a variety of different characteristics; it does not look identical in every case study. In some circumstances the process of mobilization may be less noticeable, in others it may be impossible to overlook. One very notable example of popular mobilization is the Civil Rights Movement that occurred in the United States in the 1960s. The

³ Public mobilization, mass mobilization and popular mobilization are used interchangeably to refer to mobilization on behalf of the populace.

⁴ Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1978)69.

⁵ Robert S. Jansen, "Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism*," *Sociological Theory* 29, no. 2 (2011)78.

Civil Rights Movement included extensive amounts of communication and organization of large segments of the American population. The emergence of groups such as the NAACP, conferences, protests and sit-ins were used to bring government attention to the society's growing support for eradicating racial discrimination. The Civil Rights Movement highlighted not only the cultural divide that existed in 1960's United States, but also rising support for eliminating the institutional roots of race-based discrimination in the United States. It was remarkably visible because organizers utilized the presence of intense confrontations between protestors and authorities to produce more support for civil rights.

Mobilization is a component of the revolutionary process. Its presence, however, does not equate to revolution or revolutionary transformation. Revolutions are often confused with other violent transformative events such as coups, rebellions and civil wars because of the overlapping characteristics that these movements share. ⁶While civil wars, coup d'états and rebellions can indeed alter the political structure of a state, they tend to be different because they do not fully alter both the state and social structure. Revolutions transform the social, economic and political orientation of the state and its citizenry through popular mobilization and, therefore, tend to be far longer in duration. Given the vast change that occurs during the revolutionary process, it is safe to agree that revolutions are rather lengthy; they simply cannot transpire within a short span of time. They ensue as a result of years of dissatisfaction that eventually results in mass anti-systemic mobilization and ultimately regime consolidation.⁷

⁶ Al S. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution :An Introduction* (London: Nelson, 1975), [10], 228.; James DeFronzo, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2007), 440.; John Foran, *Theorizing Revolutions* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 300.

⁷ James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review* 27, no. 1 (Feb., 1962): 5-19.

Unlike coups, which are events that result in the transformation of the authority of a state, revolutions cannot be reduced to just institutional change. They are comprised of numerous processes that occur simultaneously throughout the state.

Political transformation

Revolutions alter the composition and the ideological underpinnings of political authority. Revolutionary movements are centered on overthrowing the existing regime, and supplanting the political, ideological, and institutional structure. This type of transformation is found in all successful revolutions that have occurred throughout history.

The French Revolution of 1789 transformed the state by introducing a constitution that set forth the creation of a parliamentary system that was largely centered on a sense of liberty equaty and fraternity. It abolished the monarchy that, while technically not absolute in nature, enabled the king to maintain much of the decision making power.⁸ The Russian revolution that began in 1905 transformed a Tsarist-led autocratic state to a parliamentary system that would later be dominated by a party consisting of working class segments of Russian society, known as the Bolsheviks.⁹ China's revolution largely occurred in phases spanning from the 1911 to 1949.¹⁰ While the early phases of the revolution introduced a new constitution and replaced the emperor with a president, it was not until 1959 that communism replaced the philosophical foundation of the new political system. The 1905 Iranian revolution ushered in a new constitution that called

⁸ While the complex bureaucratic structure of the French state indicated a division of power, eighteenth century France was mostly governed by kings that declared themselves to be absolute monarchs. Stephen K. Sanderson, *Revolutions: A Worldwide Introduction to Social and Political Contention*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2010)19.

⁹ Jaroslav Krejčí and Anna Krejcová, *Great Revolutions Compared :The Outline of a Theory*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1994)11.

¹⁰ Sanderson, *Revolutions: A Worldwide Introduction to Social and Political Contention*, 277.

for a parliamentary system while maintaining the monarchic structure of the state. The 1979 revolution, however, almost entirely transformed the structure and the underlying ideology of the state. It replaced the Iranian monarch with a leader of the Shi'a religious establishment, thereby intertwining elements of the Shi'a religious establishment with the state itself.¹¹

While there are more examples of state transformation through revolution, the ones mentioned above provide a brief illustration of the kind of alteration that generally takes place within the political authority. The examples cited indicate the presence of a clear compositional shift within the leadership apparatus. In each case monarchs, tsars, emperors etc. were replaced with leaders that were completely different, in terms of their underlying ideology, from the preceding leadership. There were also exceedingly clear alterations in the ideals on which the states were founded, as visible largely through the configuration of the newly formed states.¹²

Economic transformation

Economic transformation is the process in which existing economic principles and practices are replaced by ideals that are more aligned with new revolutionary precepts. This can entail a shift from a particular type of economic system such as capitalism, to a more re-distributive type structure like socialism or communism. The process can entirely remodel the economic system, or it can simply result in less extreme alterations like instilling mechanisms for revenue that may have been lacking during the previous regime.

France experienced a huge economic transformation as a result of its first revolution. The nation had a series of economic problems resulting mostly from extensive population growth and

¹¹ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 561.

¹² In each of the case studies we witness the emergence of constitutional systems.

oppressive taxation policies in the early 1700s that caused extensive amounts of economic hardship. The nation's agricultural infrastructure was ill equipped to sustain the rapid population growth that it was encountering at the time, which therefore resulted in a scarcity of food products and excessively high food prices. In addition, the political authority imposed taxes unequally, collecting them rather oppressively by concentrating on the peasantry.¹³ Nobility and clergy however were exempt from paying taxes and, prior to the revolution, owned nearly one third of the nation's land.¹⁴ While the revolution was no-doubt multidimensional, much of the mobilization took place with the prospects of transforming the dire economic conditions that had afflicted the nation as a result of oppressive policies by the political authority. Heightened economic inequality was undoubtedly a critical determinant for mass mobilization that ultimately resulted in revolutionary transformation. The French revolution ushered in structural economic transformations by eliminating feudal dues and mandatory church tithes, nationalizing church lands, and abolishing taxes on farming. While the success of the economic reforms that came about as a result of the revolution is debatable¹⁵, economic policies were indeed transformed greatly.

As with all case studies of nations that have encountered revolution, economic inequality was prevalent in Russia, and in the 1800's that gap between the rich and the poor was progressively widening. Nearly half of Russian peasants were serfs that were bound by the unpredictable authoritative policies of their landlords.¹⁶ The tsar laid claim not only to all of the

¹³ Lilian Knowles, "New Light on the Economic Causes of the French Revolution," *The Economic Journal* 29, no. 113 (Mar., 1919)2.

¹⁴ Stephen K. Sanderson, *Revolutions a Worldwide Introduction to Social and Political Contention* (Boulder Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2010),17.

¹⁵ Some of the policies were actually worse off for tenants

¹⁶ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1995) 4.

land and natural resources of the country but the people who worked for him.¹⁷ Although Tsar Alexander theoretically eradicated serfdom in 1861, Russian peasants continued to experience vast amounts of economic inequality as result of the terms of their freedom. As part of their emancipation, landless peasants were to pay the state for their freedom through rather extended mortgages that were then turned over to the previous landlords. Workers in the more urban parts of the nation were also experiencing vast amounts of inequality through low wages and extremely poor working conditions.¹⁸ In addition, Russia's involvement in WWII led to extremely high food prices that were in fact so high that even Russian farmers were struggling to feed themselves.

Much like France and Russia, Iran also went through a period of economic inequality prior to its 1979 revolution. The Shah and those affiliated with the regime owned substantial land thus the system was essentially clientelistic and characterized by nepotism. Although Mohammad Reza Shah implemented various economic policies in an effort to build a stronger base among the Iranian masses, however, his efforts were viewed largely as failures. Land reform policies that were intended to strengthen ties and build support for the regime resulted in even greater discontent on behalf of the peasantry.¹⁹ High rates of unemployment (particularly among those with college degrees) paired with high food and living costs, and an ever-growing gap between the rich and poor, contributed greatly to the citizenry's decision to mobilize. The emergence of shantytowns was indicative of the extremely high cost of living that Iranians were

¹⁷ Sanderson, *Revolutions: A Worldwide Introduction to Social and Political Contention* 32

¹⁸ Prior the revolutions, work weeks were 6 days in length and typical works shifts were over 10 hours in duration.

¹⁹ The White revolution was a series of reform enacted by the Shah. Land reform was one of the changes that were implemented as part of the top down approach. Peasants were given the opportunity to buy land by obtaining loans from the government

confronted with and the living conditions, which the peasantry was willing to endure to leave the agrarian lifestyle.²⁰

The cases cited above indicate that revolutions are not simply focused on transforming political authority; they are also centered on improving economic conditions. While it is debatable as to whether economic conditions truly improve through revolution²¹, the motivation for mobilization is indeed partially rooted in the troubles instigated by desires for economic reform.

Social transformation

Unlike first-order or adaptive changes, transformative social changes result in visible alterations to societal composition. In contrast to adaptive social changes, transformative social change results in a more rapid alteration to the political values and traditions of a given society.²² Revolutionaries seek to change the existing social composition by introducing philosophies founded on resistance to the status quo and the clientelistic nature of the *Ancien Regimes*. After revolution, society's social structure is altered to reflect new values and renewed social hierarchy that coincides with the ideals of the new political authority.

The extent to which society transforms as a result of revolution greatly differs from state to state. In some cases, states experience considerable social-cultural changes, while others experience alterations that are more structural in nature. These changes while obviously different in terms of degree are considerably important features in the process of revolutionary transformation. The French revolution transformed the structure of French society by introducing

²⁰ DeFronzo, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements* 302

²¹ Ibid.

²² Sanderson, *Revolutions: A Worldwide Introduction to Social and Political Contention* 1

a democratic form of government that reallocated power and wealth among the French citizenry by diffusing privileges that were once reserved for nobility. French society undoubtedly changed not only in terms of its class composition but also in the ideals that guided every day life.²³

Although the social changes that occurred as a result of the Russian revolutions were less prevalent than those that occurred in France much of the power shifted in to the hands of the working class. The Iranian revolution of 1979 also resulted in a series of transformative social changes. The revolution caused a flood of policies that resulted in the implementation of laws pertaining to marriage, reproduction, divorce, clothing, political participation, and education.²⁴

The purpose of this dissertation is to offer a theoretical framework that integrates two levels of analysis to illustrate why the Middle East and North Africa are undergoing a precipitous surge in anti-systemic mass mobilization. Popular anti-systemic mobilization is the key focus of this dissertation because it is central to understanding the Arab Spring.

Methodology

Studies of Arab politics are inclined to be rather qualitative in nature. The absence of solid quantitative research on the Middle East and North Africa is mostly due to the political realities of the region. Political circumstances, namely the volatile environments in which these nations reside have resulted in a deficiency in statistical data used to conduct quant-based

²³ For a more detailed discussion on social class please refer to: Max Weber, “ The distribution of power within the community: Classes, Stande, Parties,” *Journal of classic sociology* 10, no. 2 (2010): 139.

²⁴ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 228.; Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 561.; Mehran Kamrava, *Revolution in Iran :The Roots of Turmoil* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), 174.; Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Politics in Iran : Shi‘ism from Quietism to Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 258.; George Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 550.

studies. Voids in data in the Middle East and North Africa are attributed to a series of different issues; however, one of the central reasons for this is the informal landscape in which politics is carried out. Much of the institutional apparatus necessary for conducting and maintaining statistical data is either absent, underfunded or simply incapable of functioning as a result of political circumstances within those countries. Scholars generally find that performing field research within the Middle East and North Africa is extremely challenging because of the difficulty associated with attaining primary sources. This is particularly true in regards to information that could be used for analyzing political conditions. The authoritarian nature of Arab states appears to be the greatest deterrent to conducting field research in Arab countries.²⁵ Authoritarian regimes tend to be sensitive to data collection, therefore it is common for archival materials pertaining to politics to either disappear or be intentionally destroyed by officials associated with the regime.²⁶ Also, it is common for such information to be in the hands of private individuals simply unwilling to share it with the public.²⁷ Furthermore, the informal nature of politics in these societies does not lend to research focused on institutions and formal politics.

²⁵ Janine Clark's study indicates the issues that researchers face when conducting research in the Middle East: "When question as to the greatest difficulties encountered in the field, respondents overwhelmingly reported issues that directly or indirectly were a result of the authoritarian political climate. While researchers experiences varied widely, 45% of the respondents noted what one researcher probably speaking called "the looming smell of Mukhabarat" (internal security or secret police). This was reflected in a variety of ways. 40% of the total respondent stated that they had experienced difficulties in obtaining interviews with key individuals. The most ubiquitous reasons cited were the political sensitivity of the topics and interviewees on willingness to speak openly due, most commonly, too political repression and, to a lesser extent, potential retaliation from opposition groups".

See Janine A. Clark, "Field Research Methods in the Middle East," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 3 (Jul., 2006): 417-423.

²⁷ Philipp O. Amour, "Practical, Theoretical, and Methodological Challenges of Field Research in the Middle East," *Historical Methods* 45, no. 3 (07, 2012)143.

Because of theoretical foundation and the constraints associated with obtaining statistical data, the bulk of this dissertation is qualitative in nature. In other words, quantitative data is not used unless it truly has a role in either proving or disproving the underlying theoretical premise of why Arabs are mobilizing. The empirical data used will be derived from sources such as: peer reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and newspaper articles. The literature utilized will contain material that is centered on the historical development of Arab states, their social and political structure, leadership style, civil society, economic development, social dynamics of the region, and global political and economic relations within the Arab world. This literature will serve as a tool for building the theoretical argument that revolutions are the result of a combination of micro and macro level social, psychological, political and economic dynamics.

This dissertation focuses on the nation-state as the level of analysis, since popular mobilization largely targets the state and its institutional and policy parameters and practices. The states examined in this dissertation are the ones that experienced mass uprisings as part of the “Arab Spring”. Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria are, therefore, the focus of this work.

Theories of Popular Mobilization

Scholars have developed numerous theories about mass mobilization, with most of the literature being focused on revolutions. Theories of mobilization, depending on their level of analysis, can be found throughout various subfields of discipline. Most studies of the topic, however, largely originate within two fields of study: International relations and comparative politics. Such theories tend to be divided by two central themes; those that focus on macro structural elements as the causal mechanism for mobilization and those that are centered on micro-level, behavior related factors. The field that each theory is associated with largely

indicates the causal mechanisms and the level of analysis utilized to explain mobilization. This dissertation relies on a theoretical synthesis of micro and macro levels of analysis.

Micro-level theoretical frameworks

Micro level theories of mobilization began to emerge around approximately the 1960's. Prior to then, most theories focused on socio-economic factors that were largely derived from Marx's theory of revolution. Increased access to data and more sophisticated social science methods, however, enabled scholars to delve deeper in to the psychological components that contribute to mobilization, thereby leading to the emergence of new micro-level theoretical approaches to studying the unique political phenomena. It was during this time that political science scholars shifted toward approaches that made use of the psychological foundations of human behavior to build a better understanding of popular mobilization.

Socio-psychological approaches largely consist of theoretical analogies of collective human conduct that build upon prevailing philosophies of individualized, psychological behavior and for this reason suffer from level of analysis issues. Theories such as these mostly view collective human behavior as a result of micro-psychological factors, which, in this circumstance is focused on human reaction to negative stimuli. Socio-psychological theories largely contend that popular mobilization is collective human behavior that originates from exposure to wide-scale deprivation (negative stimuli). They maintain that humans respond by striking back at the source of negative stimuli when unable to evade or overcome it. Socio-psychological theories also contend that when part of a larger community, citizens are locked in the persistent process of gauging where they stand, comparatively, in the socioeconomic spectrum. Individuals are, therefore, continually in the process of gauging their overall condition, or exposure to negative

stimuli in relation not just to others within the community but also in relation to their own past circumstances.²⁸ Through the course of this process, society gains insight into the source of its deprivation through increased knowledge²⁹, thereby mobilizing to improve conditions.³⁰ From this perspective, popular mobilization is a natural response to feelings of being comparatively disadvantaged. Micro level approaches such as these introduced a new dimension to theories of collective political mobilization by shifting the focus away from structural factors to micro-level elements that were largely overlooked in the past.³¹

James Davies was one of the first political science scholars to construct a theory of popular mobilization that linked a socio-psychological paradigm of micro human behavior to revolutionary transformation by creating what is often known as the Davies J-Curve. Ted Gurr however, expanded on his approach by constructing a more comprehensive social-psychological theory that could be applied to an even greater variety of political movements. Davies theory of revolution integrates psychological dynamics with traditional socio-economic elements. His theory is focused on uncovering the factors that lead specifically to revolution. From this perspective, revolutions transpire only when socio-economic conditions make a sudden and dramatic reversal, shaping what is referred to as an inverted J-curve.³² The general claim is that revolutions are the result of anger, frustration and anxiety that society as a whole experiences from a sudden decline.³³ Davies attributes revolution to the population's perspective of socio-

²⁸ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J.: Published for the Center of International Studies, Princeton University by Princeton University Press, 1970)22-25.

²⁹ This knowledge is gained through social interaction or what I refer to as heightened social interaction resulting from social media and text messaging.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Deprivation is the feeling that individuals experiences when exposed to negative stimuli.

³² A J-curve is simply the shape that economic and social conditions look like when graphed out.

³³ Davies, *Toward a Theory of Revolution*6

economic conditions, rather than the actual state of socio-economic development.³⁴ He essentially claims that once society has experienced a sustained period of both social and economic advancement, the citizenry expects advancement to persist. If social and economic conditions, however, make a steep and sudden decline, the population feels a sense of psychological deprivation. If that deprivation continues to spread through society and there is an overall consensus about the presence of deprivation, it can ultimately manifest into mass anti-systemic mobilization. The key component to Davies' theory is that revolutions transpire only when society has directly experienced constant social and economic improvement, followed by a steep, sudden and persistent decline.

Ted Gurr essentially builds upon Davies' theory of mobilization by expanding the general premise to address political violence. For Gurr, political violence includes any form of violence that is aimed at challenging the monopoly of power, and destroying standard political practices.³⁵ Political violence therefore includes events such as revolutions, guerilla wars, coups d'états, rebellions and riots.³⁶ Such violence occurs when society experiences deprivation resulting from unattainable rising value expectations that emerge as a result of exposure to modes of life that are often far different, and in many ways perceived better than their own.

³⁴ "It is the dissatisfied state of mind rather than the tangible provision of adequate or inadequate supplies of food, equality, or liberty which produces the revolution. In actuality there must be a joining of forces between dissatisfied, frustrated people who differ in their degree of objective, tangible welfare and status". Ibid.

³⁵ Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*

³⁶ Gurr explains that "... political violence refers to all collective attacks within a political community against a political regime, its actors – including competing political groups as well as incumbents – or its policies. The concept represents a set of events, a common property of which the actual or threatened use of violence, but the explanation is not limited to that property. The concept subsumes revolution, ordinarily defined as fundamental sociopolitical change accomplished through violence. It also includes guerilla wars, coups d'état, rebellions, and riots" Ibid.

According to Gurr, exposure to such ideas is often attributed to the presence of communications media and/or, missionary work.³⁷

Socio-psychological theories diverge from classical theories of revolution by concentrating on perceived dissatisfaction rather than the inadequacy of tangible goods, resulting from the existing socio-economic structure.³⁸ Karl Marx attributed revolution to the exploitative nature of the capitalist system; he, therefore, focused on the alienation that emerged as a result of the existing socio-economic structure the regime largely helped maintain. Though he discusses alienation, he does not fully explain how the psychological aspects of exploitation are linked to the structural features that are believed to lead to revolution. Marx refrained from considering the micro, behavioral-oriented, characteristics of anti-systemic mobilization, which scholars like Davies and Gurr integrated into existing ideas of revolution.

Macro-level theoretical frameworks

Classical economic theories of popular mobilization are often associated with Marx, as he was one of the original scholars to present a basic set of ideas and assumptions pertaining to revolution. While theories of popular mobilization have greatly evolved since then, it is impossible to deny the significant role that classic works, like those of Marx have had on current theories. Marx largely built the foundation for contemporary theories of mobilization by fusing elements of the social structure of society and politics with focus on economics. Much of the philosophical foundations of Marx's literature on revolution, however, can be attributed to George Hegel's ideas of historical change; as his philosophies set the framework for a

³⁷ Ibid.

revolutionary theory of society that was mostly absent among European intellectuals of the time.³⁹ Hegel argued that the mind and spirit were the forces responsible for the development of history and that interaction between two of the elements (the thesis and the antithesis), would result in a rebellion, which he perceived as beneficial for human development.⁴⁰ Marx adapted Hegel's dialectic to construct a theory of mobilization that was less abstract and more applicable to prevailing political and economic circumstances. Marx applied that dialectic to the relationship between the dominant social classes, which emerged as a result of capitalism. He argued that society was bound by a dynamic tension "between the means (or forces) of production-the technical, material, natural, and human resources that are brought into play in the provision of life's necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter and the relations of production, which consists of those social arrangements that groups of men and women develop by which to organize the provision of those necessities".⁴¹

Marx mostly believed that while labor is good for the development of man, constant uniform labor, most often found in the capitalist system, is not.⁴² Such labor is purely for

³⁹ Ronald H. Chilcote, *Theories of Comparative Politics : The Search for a Paradigm* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981)79.

⁴⁰ *ibid* 78 " the dialectic consists of three elements: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. For Hegel, each stage of history is characterized by a dominant viewpoint or idea, which represents the thesis. Through its elaboration, the thesis produces its own contradictions or oppositions, which formulate themselves into a contrary viewpoint or idea, the antithesis. The antithesis represents the negation, or the contradiction, of the existing viewpoint or thesis. The violent clash of thesis and antithesis yields a synthesis or a new viewpoint for civilization. This synthesis is not a combination of the better elements of the thesis and antithesis, but an entirely new phenomenon of human thought. Once at stand, the synthesis itself becomes the thesis in a new stage of history and the dialectic is set in to motion again. The clash between thesis and antithesis manifests itself in history as war or rebellion, from it the progress of man which is accompanied by inescapable, but ultimately beneficial, violence".

⁴¹ Michael S. Kimmel, *Revolution, a Sociological Interpretation* (Philadelphia Pa.: Temple University Press, 1990)16-17.

⁴² Richard N. Hunt, *Classical Marxism, 1850-1895*, Vol. 2 (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984)214.

advancing the accumulation of capital and is therefore only beneficial to the bourgeoisie that financially profit from the output. From this perspective, repetitious labor is detrimental to humanity as it prevents the flow of man's natural spirit.⁴³ In this system, proletariats (workers) are essentially exploited and used merely as a source of production. They thereby experience alienation. Theoretically, the goal is to advance to a Communist system, which from this perspective is egalitarian in nature. In order to evolve, however, exploitation must be eradicated through the process of revolution. From a Marxist perspective revolution is, therefore, perceived as a positive process/event in the evolution of civilization. Marx believed that revolutions occur only when objective structural conditions are conducive to mobilization, and that those conditions only materialize by the conflict that emerges in the process of capital production.⁴⁴

Marx's theory of revolution is heavily structure-based. However, he clearly acknowledges the presence of a psychological component to mobilization. He uses the phrase "alienation" to describe why portions of the population, in this case the proletariats; behave as they do in capitalist systems. Alienation essentially describes the psychological components associated with micro level markers of public mobilization and revolutionary change. It is the feeling of isolation that an individual within a society experiences as a result of a particular phenomenon, which in this case is attributed to circumstances that are typically social, political or economic in nature. Although the term is widely used among scholars within political

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Marx insists that the same mechanism that holds society together in dynamic tension – the conflict between the forces and relations of production – is also the force that will create the objective conditions for revolution. What is more, these objective conditions occur independently, and indeed are historically and logically prior to any psychological motivation towards revolution by any social groups. Revolutions may be made by discontented people, but they can only do so when the objective structural conditions are already conducive to revolution".

See Kimmel, *Revolution, a Sociological Interpretation* 16-17

philosophy, in the fields of international relations and comparative politics it is most often associated with Marxian ideas of the psychological implications of structures that are largely an amalgamation of social, political and economic elements.⁴⁵ Marx's theory, therefore, falls within the parameters of micro/ mid level theories of mobilization, because it makes use of the social conditions of the working class and the economic structure of the capitalist system to support popular mobilization.

These theories tend to focus on the state as the level of analysis and the element most responsible for mobilization.⁴⁶ Theda Skocpol claims that mobilization is the consequence of a malfunctioning state.⁴⁷ From this perspective, however, the state is viewed as a military and administrative institution that is used to extract resources from the population so as to maintain stability and competitiveness in the global atmosphere.⁴⁸ This approach does not apply the psychological elements that were present in classical micro-structural theories like that of Marx. Instead, the state is the central level of analysis because this perspective of instability is attributed to the political authority's inability to maintain order and compete in the global atmosphere.⁴⁹

World Systems theory (WST) is a post-Marxist framework that addresses revolution by analyzing exploitation on a global level by concentrating on external dynamics.⁵⁰ This theoretical framework was developed in the 1970's by Immanuel Wallerstein and later expanded

⁴⁵ Although Marx cannot be given credit for developing the term he can indeed be credited with the task of associating it with the social and psychological implications of capitalist states.

⁴⁶ Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003) 67.

⁴⁷ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979a), 407.

⁴⁸ Goldstone, *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies* 67

⁴⁹ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979b) 30-31.

⁵⁰ World System's theory may be addressed by the acronym WST

on in the 1980's by Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank, and Wallerstein himself. It builds heavily on Marxists principles of class struggle, exploitation, alienation, class-consciousness and revolution to illustrate macro-level indicators of revolution, often neglected by other theories of revolution. Those who adhere to a WST framework attribute the widening socio-economic imbalance to the capitalist nature of the system. Instead of focusing solely on the structure of individual states and the events occurring specifically in those particular states, like classical Marxist and social-psychological approaches largely do; WST theorists broaden the level of analysis, thereby expanding causal factors to forces that originate outside of the state itself. Revolution, from this perspective, is perceived as an inevitable and a welcomed consequence of the economic structure of the global system.

WST views the nature of the relationship between developed and underdeveloped nations in terms of a spatial hierarchy that was given the opportunity to develop as a result of industrialization.⁵¹ Industrialization, from this perspective, led to the emergence of a North-South global divide that consisted of nations that used their advances in technology, as a tool for suppression and exploitation. This framework largely opposes orientalist notions of underdevelopment that rely on ethnic or cultural factors as parameters for development.⁵²

⁵¹ Samir Amin and Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, *Dynamics of Global Crisis* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982).

⁵² "This construction of people, or nations, has not been haphazard. Just as steeds are placed in a hierarchy of power, reflecting a spatial hierarchy of the production processes and of the concentration of capital in the world economy, so peoples are located in a rank order of "superiority" and "inferiority" anthropologists may talk of "cultural relativity," but every street urchin knows the difference between the Superman and the "minorities". Racism is not merely endemic to the modern world system; it is intrinsic to it. And beneath the basic fault line (white versus non-white) lie a thousand more subtle distinctions which demonstrate the importance of the pecking order despite its occasional fuzziness and despite the ability of some world castes to win minor adjustments in their position". Ibid.

Instead, they view imperialism, carried out through colonialist and neo-colonialist policies, as the source of the disparity that exists between developed and underdeveloped nations.

From this perspective, the developed state essentially fits within the role of what Marx referred to as the bourgeoisie, while the underdeveloped takes on the role of the proletariat.⁵³ Scholars that use this framework largely contend that capital furthering policies, implemented by the core, impair peripheral state growth, thereby leading to exploitation that is then upheld by certain segments of the population that are located within the developing states themselves.⁵⁴ What distinguishes core and peripheral states from each other is the ability to control the accumulation of capital; peripheral states have little to no, local control of the accumulation of capital because the global system largely deters such states from economic expansion, by essentially making diversification costly.⁵⁵ Peripheral states therefore rely on single or limited commodity exports that leave them more vulnerable to fluctuations in the global market. They contend that the internal dynamics of periphery states are directly impacted by the fluctuating demand for exports. The political authority often becomes more oppressive if global demand for its resources declines, because the bulk of a developing nation's revenue, used to provide services, is generated through single commodity exports. When services are reduced or eliminated as a result of such fluctuation, the citizenry is more responsive to corruption, which then leads to an increase in repression. Economic volatility therefore prohibits the social and economic development of peripheral states that, when combined with other features, leads to revolution.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Johan Galtung, *A Structural Theory of Revolutions* (Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, 1974), 78.

⁵⁵ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System in the Longue Durée* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004a)6.

Limitations of Existing Theories

While Marx's theory of revolution has many shortfalls, one of the central problems with the theory is applicability. Marx claims that revolutions are the desired outcome of the tension that emerges between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and that such events are limited to advanced capitalist systems. In the last century, however, revolutions have occurred only in agrarian societies. Advanced capitalist societies' have not even mildly encountered the prospects of revolutionary transformation, as Marx claimed. Another problem with the theory is that it focuses too much on socio-economic and structural causes of revolution without properly connecting them to the psychological elements of mobilization.⁵⁶ Although structural matters are vital for any working theory of revolution, mobilization simply cannot transpire without individual action. Also, it fails to consider global matters that influence the socio-economic structure of a state as macro level theories do.

The problem with state-centered theories of mobilization is that they completely overlook the cultural and psychological elements that contribute to mobilization because they view the state as the central level of analysis and the source of instability. Skocpol indicates that while the state is indeed autonomous from the control of the dominant social class, the "... actual extent and consequences of state autonomy can only be explained in terms [of] specific to particular

⁵⁶ This can be understood in terms of the agent structure debate. The agent structure debate can be understood as the divide that exists among social scientists in regards to the origins of social phenomena. Scholars that are proponents of structure side of the argument, largely contend that social structure is responsible for forming social phenomenon. In contrast, those that tend to align with agent side of the debate largely believe that individual actions are responsible for social phenomenon.

types of political systems and set historical international circumstances.”⁵⁷ It appears that from this perspective, even the state is bound by historical and political elements that simply cannot be separated from dynamics that are social in nature.

In contrast, macro-level theories of mobilization suffer from explanatory flaws that are mostly attributed to focusing far too much on structural or economic discussions that overlook the relevance of human micro-level behavior. The case study of the Egyptian uprising is just one example in which WST framework is completely inapplicable. Its high import to export ratio is indicative of a nation that is generally lacking the tangible exports necessary to fit the economic parameters of peripheral state. This is particularly interesting because Egypt does not have the characteristics of an export driven economy that properly fits within a global socio-economic paradigm, yet it encountered anti-systemic mobilization, which resulted in the fall of Hosni Mubarak. The Egyptian uprisings were due to a combination of disparity among its populace, these conditions, however, are not the result of circumstances typical to export-driven, rentier states that are exploited for raw materials; they are far more complex than something that could be exclusively addressed with a macro economic framework. Anti-systemic mobilization does not have to be simply a result of economic domination through resource exploitation, as World Systems theorists have argued in the past. Revolutions could be a response to rising global awareness of policies that go beyond the core’s short-term economic interests. This was in the case in Egypt. The relationship of dependency between Egypt and the United States fostered conditions that relied heavily on oppression to survive. Psychological theories compliment post-Marxist global socio-economic theories such as WST, because they account for psychological

⁵⁷ Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* 30

elements of mobilization and in turn, result in a greater ability to predict anti-systemic movements.

WST frameworks are particularly useful in studies pertaining to revolutions because they focus on the structural aspects of the global economic environment that are often mistakenly overlooked, or simply ignored by other theories. However, the problem with classical WST-based frameworks is that they have to rely on non-economic parameters to address anti-systemic mobilization in low-export states that fail to meet the guidelines of their global export-driven model. Poor economic conditions and the dynamics associated with such environments are indicators of mass anti-systemic mobilization. There are numerous psychological elements that enhance the desire to mobilize. However, WST framework generally avoids discussions pertaining to the micro level indicators of mobilization that psych-social theories are able to address.

As indicated above, there are numerous theories for explaining why individuals collectively mobilize (as those in the Arab world have done). There is no doubt that the Arab Spring/ Awakening/ Uprisings⁵⁸ have revolutionary characteristics. However, there is an existing debate about the root cause of these particular anti-systemic episodes and the origins of mass mobilization in general. Although there are numerous theories on causative factors of revolution that were not mentioned in this work, most tend to adopt a particular level of analysis and therefore leave many questions unanswered.⁵⁹ Existing theories tend to fall short of properly addressing the diverse characteristics of the Arab world's political landscape.

⁵⁸ Arab Spring, Arab uprising, Arab awakening and Arab Revolutions are often used interchangeably to describe the anti-systemic mobilization that started in 2010.

⁵⁹ Although Theda Skocpol's work is one of the most comprehensive theories of revolution to date, the characteristics used for conceptualizing revolution unnecessarily distinguish between the social and political elements of revolution. She claims: "Social revolutions are rapid basic

The theories of revolution discussed appear to adhere to one level of analysis or another. Rarely do they fuse macro and micro level dynamics to broaden theoretical predictability. While such approaches allow for more concise theoretical explanations of social change, their predictive capacity is virtually always challenged by factors addressed in alternate levels of analysis. The heterogeneous nature of the foundations of contemporary Arab mobilization essentially makes the use of single-level paradigms particularly problematic. The uprisings are not just the result of malfunctions in the structure of the state, nor can they wholly be attributed to the psychological characteristics of the Arab people. The uprisings are due to a fusion of global socio-economic characteristics, established through imperialist policies, as well as perceived deprivation that stems from increased social interaction. To construct a comprehensive theoretical explanation for the Arab uprisings, it is imperative to account for a series of factors that often range between multiple levels of analysis. In this particular circumstance, it is crucial to address dynamics that are both structural and psychological in nature, while also accounting for factors that serve as a tool for linking the two together. In order to properly understand the Arab uprisings, it is essential to examine the impact that the global capitalist socio-economic structure of the world system, for which the Arab world has little control over, has on the underlying dynamics of Arab politics. Once achieved, one can then construct an idea of

transformation of the society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below" (1974, 4). Political revolutions however differ from those that are social in nature in that "...they are not necessarily accomplished through class conflict" and they are largely confined to transforming the political structure of the state; they have little to no impact on the social structure. Rebellions on other hand "...even when successful, may involve the revolts of subordinate classes – but they do not eventuate in structural change" (1974, 3). While Skocpol does include the central components of revolutionary transformation, her distinctions place severe and unnecessary constraints by creating far too many subgroups. Revolutions are social movements that include transformation on all levels.

contemporary Arab political behavior that accounts for societal changes that have emerged as a result of heightened social interaction.

A Theoretical Synthesis

Wide-scale anti-systemic mobilization indicates a given citizenry's profound aversion to state policies and practices. While this form of mobilization suggests an overall disillusionment with the state, it does not imply that public interests are homogenous. Public interests and demands are based on interplay of dynamics that often fluctuate depending on the perceived condition of the citizenry.⁶⁰ On a macro level they are shaped by the political and economic structure of the global system that often influences the state to behave in a way that can result in citizens feeling deprived. On a micro level these are influenced by psychological components, such as the emotions that lead the citizenry to feel deprived. Mobilization occurs when the population at large experiences a sense of deprivation as a result of threats to safety/security and/or social, political and economic concerns.⁶¹ Deprivations are measured against a dynamic,

⁶¹ "The term 'marginalization' refers to two main issues. The first issue is the significant reduction in involvement in society and the considerable loss of opportunities experienced by certain groups or individuals within a specific society, with a consequent breakdown of ties either in terms of social control or in terms of reciprocal solidarity. Such reduction leads to a progressive decline in social participation, an increase in the level of poverty and ongoing exclusion from social agencies such as schools, the job market, political communities and so on. When taken to the extreme, this process results in people becoming dropouts or *clochards* and completely refusing the social values and ties of the society. The other issue - which although connected to the former does not completely overlap with it - is that even in such *seemingly* fluid structures as democratic societies, in which all players have equal opportunities to move within the social context, and especially to move up and down the social ladder, there are relatively rigid or semi-rigid elements which considerably reduce the social mobility of the members of some groups, condemning them to a future of marginalization. In other words, such group members do not share the same opportunities to improve their condition in society as others due to being denied access to positions of power, prestige and wealth".

yet universal, order of human concerns that generally hold true across anthropological spectrums. Citizens, therefore, mobilize because their perceptions of existing conditions⁶² do not align with what they want it to be.⁶³

Within societies, there is a basic structural hierarchy that is necessitated by the fluctuating demands of humans at the individual level.⁶⁴ Society often holds the political authority/state accountable for the fulfillment of those demands and expectations. The hierarchy largely consists of a series of needs and preferences, with physiological and safety needs clearly taking precedence over all others because of their role in in the process of human survival.⁶⁵ The remaining are those that are largely social in nature, that is, they need only to be met within the presence of a social backdrop; they are not essential to survival, but can be significantly important within society.

See "MARGINALIZATION." *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity & Culture* Sage UK, 2003) (accessed 2/21/2014 2:52:29 PM).

⁶² Existing conditions in regards to how they believe they are being deprived.

⁶³ This is because heightened social interaction through technology has opened doors to new ways of life [whether real or not] that are often more desirable than the current situation.

⁶⁴ Abraham Maslow first discussed this in this in his research on the hierarchal structure of human needs.

⁶⁵ It is important to note that the hierarchy is not fixed; its flexible in that it does not apply to the deprived, psychopaths and those that have been satisfied for an extensive period of time. See David D. Van Fleet, "The Need-Hierarchy and Theories of Authority," *Human Relations* 26, no. 5 (October 01, 1973).

Hierarchy of Demands

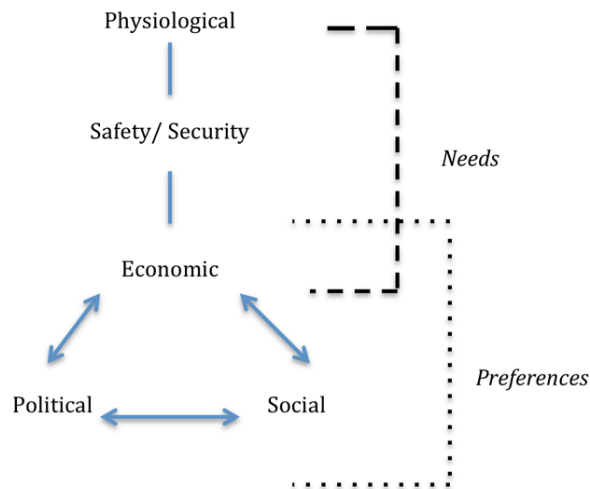


Figure 1. A

Physiological necessities such as access to food, water and shelter are most vital in the hierarchy of needs demanded of the state. Physiological needs are paramount in the order of demands because of the crucial role they play in human survival. Evidence suggests that issues pertaining to food and water have indeed been at the center of much of the anti-systemic movements that have taken place in the modern era, with food prices being one of the central motives for mobilization.⁶⁶ Studies have found that citizens tend to hold the state/political authority responsible when food prices rise beyond a reasonable level, irrespective of the state's role.⁶⁷ Once those physiological needs have been met, however, citizens turn their attention to demanding safety via protection from danger because they are essential to self-preservation.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Julia Berazneva and David R. Lee, "Explaining the African Food Riots of 2007–2008: An Empirical Analysis," *Food Policy* 39, no. 0 (4, 2013): 28-39.

⁶⁷ Davide Natalini, Aled Jones and Giangiacomo Bravo, "Quantitative Assessment of Political Fragility Indices and Food Prices as Indicators of Food Riots in Countries," *Sustainability* 7, no. 4 (2015) 4362, <http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/7/4/4360>.

⁶⁸ One of the State's functions is to preserve the safety of its population through protection from both internal and external threat

Nation-states are expected to maintain the safety of their populace from both internal and external threats. Externally, the state is expected to preserve the security of its populace by defending its physical borders⁶⁹ from both military and non-military threats.⁷⁰ Internally, the state is expected to ensure the physical welfare of its population through policies that provide domestic security and stability.

After the physiological and safety demands have been met, society shifts its focus to subjects pertaining to human development. Matters such as the economy, along with political and social concerns, move to the top of the agenda. These demands tend to be more dynamic as they often fluctuate as a result of individual preference. With that said, issues that are economic in nature often take primacy over social ones. The prospect of anti-systemic mobilization significantly increases when economic conditions, real or perceived, are unfavorable. This is true because both urban and rural parts of society experience the complications associated with basic disparities such as an increase in the price of food, housing, and textiles.⁷¹

While it is true that economic conditions alone are not enough to bring about protest, states that fail to meet the economic demands of the population overtime are indeed more prone to experiencing mass anti-systemic mobilization. This is because poor economic circumstances have a lasting psychological impact on society, as they often affect access to those elements⁷² that are found to be fundamental to human survival.⁷³

⁶⁹ Friedrich Kratochwil, "Of Systems, Boundaries, and Territoriality: An Inquiry into the Formation of the State System," *World Politics* 39, no. 1 (Oct., 1986): 27-52, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010297>.

⁷⁰ SAMUEL M. MAKINDA, "Sovereignty and Global Security," *Security Dialogue* 29, no. 3 (September 01, 1998)282.

⁷¹ This generally becomes visible when the cost of commodities rise, while the compensation of labor remains stagnant.

⁷² As discussed above

⁷³ Mehran Kamrava, *Revolutionary Politics* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992) 164.

Once the more critical demands necessary to survival have been met, citizens shift their focus to other issues that may further advance living conditions. Heightened social interaction as a result of access to technology and social media, however, exposes individuals to a surge of information that allows them to gain new ideas about the world around them. How accurate or true to reality these ideas are is not of importance, as this exposure alone is enough to cause individuals to reevaluate their demands. This is where the impact of the global economic system becomes visible. The peripheral/dependent economic role of developing states severely limits the periphery's capacity to deliver on the needs and preferences demanded by its population. When this is paired with unmet social and political demands, it results in an environment that is ideal for breeding anti-systemic protest and mobilization. Ultimately it does not matter if there is empirical evidence of the state's inability to deliver on demands; the perception of their existence is sufficient enough for mobilization.

Externally, the structure of the global system and the policies that are pursued by the global hegemony lead to an environment that are derived by the political and economic foundations of neoliberalism. These policies are centered on selective instability, patron-client state relations and the use of force to eliminate resistance to Western political and economic domination. Given the economic circumstances and the lack of development within the Arab world, the leaders of these countries often agree to trade deals and aid that further deepen their dependence on the Western world. Arab autocrats serve as a conduit for Western imperial policies at the insistence of their colonial overseers and to the detriment of the interests of their populace.

The lack of economic diversity in the Arab worlds allows these states to fall victim to predatory economic policies pursued by the West. These states are intentionally encouraged to

privatize and engage in trade deals that are financially beneficial to the West. This is particularly true in predominantly oil producing states. States with minimal or negligible fossil fuel resources including Egypt are of great geo-strategic significance to the West. These states are forced to pursue pro-western policies by resorting to an array of strategies including threats of regime change as well as economic and military assistance.

Chapter Two

Domestic Origins of Instability in the Arab World

The Arab world's current political landscape is influenced by the remnants of its deep colonial past. Arab nation-states are the culmination of decades of Western political influence that emerged from the power vacuum that was produced with the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The dismantling of the Ottoman Empire enabled French and British colonial powers to shape the political map of post-WWI Middle East by constructing dependent nation-states throughout the region.⁷⁴ Therefore, much of the Arab world today consists of states that suffer from various internal complications associated with the historical underpinnings upon which the states were founded. The current political landscape of the region is, therefore, greatly due to exogenous factors. It is a consequence of colonialism⁷⁵ and the involuntary transition to the nation-state system, rather than simply a product of natural political development.

The Nature of Arab States

Arab states are generally known for their autocratic approach to governance. Politics within the states consist of an amalgamation of both traditional, tribal networks, and semi-bureaucratic elements that often clash when operating alongside each other. The fusion of these two results in states that, while on the path to development, suffer from significant structural impediments, which inhibit the developmental process. Their most prominent feature is the style of leadership that dominates throughout them. These states are predominantly autocratic, that is,

⁷⁴ Autoosa Kojoori-Saatchi and Mehran Tamadonfar, "Why Stalemate?: The Syrian Conflict and the Sectarian Divide" (Chicago, Midwest Political Science Association unpublished conference paper, April 11-14 2013, 2014).

with the exception of a few hybrid regimes such as Lebanon, post-Saddam Iraq and the Palestinian Authority.⁷⁶ Arab leaders hold a monopoly over power, maintaining almost full control over the decision-making apparatus. Power is, therefore, exceedingly centralized in these countries.⁷⁷⁷⁸ Arab dictators exercise almost exclusive control over state institutions. This is true of not only parliaments and judiciary branches, if they exist, but also lower level institutions as well.⁷⁹

Arab states are neo-patrimonial, that is, unlike the older patrimonial forms of governance they contain some degree of institutionalization. They are characterized by personal rulership⁸⁰ and an executive branch that is constructed around the character of the individual in power. The government cannot be separated from the leader himself. What would the Ghaddafi regime have been without the eccentric Muammar Ghaddafi (1942-2011) as its leader. The same is true of the former regimes of Zine El Abidine Ben-Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, as well as Bashar Hafez al-Assad, the current leader of Syria. These states are manufactured around the character of their leaders. Their leadership style, their personalities, their religious leanings, as well as tribal and sectarian associations are all intertwined in the structure of the government.

Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, like nearly all other Arab states, are governed by neo-patrimonial forms of leadership. The first president of Tunisia⁸¹ held office for over thirty years

⁷⁶ Pollack, *The Arab Awakening :America and the Transformation of the Middle East*21

⁷⁷ Natasha M. Ezrow and Erica Frantz, "STATE INSTITUTIONS AND THE SURVIVAL OF DICTATORSHIPS," *Journal of International Affairs* 65, no. 1 (Fall 2011, 2011)1.

⁷⁸ It is important to acknowledge, however, that the Arab autocracies of today are rather different than the ancient dictatorships of the past because they often have to share some power with the state's political institutions.

⁷⁹ Ted C. Lewellen, *Dependency and Development: An Introduction to the Third World* (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1995)140.

⁸⁰ Robin Theobald, "Globalization and the Resurgence of the Patrimonial State," *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 61, no. 3 (September 01, 1995) 423.

⁸¹ Habib Bourguiba

and though he was eventually removed in 1987, the personalistic tribal nature of the Tunisian regime simply carried on with Ben-Ali.⁸² This was also true in Egypt. Following the defeat of the Egyptian monarchy, all of Egypt's presidents⁸³ have acknowledged the political significance of familial, religious, and regional considerations in their political institutions and practices. Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat⁸⁴ and Hosni Mubarak were all known to utilize their power to fill government positions with individuals that largely followed their own ideological proclivities. Although Mubarak tried in many ways to conceal the amount of power he wielded via institutions, it was no secret that he maintained almost exclusive control over the Egyptian government. Mubarak was able to staff his administration with individuals that were loyal to him because, as chairman of the National Democratic Party (NDP), he had direct control of who would be permitted to the party.⁸⁵ Both Bashar al-Assad and his father Hafez al-Assad of Syria are famously known for staffing nearly all government positions with members of their own minority sect known as Alawites.⁸⁶ This has enabled the Assad regime to maintain control over a nation that is composed of mostly Sunni Muslims.⁸⁷ Muammar Ghaddafi was priming his son Saif al-Islam for presidency prior to the uprisings that resulted in his ouster and eventual death.⁸⁸ He too maintained control of the state through a sturdy patron-client system, which was

⁸² Jason Brownlee, "And Yet they Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neopatrimonial Regimes," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37, no. 3 (2002) 47.

⁸³ Not including the transitional president Muhammad Naguib

⁸⁴ Robert Springborg, "Patrimonialism and Policy Making in Egypt: Nasser and Sadat and the Tenure Policy for Reclaimed Lands," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15, no. 1 (1979) 51-52.

⁸⁵ Kevin Koehler, "Authoritarian Elections in Egypt: Formal Institutions and Informal Mechanisms of Rule," *Democratization* 15, no. 5 (2008) 985.

⁸⁶ Alawites are a minority Shiite sect of Islam

⁸⁷ Raymond Hinnebusch, "Modern Syrian Politics," *History Compass* 6, no. 1 (2008): 263-285.

⁸⁸ Larbi Sadiki, "Wither Arab 'Republicanism'? the Rise of Family Rule and the 'End of Democratization' in Egypt, Libya and Yemen," *Mediterranean Politics* 15, no. 1 (2010) 103.

comprised mostly of close friends and family. Like these other Arab dictators, the Ghaddafi family not only controlled the state, they even owned or had a hand in nearly every major business venture in the country and held absolute control of the state.⁸⁹

Middle Eastern countries hold few, if any, contestable elections in comparison to other parts of the developing world.⁹⁰ They are generally a one-party state, which means elections, and the laws pertaining to them, are manipulated in a way to allow the existing autocrats to remain in power.⁹¹ These regimes use political elections as a tool for projecting an illusion of pluralism. In reality, citizens have very little, if any, input in government decision-making. This is particularly true in terms of executive elections because there is absolutely no competition in that realm. Elections are utilized to placate the public and conjure an image of formal political competition. This competition, however, does not exist. It is merely a way to appease political opponents and appeal to international donors.⁹² Laws often place severe restrictions on the development of new parties and there is a substantial amount of electoral manipulation via ballot tampering, imprisoning voters, and simply preventing individuals from casting their votes.^{93 94} This façade allows Arab leaders to prolong the lifespan of their regimes because it distracts political opponents with costly, semi-democratic activities that give the illusion of democracy.^{95 96}

⁸⁹ Alison Pargeter, *Libya :The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012)210.

⁹⁰ Jason Brownlee, "Executive Elections in the Arab World: When and how do they Matter?" *Comparative Political Studies* 44, no. 7 (2011) 809.

⁹¹ Kjetil Selvik and Stig Stenslie, *Stability and Change in the Modern Middle East*I.B. Tauris, 2011)188.

⁹² Beatriz Magaloni, "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 4-5 (2008) 727.

⁹³ James A. Bill and Robert Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, 5th ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2000) 213.

⁹⁴ Selvik and Stenslie, *Stability and Change in the Modern Middle East*155

⁹⁵ Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski, "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," *Comparative Political Studies [H.W.Wilson - SSA]* 40, no. 11 (2007) 1291.

Arab leaders continually win by extremely high margins, with some exceeding 90 percent of the vote.⁹⁷ Such electoral outcomes signify that elections, specifically executive ones, are fixed to result in explicit political outcomes that benefit the regime. As a result, states such as Egypt experience extremely low voter turnout from voter apathy.⁹⁸

In the 2004 presidential election in Tunisia, Ben-Ali had what the regime claimed to be a margin of victory of 94.5 percent.⁹⁹ In 2006, Mubarak walked away with an 81 percent margin of victory in the presidential election in Egypt. Despite the sectarian based civil war in Syria, Assad had over an 88 percent margin of victory in the 2014 presidential election.¹⁰⁰ These numbers are conflated so as to present an image of strong popular support. They are in no way representative of the free and fair elections that take place in democratic systems.

Politics and decision-making in these countries tend to occur outside of institutions. Unions, political parties, legislatures, bureaucracies and militaries often lack the political relevance that is common in democratic systems.¹⁰¹ Formal institutions house informal groups in which most of the politicking occurs, thus political institutions often contain vast amounts of tribal and sectarian political elements.¹⁰² The tribal, familial, sectarian ties are what enable these autocracies to stay in power, as they enable a higher degree of internal cohesion and stability.

⁹⁶ Magaloni, *Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule* 724

⁹⁷ Brownlee, *Executive Elections in the Arab World: When and how do they Matter?* 816

⁹⁸ Glenn E. Perry, "THE ARAB DEMOCRACY DEFICIT: THE CASE OF EGYPT," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2004): 91-107.

⁹⁹ Brownlee, *Executive Elections in the Arab World: When and how do they Matter?* 816

¹⁰⁰ "Election Guide." <http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2734/> (Accessed September 2015, 2015).

¹⁰¹ James A. Bill, "The Plasticity of Informal Politics: The Case of Iran," *Middle East Journal* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1973, 1973) 132.

¹⁰² Lina Khatib, "Political Participation and Democratic Transition in the Arab World," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* 34, no. 2 (2012) 330.

Institutions in these countries often serve as a tool for creating the myth of a division between the public and the private sphere. These distinctions are mostly an illusion that is used to placate the population. Comparatively speaking, these systems are more advanced than the traditional patrimonial/patriarchal states which were common in the pre-nation-state Arab world. This is because they contain institutional elements which traditional patriarchal and patrimonial systems lacked. These institutions, however, mostly serve as a tool for concealing the concentration of authority within them. State institutions within these countries, specifically political ones, are used more as a means to “facilitate power sharing among the elites,”¹⁰³ rather than to serve any genuine function for society. They essentially enable Arab leaders to gain political leverage by distributing high paying bureaucratic appointments to supporters.

The nature of these states, specifically the informality of politics and the overwhelming presence of nepotism, prevent Arab bureaucracies from functioning in a manner conducive to the process of democratization. The reliance on tribal, sectarian and clan-based ties results in arrangements that favor government appointments based on personal relations rather than merit. Tribal solidarity is, therefore, preferred over “utilitarian and universalistic principles...”¹⁰⁴ In these countries even marriages are used strategically to cultivate political alliances.

These leaders exercise extensive amounts of control over all branches of the state. The centralization of authority undercuts accountability within the bureaucratic elements of the state. State officials blame bottlenecking and the lack of initiative,¹⁰⁵ which frequently takes place within institutions on the nature of the regime and the need for consent from higher ups. Arab

¹⁰³ Theobald, *Globalization and the Resurgence of the Patrimonial State* 300

¹⁰⁴ Simon Ulrik Kragh, "The Anthropology of Nepotism: Social Distance and Reciprocity in Organizations in Developing Countries," *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 12, no. 2 (2012) 249.

¹⁰⁵ Jamil E. Jreisat, "Rethinking Administrative Capacity Development: The Arab States," *Public Organization Review* 12, no. 2 (2012) 147.

bureaucracies, therefore, lack authority over their domain, which bureaucracies in western democratic states tend to have.¹⁰⁶ This dysfunction within Arab institutions generally hinders the distribution of services to the populace,¹⁰⁷ thereby preventing the emergence of a fully functioning bureaucracy, which is crucial to the developmental process.

Corruption is common within Arab states and it is found at all levels of government. Arab leaders and the officials they appoint to the bureaucracy use their authority to extract resources from the state for private use. Although Arab nations are resource-rich, much of the profit from natural resources such as oil, cotton, etc. never reach the public. Nearly 60 percent of states within the region rank above the international mean, in terms of the presence of corruption (See Table 1 for data on corruption).¹⁰⁸ Corruption ranges from small bribes to more invasive and damaging forms, such as the annexation of government land and the theft of equipment and government assets for personal use. The presence of this phenomenon clearly hinders the state's capacity to properly function because it depletes the state of resources that are necessary for infrastructure and social programs.

This type of Corruption was indisputably present in the Ben-Ali regime. The extent of the regime's corruption, however, only became visible when Wikileaks published U.S. State Department cables pointing to the depths of the regime's corruption.¹⁰⁹ These documents revealed that Ben-Ali's extended family had amassed large fortunes by using their proximity to the president and state resources to develop and, in some circumstances, illegally seize local

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ James L. Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)4.

¹⁰⁹ Peter J. Schraeder and Hamadi Redissi, "Ben Ali's Fall," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 3 (2011) 14.

businesses.^{110 111} The Trebelsi family's rise to power and affluence was the product of Leila Trebelsi's marriage to president Ben-Ali. Before his ouster, Ben-Ali and his extended family had come to own over 180 Tunisian businesses, including but not limited to airlines, banks, hotels, radio stations, car manufacturing plants, private schools and various pieces of real-estate.¹¹² Ben-Ali's wife smuggled over 56 million dollars worth of gold bullion on her private jet prior to Ben-Ali's ouster.¹¹³

The Egyptian regime was similarly plagued by corruption. Mubarak used the adoption of neoliberal (economic) reforms as a vehicle for looting and dispersing state resources among his friends and family.¹¹⁴ Mubarak's eldest son was known to use his father's name to overcome bureaucratic barriers in exchange for shares of profits from business deals that he pushed through.¹¹⁵ His younger son Gamal was known for using his training in banking and his access to privileged information in regards to government reforms to grow his wealth through insider trading.¹¹⁶ Smaller forms of corruption were just as common in the Egyptian state. Government workers often subsidized their shrinking paychecks by demanding bribery and kickbacks from

¹¹⁰ Eva Bellin, "The Politics of Profit in Tunisia: Utility of the Rentier Paradigm?" *World Development* 22, no. 3 (1994): 427-436.; Michael B. Bishku, "Is it an Arab Spring Or Business as Usual? Recent Changes in the Arab World in Historical Context," *Journal of Third World Studies* 30, no. 1 (2013): 55.; Babak Deghanpisheh, "Tunisia's Ben Ali and Family Ran a Mafia State," *Newsweek*, <http://www.newsweek.com/tunisia-ben-ali-and-family-ran-mafia-state-66921> (accessed September 2015, 2015).; Béatrice Hibou, "Domination & Control in Tunisia: Economic Levers for the Exercise of Authoritarian Power," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 108 (2006): 185-206.

¹¹¹ Schraeder and Redissi, *Ben Ali's Fall* 9

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* 41

¹¹⁴ Hazem Fahmy, "An Initial Perspective on "the Winter of Discontent: The Root Causes of the Egyptian Revolution," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2012) 350.

¹¹⁵ Bahgat Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, eds., *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond* (Cairo & New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 349.

¹¹⁶ Lloyd C. Gardner, *The Road to Tahrir Square :Egypt and the United States from the Rise of Nasser to the Fall of Mubarak* (New York, NY: New Press, 2011), 230.

the population.¹¹⁷ Growing income inequality among those within the Ministry of Interior in Egypt encouraged police officers to take advantage of the state and its people as well. Many made their living through bribery, money laundering and extortion.¹¹⁸

Tribal and clan-based relations are the foundation for power and politics in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen.¹¹⁹ Ben-Ali used his power to essentially blur the lines between the public and private spheres in order to monopolize power and wealth among clans that were close to him. His friends and family were awarded with the ability to default on government loans, form duopolies and monopolies, and benefit from forced joint business ventures.¹²⁰ The Mubarak regime of Egypt was also based on a series of familial and clan-based relationships. Those within his close-knit circle of friends and family gained a stake in nearly every large business venture in Egypt.¹²¹ Public interests were of little concern for Hosni Mubarak because his entourage, consisting mostly of friends and family, had control of largely all components of the Egyptian government.¹²² Also this could be said for Ghaddafi of Libya and Saleh of Yemen and still true with Assad of Syria. These autocrats surrounded themselves with close friends and relatives, strategically placing individuals within military and bureaucratic institutions so as to control and profit from nearly all elements of the state.¹²³ All of the upper echelons of the Syrian

¹¹⁷ Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond* 56-57

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Deghanpisheh, *Tunisia's Ben Ali and Family Ran a Mafia State*

¹²⁰ Hibou, *Domination & Control in Tunisia: Economic Levers for the Exercise of Authoritarian Power* 198

¹²¹ Mohamed Elshehad, "Breaking the Fear Barrier of Mubarak's Regime," Social Science Research Council, <http://www.ssrc.org/pages/breaking-the-fear-barrier-of-mubarak-s-regime/> (accessed September 3, 2015).

¹²² Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond* 21

¹²³ Brownlee, *And Yet they Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neopatrimonial Regimes* 44

military are comprised of members of Assad's own largely Alawite based Ba'ath party.¹²⁴ In the case of Libya, Ghaddafi formed a parallel security force that consisted of close friends and family to counter the state military, which initially had a rather strained relationship with his regime.¹²⁵

Arab leaders often attempt to derive authoritative legitimacy through religious and monarchic traditions that simply cannot function alongside the institutional structure of the modern nation-state.¹²⁶ They do not represent the sovereign will of the Arab populace, that is, they do not act on behalf of the desire of Arab population. This is why they use coercion as a means to maintaining control. Coercion is used as a substitute for legitimacy; it is utilized to get the populace to acquiesce to decisions made by the regime.¹²⁷

These autocrats maintain absolute control by having a rather effective apparatus for repression.¹²⁸ They have a monopoly over power because they have the capacity to use state resources such as the military, police, and other institutions to thwart potential dangers to the regime. In these countries, state institutions are more often than not used for coercion in deterring the populace from organizing activities that could in any way threaten the regime's existence. Arab autocracies use a combination of coercive methods that include both violent and non-violent forms of repression such as violations of both physical rights and civil liberties.¹²⁹ They

¹²⁴ Seth Kaplan, "A New U.S. Policy for Syria: Fostering Political Change in a Divided State," *Middle East Policy* 15, no. 3 (2008): 107-121.

¹²⁵ Brownlee, *And Yet they Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neopatrimonial Regimes* 46

¹²⁶ Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State* (Routledge, 2011) 18.

Saïd K. Aburish, *A Brutal Friendship: The West and the Arab Elite*, 1 U S ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 13

¹²⁷ Abel Escribà-Folch, "Repression, Political Threats, and Survival Under Autocracy," *International Political Science Review* 34, no. 5 (November 01, 2013).

¹²⁸ Lewellen, *Dependency and Development: An Introduction to the Third World* 141

¹²⁹ Escribà-Folch, *Repression, Political Threats, and Survival Under Autocracy* 526

also reduce impending threats to authority by killing, imprisoning or making dissidents disappear, which not only contest the regimes' legitimacy but also potential electoral opponents and political adversaries which gain too much attention.¹³⁰

Ben-Ali used government mechanisms for taxation and social security to coerce those who opposed his regime. His government was known for imposing illicit fines/taxes on those that defied the government.¹³¹ His regime like others, took a firm stance against Islamist groups. Even those that challenged him through democratic means were imprisoned, tortured, and killed.¹³² Mubarak, like Ben-Ali also utilized state mechanisms creatively and to his advantage. He strategically used the emergency law, which the state was operating under after the assassination of Anwar Sadat, to enforce policies aimed at preventing regime disturbances.¹³³ The Mubarak regime was known for being particularly brutal to its citizenry. His government jailed, tortured, and killed numerous members of the Muslim Brotherhood. This behavior was not strictly reserved for Islamist groups; ordinary citizens were often abused by the regime as well. The regime was responsible for over 460 cases of torture and 167 cases of death attributed

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Hibou, *Domination & Control in Tunisia: Economic Levers for the Exercise of Authoritarian Power* 191

¹³² "Many documents attest to the inhumane treatment suffered by Mouvement de la tendance Islamiste (MIT) militants (later to become Ennahda) practice to which they continue to be subjected today. Abusive treatment includes violent arrest, imprisonment, torture, mistreatment leading to death; solitary confinement, imprisonment in overcrowded conditions, lack of beds, sleep deprivation; malnutrition, dehydration, poor hygiene, the rapid spread of diseases; negligent or altogether nonexistent medical care; drug addiction; unsafe working conditions; prohibition of prayer; frequent and humiliating cell searches; sexual abuse".

Ibid.

¹³³ Elizabeth Dickinson, "Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Hosni Mubarek," *Foreign-policy*, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/04/anatomy-of-a-dictatorship-hosni-mubarak/> (accessed september 3, 2015).

to torture.¹³⁴ Ghaddafi who referred to himself as the “King of Kings”¹³⁵ also took a hard stance against those who challenged his regime. Those who were suspected of spreading anti regime rhetoric were abused, tortured and imprisoned.¹³⁶ Ghaddafi was known to be exceptionally tough on Islamist groups in Libya, because their institutionalized structure enabled them to have the capacity to organize, and potentially threaten his authority. He also considered them to be a byproduct of imperialism so he particularly loathed their existence. In the late 1980s Ghaddafi started what would be the systematic oppression of various groups, which threatened the stability of his regime.¹³⁷ He specifically targeted members of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad and Takfir Wa Hijra because of their growing power.¹³⁸

Impediments to Development

State institutions in Arab countries are dysfunctional because most of bureaucrats employed, within the upper segments of the bureaucracy of these states, lack the skills required for the positions they hold. This is because high-ranking positions within institutions are given as reward for loyalty to the regime. Most high ranking/high paying positions in state institutions are occupied by individuals that are related to the leader; this system of patronage enables a give-

¹³⁴ Emily Loftis, "Mubarak's Horrific Human Rights Legacy," Mother Jones, <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2011/01/mubaraks-human-rights-record> (accessed september 2015, 2015).

¹³⁵ Marwan Bisharah, *The Invisible Arab: The Promise and Peril of the Arab Revolutions* (New York, NY: Nation Books, 2012) 36.

¹³⁶ Mathias Gebauer, "Oppression in Libya: A Peek at the Inner Workings of Gadhafi's Regime," SPIegel.de, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/oppression-in-libya-a-peek-at-the-inner-workings-of-gadhafi-s-dictatorship-a-747665.html> (accessed September 4, 2015).

¹³⁷ According to some, repression in these states tends to take on a curvilinear shape. Lower levels of repression correlate with lower levels of mobilization, whereas higher levels of repression correlate with circumstances that hamper public mobilization.

¹³⁸ Luis Martinez, "Libya: The Conversion of a 'Terrorist State'," *Mediterranean Politics* 11, no. 2 (2006) 157.

and-take relationship to ensue, with those close to the leader profiting from his authority. The leader profits from the power he receives from controlling the bureaucratic elements of the state.

¹³⁹ Thus, those serving within state institutions often lack the merit/ expertise/ knowledge necessary to enable these institutions function as they were intended to. ¹⁴⁰ This is why Arab bureaucrats frequently turn to friends and family for guidance on how to proceed with projects. While it may seem that cronyism in the Arab world is motivated solely by personal gain, it can also be attributed to the overwhelming lack of expertise among Arab bureaucrats.¹⁴¹ This lack of expertise, when paired with overwhelming amounts of corruption, leads to inefficient and dysfunctional institutions.

Political conditions in these countries can complicate life for Arab citizens. The nature of these states and their lack of democracy in particular, prevent citizens from organizing to make demands. Because of this, there is a huge disconnect between what people want and what the regimes want. ¹⁴² These governments essentially do the bare minimum for their citizens; just enough avert a popular revolt, and nothing more. As a result, most Arab regimes are continuously on the brink of being overthrown, making just enough concessions to remain in power. For these reasons, most citizen demands are left unmet.

The unique geo-political circumstances in the region force Arab countries to spend comparatively more on security in terms of GDP than other countries with similar levels of development. This is because Arab states need to procure arms to silence opposition and because

¹³⁹ Magaloni, *Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule* 729

¹⁴⁰ Mounira M. Charrad, "Central and Local Patrimonialism: State-Building in Kin-Based Societies," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 636, no. 1 (2011) 53.

¹⁴¹ Bellin, *The Politics of Profit in Tunisia: Utility of the Rentier Paradigm?* 432

¹⁴² Michael K. Miller, "Electoral Authoritarianism and Democracy: A Formal Model of Regime Transitions," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 25, no. 2 (2013) 157.

they are surrounded by states with similar security issues. Arab governments spend approximately 2-5 times more than Latin American countries¹⁴³ in terms of percentage of GDP for military expenses.¹⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁵ With the exception of Columbia, Most Latin American states spend between 1-1.5 percent of their GDP for military expenses. Arab countries, however, spend anywhere from approximately 3-9 percent of their GDP.¹⁴⁶ The problem in these countries is that spending does not translate to safety for the people. Though there is no data on the allocation of funds for domestic security, given the nature of the regimes, it is safe to assume that a significant portion of military spending is used for internal oppression. So while most of these institutions operate under the guise of protecting the people, regime fortification takes priority.¹⁴⁷ Citizen safety interests are, therefore, not only left unmet by the regime, but the regime itself also becomes a safety concern for the people.

Domestically speaking, there are additional safety concerns. The rise of militant Islamists groups such as Al Qaeda, ISIS/ISIL and the dangers associated with their growth in recent years has been particularly problematic. The growing presence of militant groups in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Saudi Arabia¹⁴⁸ has become a terrifying reality to those who live in the Arab world. These organizations are known to harm innocent people and businesses. They do this to instill fear and draw attention to their objectives. Militant Islamist groups are linked to violence

¹⁴³ with similar levels of development

¹⁴⁴ World Bank Data, "World Bank Data on Military Spending," World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS> (accessed August 2015, 2015).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Not accounting for foreign aid in the form of weapons etc. that Arab countries receive from the West.

¹⁴⁷ Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* 39

¹⁴⁸ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Internal and External Security in the Arab Gulf States," *Middle East Policy* 16, no. 2 (2009): 39.

throughout the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁴⁹ Daily life in the Arab world is persistently challenged by the growing presence of Islamist groups.¹⁵⁰ Arab states have made efforts to thwart damage done by militant Islamist groups. They attempt to secure major landmarks and tourist areas but the unpredictable nature of these groups simply prevents these regimes from fully protecting the Arab populace.

The fear of the prospects of a nuclear Iran and the political repercussions of its conceivable emergence as a regional hegemon compounds the security concerns of both these states and their citizens.¹⁵¹ Iran's military presence in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria is worrisome to conservative Arab regimes because its growing power will produce changes that will likely shift sectarian dynamics in favor of Shiites, as they have in both Syria and Iraq. While for Shi'ite Arabs this may be a welcome change, the majority of Arabs, which are Sunni, simply do not want Shi'ites acquiring even more power and influence in the region than they already have.¹⁵² Iran's support for the Assad regime has illustrated the deep political and ideological differences that are present within the region. Domestically, the relationship between the two countries "...counterbalances conservative Arab policies and strategies. This alliance, also helps offset Israel's leverage in the Persian Gulf, increases influence among radical Islamist groups in Lebanon/Palestine and impacts engagement with the West. It also provides the Syrian regime

¹⁴⁹ Yemeni based militant Terrorist groups have been linked to attempted attacks on oil fields in Saudi Arabia, various businesses around the community and bombings in public places such as hotels and restaurants.

¹⁵⁰ "Egyptians Fear Islamist Militants Gathering on Libyan Border." Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/13/us-egypt-libya-idUSKBN0FI0K120140713> (accessed July, 2013).

¹⁵¹ Ulrichsen, *Internal and External Security in the Arab Gulf States*, 39.

¹⁵² Dale Sprusansky, "Arab Attitudes Toward Iran," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 32, no. 4 (2013): 54.

with weapons, economic support and assistance with containing domestic radical opposition".¹⁵³
This is no doubt troubling for Sunni Muslim.

Arab states cannot provide or sustain the living conditions that are demanded by their citizenry because of the financial burdens associated with the presence of wide-scale corruption and the lack of a functional institutional apparatus. This is because most ¹⁵⁴ resource rich Arab states with little to no taxation, are single commodity exporters¹⁵⁵ which rely heavily on export profits for the state's operation.¹⁵⁶ The lack of export diversity, therefore, makes their economies more volatile. As a result, they often experience more pronounced revenue fluctuations and therefore, less financial stability. Economic instability, due to fluctuations in export income that results from variable market demand, frequently hinders the delivery of public services. In some circumstances, it completely eliminates costly infrastructure-based services/projects in the Arab world.¹⁵⁷ To further increase the burden, the line that separates public from private is blurred in the Arab world. Arab leaders and their entourage steal state resources, thereby using funds from state projects for their own personal use,¹⁵⁸ further complicating state budgeting.

All Arab states, regardless of their financial capacity, have poor urban infrastructure. These governments avoid funding the development of rural areas because they tend to lack the immediate financial incentives that oil, natural gas, minerals and other services offer.¹⁵⁹ These

¹⁵³ Autoosa Kojoori-Saatchi and Mehran Tamadonfar, *Why Stalemate?: The Syrian Conflict and the Sectarian Divide* 19

¹⁵⁴ Egypt is an exception because the resource it offers is geostrategic in nature. Its proximity to Israel and the Suez Canal set Egypt apart from other Arab countries.

¹⁵⁵ Hazem Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1987) 386.

¹⁵⁶ Luis Martínez 1965, *The Violence of Petro-Dollar Regimes: Algeria, Iraq, and Libya* (Columbia University Press, 2012) 24.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Beblawi, *The Rentier State in the Arab World* 387

¹⁵⁹ Such as the rents from the Suez Canal.

states, therefore, often experience extensive volumes of rural-to-urban migration. An “urban bias”¹⁶⁰ forces those unable to live in rural areas to relocate to cities where they can obtain the necessities that are otherwise not available to them due to low wages, poor education, and a lack of jobs.¹⁶¹ Shantytowns and slums surround major cities because of housing shortages attributed to a lack of affordable housing and overpopulation.¹⁶² These conditions force low wage laborers to take residence in makeshift homes that often lack running water and utilities.¹⁶³ Cairo is a good example of this particular problem. The lack of affordable housing has resulted in the emergence of various types of shantytowns, ranging from proper brick and mortar buildings to tin covered structures that lack running water and utilities.¹⁶⁴

Life in Arab cities is further complicated by outdated city planning methods. Major cities experience severe overcrowding due to poor city planning and an ever-growing population that is hungry for opportunity¹⁶⁵ that can only be found within major cities.¹⁶⁶ Highways and roads are small, congested and often in need of improvements that require monetary commitments that

In the case of Egypt rents from the Suez canal and the economic aid are the source of its income

¹⁶⁰ Minh Quang Dao, "Rural Poverty in Developing Countries: An Empirical Analysis," *Journal of Economic Studies* 31, no. 6 (2004) 500.

¹⁶¹ The lack of opportunity throughout the more rural parts of these nations forces those looking for employment to migrate to larger cities for education, employment, healthcare and other services not readily available in more rural areas.

¹⁶² It is important to note that while these cities often contain modern high rise apartments etc, that house is not affordable to even those making average income let alone low paying, blue collar jobs like that peasants often take in the city.

¹⁶³ Marwa A. Khalifa, "Redefining Slums in Egypt: Unplanned Versus Unsafe Areas," *Habitat International* 35, no. 1 (2011) 43.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Such as employment, education and healthcare.

¹⁶⁶ Most of the infrastructure within these cities were built during the oil boom of the 1970s and are, therefore, insufficient for the current amount of people that live within them today.

Arab governments have been unwilling to make.¹⁶⁷ Government officials are known to steer clear of expensive, long-term, budget depleting projects and services because they constantly risk the potential of being suspended as a result of budget constraints caused by revenue fluctuations.¹⁶⁸ Public transportation is lacking and is mostly limited to costly taxis or bus systems, which are still constrained by road congestion that further complicates daily urban life in the Arab world.¹⁶⁹ Basic food staples, although often subsidized, are incredibly costly for most Arabs (See Table 2 for data on food price volatility). The poorer segments of society, such as farmers, often pay up to half of their income for food.¹⁷⁰ This makes life extremely difficult for uneducated peasants. The imbalance creates a system in which the farmers cannot sustain themselves or their families, thus they are forced to relocate to the urban areas. Migration issues as a result of this place further strain on an already weak agricultural sector. Government facilities are often underfunded and servicing far too many people. Schools, even in wealthier Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, suffer from extensive amounts of overcrowding, with over 30 percent more students in classrooms than are typically permitted.¹⁷¹ Poor urban planning programs further complicate the ability to obtain primary education, as there are generally not enough schools in the cities to sustain the growing population.

¹⁶⁷ The oil boom of the 1970's enabled oil rich Arab states and surrounding nations to initiate what they thought could be a quick path to modernization. Arab countries began working on civil infrastructure by constructing much-needed roads, public transportation, stronger military apparatus, more schools, increased food subsidies etc. The problem, however, is that the most of the funds from the sudden rise in oil prices were initially used inefficiently and, therefore, do not result in the level of modernization that Arab leaders thought.

¹⁶⁸ Michael Ross 1961, *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations* Princeton University Press, 2012) 208-209.

¹⁶⁹ With the exception of Egypt, rail systems are generally absent within these nations.

¹⁷⁰ Ibrahim El-Dukheri, Nasredin Elamin and Mylène Kherallah, "Farmers' Response to Soaring Food Prices in the Arab Region," *Food Security* 3, no. S1 (2011) 159.

¹⁷¹ SULTAN AL-SUGHAIR, "Overcrowded Saudi Classrooms Hampering Learning Process," (October 14, 2014), <http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/644571>.

The nature of these economies, their absence of economic diversity, and their reliance on oil and rents from other resources, as well as extensive amounts of foreign aid, has a negative impact on the employment sector (See Table 3 for oil export data).¹⁷² The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have the highest rates of unemployment around the globe, with total numbers reaching up to around 12.2 percent.¹⁷³ Much of this is attributed to government policies that focus on short-term regime interests rather than policies that take the long-term interests of the citizenry into consideration. The problem now, however, is that a massive population bulge in the Middle East has resulted in uneven growth, with over 50 percent of the population under the age of 30. This is exceedingly problematic because a comparatively large portion of the population is in need of jobs.

For example, in Tunisia unemployment had reached up to 18 percent,¹⁷⁴ with youth unemployment at a staggering 26.7 percent.¹⁷⁵ Excessive amounts of corruption on behalf of the Tunisian government largely deterred foreign investment, thereby adding even further to the economic complexities that the country was facing.¹⁷⁶ Egypt also experienced historically high rates of unemployment prior to the uprisings that occurred. In Egypt, unemployment among the youth was over 25 percent.¹⁷⁷ This is problematic because almost half of the population in Egypt is under the age of the thirty and nearly 35 percent of its youth were enrolled in tertiary education prior to mass unrest.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷² There are, however, some exceptions to this.

¹⁷³ Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin and Ismihan N. Kilicarslan, "An Analysis of the Unemployment in Selected MENA Countries and Turkey," *Journal of Third World Studies* 25, no. 2 (2008)189.

¹⁷⁴ Mohamed Siala and Nehed Ben Ammar, "Tunisia's Revolution and Youth Unemployment," *Eurasian Journal of Economics and Finance* 1, no. 2 (2013)39.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond*107

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Although by no means homogenous, domestically speaking, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya were indeed very similar in terms of development and state structure. These were all oppressive authoritarian states that maintained political control through institutionalized coercion. Their governments intimidated their citizenry into complying with the status quo rather than assessing the needs and wants of society and delivering on those needs, as democratic governments often do. These regimes were concerned with survival and little more. It is for these reasons that living conditions within them were less than pleasant. Individuals who were fortunate enough to be affiliated with those in power were given privileges that the rest of citizens were not. Inequality was, therefore, particularly pronounced in these societies. There was an extreme disparity in these countries' populations. This applies to almost every aspect of life: social, economic and political. These regimes remained in power through bribery, nepotism and brutality. This is why Ben-Ali, Mubarak, Ghadaffi and other Arab dictators had to persistently trade public resources in the form of money, land, jobs etc. to acquire the support of those who aided them in maintaining the regime. These Arab states had high rates of unemployment/underemployment. They suffered from instability due to regional and domestic safety concerns. There was a lack of social and political freedom, large amounts of corruption, exceedingly high food and housing prices, and a general lack of development.

The Arab citizens of today are far more cognizant of their inequalities than those living in past decades with similar circumstances. They are living under the same oppressive regimes of the past, however, they are now equipped with technology that enables them to rapidly access and disseminate information. Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyan and Syrians are, therefore, more informed about the surrounding world and more able to express their dissatisfaction with their lack of freedom, with unemployment, lack of safety, housing prices, police brutality, corruption,

inequality etc. These people perceive their conditions to be unfavorable because websites, blogs, and social media posts illustrate the western world as comparatively better than their own countries.

The uprisings that have taken place within these countries were no doubt attributed to unfavorable domestic conditions paired with heightened social interaction (See Table 4 for internet access data in the MENA). These people simply needed a catalyst for mobilization. That catalyst was the Tunisian street vendor that set himself on fire to protest the corruption and bureaucratic government barriers present within his country.¹⁷⁹ Videos of protests that emerged as a result of his suicide ignited the support and mobilization of others frustrated with the Ben-Ali regime. The Ben-Ali government tried to prevent protests from further spreading by restricting Internet access and shutting down dissident websites. However, the uprisings had grown significantly and already spread throughout far too much of the country.¹⁸⁰ Similar uprisings began to emerge throughout Egypt. Many were surprised by these uprisings because of the oppressive nature of the Mubarak regime and the strength and size of the state's coercive apparatus. Websites, tweets, blogs and texts through mobile phones and computers simplified and amplified the distribution of anti-regime propaganda.¹⁸¹ Images, videos and word of the uprisings taking place in Tunisia, rapidly spread among Egyptians, igniting disdain for what were perceived to be similar conditions in Egypt.¹⁸² This revolutionary rhetoric spread throughout much of the Middle East. However, some states like Libya and Syria became

¹⁷⁹ A Tunisian street vendor by the name of Mohamad Bouzazi set himself on fire to protest the bureaucratic government barriers that preventing him from operating his small business.

¹⁸⁰ Pat Lancaster, "Tunisia: A Catalyst for Change?" *Middle East*, no. 419 (02, 2011): 18-19.

¹⁸¹ Alexander Kazamias, "The 'Anger Revolutions' in the Middle East: An Answer to Decades of Failed Reform," *Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (06, 2011): 143-156.

¹⁸² Delinda C. Hanley, "Road to Democracy. Reflections on the Egyptian Revolutions," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 30, no. 5 (07, 2011): 63-64.

particularly susceptible because external forces had an interest in regime change. With that said, they did indeed experience mass uprisings that were rooted in discontent that resulted from extensive amounts of government oppression, unemployment/underemployment, lack of safety, high housing prices and inequality etc.

Chapter Three

The External Implications of Contemporary Arab Mobilization

Structural/ Systemic Foundations

Much of the contemporary mobilization in the Arab world can be traced to impediments that stem from the nature in which nations interact on a global level. The philosophical basis of the neo-liberal, capital-centric global economy has shaped nation-state relations in a way that often emphasizes political domination and capital accumulation over basic human values and principles. It is a system and philosophy that integrates elements of both physical and economic domination through the use of global institutions. This overarching disregard for development outside of a capitalist perspective has fashioned a system that is divisive and exceedingly oppressive. It is founded on a culture that highlights new orientalist ideals; ideals that are largely constructed on false assumptions about the Middle East and its people.¹⁸³ Neo-orientalism is a false narrative that attempts to associate the ills of the MENA with the ethnic and cultural attributes of the people of that region.

The imperialist strategies of the Western world enable it to maintain control of the global system both politically and economically. This is possible because the institutional structure of global trade is constructed in an oligopolistic way, so as to encourage the endless accumulation

¹⁸³ “Neo-Orientalism is more tied to the post-9/11 American cultural changes and the retaliation that took place after the attacks. The 9/11 attacks and the so-called “War on Terror” brought the Middle East and the classic Orientalist discourse, with its binary division of “us” and “them” into focus once more. Therefore, representations of Arab Muslims become more prevalent in post-9/11 politics, and terrorism becomes the most available term for labeling this group of people. The war on terrorism does not only involve a fight against Arab terrorists but also dedicates great efforts for observing and keeping an eye on every Muslim as the Canadian Prime Minister said on September 6, 2011, “Islamic terrorism is the greatest threat to Canada’s security” (*CBC News*, 2011). This view, including American assumptions spanning many fields of cultural studies, assumes that Islam is a threat to the Western way of life”. Mubarak Altwaiji, "Neo-Orientalism and the Neo-Imperialism Thesis: Post-9/11 US and Arab World Relationship," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2014) 314-315.

of power and capital among those in control and to prevent those in the periphery from advancing.¹⁸⁴ Patents, strict trade regulations, and sanctions are just some of the barriers that have been formed to prevent peripheral nations from branching out in industries. These barriers often yield a greater profit margin, thereby preventing shifts to the structure of the global system. Western powers use a mix of traditional colonial strategies of expansionism and neo-colonial devices to maintain elements of the status quo, which are advantageous to the West and its allies.

This modern world system consists of various interrelated but dynamic components, which are in a persistent state of interaction.¹⁸⁵ Much of this contact consists of the cross border transfer of goods and labor, which is the foundation of the neo-liberal mentality that dominates the current Western-centric political spectrum.¹⁸⁶ Peripheral states such as those in the Arab world are exploited economically and politically to bring about an environment which is unstable and easily manipulated. Peripheral nations are often used either directly for their resources, or indirectly to bring about specific political conditions that enable the global economic system to continually exploit the MENA.¹⁸⁷ This results in a less noticeable form of domination, which is often sold under the guise of altruist ideals such as democracy and human rights.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004b) 25.

¹⁸⁵ Galtung, *A Structural Theory of Revolutions*, 78.

¹⁸⁶ N. De Graaff and B. Van Apeldoorn, "Varieties of US Post-Cold War Imperialism: Anatomy of a Failed Hegemonic Project and the Future of US Geopolitics," *Critical Sociology* (2010).

¹⁸⁷ Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System in the Longue Durée* 5-11

¹⁸⁸ "U.S. interventionism, except perhaps in the Second World War, has shown little respect for democratic principles, yet its foreign policy rhetoric, a backhanded tribute to the sensibilities of ordinary people, is always cast in that light. Whereas the U.S. has relied extensively on providing aid to dictatorial regimes throughout the world (a policy it has yet to abandon), in a communication-intensive world environment, it is now considered more politically legitimate to accomplish its neoliberal ends through the discursive framing of "democracy assistance." See Gerald Sussman, "The Myths of 'Democracy Assistance': U.S. Political Intervention in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe," *Monthly Review* 58, no. 7 (2006) 26-27.

Those who are part of the decision-making apparatus are often referred to as the “core” or “center” as per the terms defined by Johan Galtung.¹⁸⁹ These are advanced industrialized capitalist states, which control the global economy. Core nations are generally rich with natural resources and have strong state institutions with large, powerful militaries. These militaries are used to uphold the regime’s assertive role in the global system. The core nations interests, which are now mostly dictated by the United States, are centered around preventing any and all moves toward pluralism. This is due to the fact that pluralism is perceived to hinder the political and economic activities of the global powers in the MENA. Democracy is reserved for only those who align with the neoliberal paradigm.¹⁹⁰ The core nations’ goal, therefore, is to prevent political efforts that reduce the economic and political wellbeing of the global powers that financially benefit from the structure of the global system.

Imperialism is not a new concept for the inhabitants of the Middle East and North Africa and this dissertation is not intended to downplay its existence prior to Western domination. The MENA has experienced some form of imperial control throughout much of its history.¹⁹¹ Political control in the region, however, has shifted from a subtle domination to a more divisive and exploitive kind. The mechanisms for controlling the region are significantly different as a result of the ideological foundations of global hegemony. The semi-centralized nature of the Ottoman authority allowed for a greater degree of autonomy among its populace, because it

¹⁸⁹ Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971): 81-117.

¹⁹⁰ M. Shahid Alam, *Challenging the New Orientalism: Dissenting Essays on the "War Against Islam"*, 1st ed. (North Haledon, NJ: Islamic Publications International, 2006), 248.; Altwaiji, *Neo-Orientalism and the Neo-Imperialism Thesis: Post-9/11 US and Arab World Relationship*, 313-323.; JEAN ALLAIN, "Orientalism and International Law: The Middle East as the Underclass of the International Legal Order," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 17, no. 2 (2004): 391-404.

¹⁹¹ Some parts of the Middle East and North Africa were also at times under Persian Imperial control.

enabled most of the traditional tribal Arab systems to maintain their political relevance without using too much coercion.¹⁹² Tribal differences within the empire were not used divisibly as they have been by Western powers. Power fluctuated quite extensively during the Empire's seven hundred year reign, with some periods more politically centralized than others. What was unique about it was that political authority made special provisions¹⁹³ in terms of taxation and military service in order to account for the unique nature of its more nomadic and tribal Arab populace.¹⁹⁴ Politics in the Ottoman state were configured around an ideological perspective that was mostly anti-accumulationist in nature. Economic policies were influenced greatly by the social configuration, the relationship between state and society, and the needs of the different groups represented throughout the empire. Ottoman policies were centered on maintaining the stability and security of the entire empire.¹⁹⁵

This is not to say that the Ottoman Empire was particularly beneficial for the Arab people. The Arab populace lost its sovereignty and its ability to rely entirely on the tribal political elements, which had been the fabric of its history.¹⁹⁶ The Ottoman Empire was imperialistic, after all. To

¹⁹² In settled communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim notables had an interest in preserving their power and opposing any fundamental reforms offered by state agents. In semi-nomadic groups, tribal leaders mostly resisted attempts of taxation, military conscription and sedentarization. The state projects were modified based on local responses.

See Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006) 471.

¹⁹³ Provisions were dependent on the location of the tribes, if they were located near a frontier etc.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ ARIEL SALZMANN, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: "Privatization" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics & Society* 21, no. 4 (December 01, 1993): 393-423.

¹⁹⁶ Amy Mills, James A. Reilly and Christine Philliou, "The Ottoman Empire from Present to Past: Memory and Ideology in Turkey and the Arab World," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31, no. 1 (2011): 133-136.; Şevket Pamuk, "Institutional

say that any form of imperialism was good for the Arab people is to essentially say that sovereignty is only desirable when yielding results that fit within specific ideological or philosophical paradigms. Because of its nature, the Ottoman Empire brought about a polarized environment, which in no doubt, was undesired by the tribal Arab population.¹⁹⁷ The political hierarchy within the Ottoman military, though not intentional, created divisions between the predominantly Turkish military leaders and its Arab members. This was attributed to the vast distinction in skills between the Turkish and Arab members of the Ottoman military. Illiteracy and outdated combat techniques prevented Arabs from progressing as rapidly within the ranks of the Ottoman military apparatus as their Turkish counterparts. Though this was later addressed, it resulted in some cultural fragmentation between the Alayh (officers raised from the regiment) and those who entered the military as officers.¹⁹⁸

Emergence of the Semi-Westphalian State

Arab politics transformed with the onset of Western Imperialism. European imperial powers used the void that emerged with the fall of the Ottoman Empire to apportion the Middle East and North Africa. They shaped the borders to represent the political and economic needs of England and France, the two imperial powers, by implementing a semi-Westphalian nation-state system.¹⁹⁹ This was thought to be better than the tribal and sectarian rooted system, which was

Change and the Longevity of the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1800," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35, no. 2 (Autumn, 2004): 225-247.

¹⁹⁷ Samir Amin, "U.S. Imperialism, Europe, and the Middle East," *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 56, no. 6 (11, 2004) 13.

¹⁹⁸ Mesut Uyar, "Ottoman Arab Officers between Nationalism and Loyalty during the First World War," *War in History* 20, no. 4 (2013) 528-529.

¹⁹⁹ Raymond Hinnebusch, "Europe and the Middle East: From Imperialism to Liberal Peace?" *Review of European Studies* 4, no. 3 (2012) 19.

still largely in place after the fall of the Ottomans.²⁰⁰ The problem was that only certain elements of the Westphalian state structure were adopted or implemented throughout the region. These particular elements were those that benefited the European powers.

The semi-Westphalian system was responsible for introducing new geographical borders.²⁰¹ This essentially added to other elements, such as norms and values, of Western-based cultural domination that were institutionally implemented throughout the Arab world. The League of Nations Mandate System, which was the global institutional mechanism responsible for the current nation-state structure of the region, geographically divided the MENA to represent the respective authorities of imperial powers at the time: Britain and France.²⁰² This eventually resulted in the development of states that lacked the legitimacy to emerge independent of external influence. It is largely responsible for much of the structural issues that contribute to conflict within region.²⁰³ For example, both Israel's and Iraq's conflict-ridden histories are the

²⁰⁰ Kayaoglu argues: "The centrality of the Peace of Westphalia (to the evolution and structure of the international system is a familiar theme in international relations scholarship. 1 Countless references to these treaties have led to the formation of a framework for understanding international history and politics that I call the Westphalian narrative. 2 Among the chief elements of this narrative is the idea that the Peace of Westphalia instituted, or at least embodied, the principles of sovereignty and secularism".

The idea of this supremacy of the system is rooted in this narrative that is developed by Western scholars. Turan Kayaoglu, "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory: Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2010) 194-195.

²⁰¹ Fred H. Lawson, "Westphalian Sovereignty and the Emergence of the Arab States System: The Case of Syria," *The International History Review* 22, no. 3 (2000) 529.

²⁰² Peter Sluglett, "An Improvement on Colonialism? the 'A' Mandates and their Legacy in the Middle East," *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 413-427.

²⁰³ Hinnuebusch explains that: "Arbitrary boundary drawing also built conflict into the very fabric of the regional states system. Consequent border conflicts generated durable centres of regional war—in the Gulf, notably over the Shatt al-Arab, between Algeria and Morocco and between Israel and its neighbours. The creation of Kuwait blocking Iraq's access to the Gulf also meant drawing a line around oil wells and creating an artificially privileged population bound to excite the envy of its stronger neighbour. Arbitrary boundaries, cutting across identities,

product of imperial missteps in the region.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, Israel lost the support of its British makers because of the heavy cost of maintaining it. Its unnatural borders, and its reliance on emigration from other parts of the world to maintain its Jewish identity, were something even the British realized would be costly.²⁰⁵ Iraq's borders, again, courtesy of Britain, landlocked it from the Caspian Sea and also cut it off from some of the valuable oil fields it had access to while under Ottoman control.²⁰⁶ Those particular circumstances, and the waning influence of European powers following WWII, enabled the United States to move in and reap the benefits of the new geographical structure of the MENA.²⁰⁷

frustrated Arab nationalism and Kurdish nationhood". Hinnebusch, *Europe and the Middle East: From Imperialism to Liberal Peace?* 19

²⁰⁴ Jeffrey S. Morton and Nicole Shortt, "The Arab Spring: Implications for Israeli Security," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (2012): 34-51.; Haim Bresheeth, "The Arab Spring: A View from Israel," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 1 (2012): 42-57.

²⁰⁵ Morton and Shortt, *The Arab Spring: Implications for Israeli Security*, 34-51.

²⁰⁶ Majid Khadduri, "Iraq's Claim to the Sovereignty of Kuwait," *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 23, no. 1 (1990) 5.

²⁰⁷ Rashid Khalidi argues that "After the United States became a Middle East power in the wake of World War II, it initially retained its good reputation, getting Russian and British troops out of Iran in 1946, helping Libya become independent in 1951, and supporting Egypt in closing British military bases in 1954 and again during the Suez war of 1956. However, U.S. policy makers were soon supporting antidemocratic regimes because they provided access to oil or military bases."

See Rashid Khalidi, "Resurrecting Empire," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, no. 1 (2005) 4.

Hinnebusch explains the U.S. emergence in the region: "The Suez war in which Britain and France, together with Israel, tried to defeat Egypt's Nasser, the standard-bearer of Arab nationalism that had effectively defied the Baghdad Pact, led to Europe's political recession from the region, culminating in Britain's 1974 military withdrawal from the Gulf. This left, from the viewpoint of the West, a "vacuum" which the US gradually began to fill, partly through alliances with conservative and/or non-Arab states, the Shah's Iran, Turkey and Israel, against the Arab nationalist states, partly through a creeping military presence in the Gulf". Hinnebusch, *Europe and the Middle East: From Imperialism to Liberal Peace?*, 18.

A Different Approach to Imperialism: U.S. Methods

The United States relies on an entirely different approach to imperial control, often referred to as neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism. U.S imperialism is unique in that it generally uses global institutions to exert its political and economic influence throughout the world. These institutions serve as the mechanism for disseminating its neoliberal policies.²⁰⁸ The United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) serve as instruments for imposing economic and military objectives within the Arab world.²⁰⁹²¹⁰ These global institutions are used by the United States to essentially give the false impression of multilateralism and to deflect some of the liability associated with policies, which can be found as unfavorable by the global community.²¹¹ Because of its hegemony through economic and military resources, the United States influences other major actors to back its objectives by encouraging them politically to support sanctions and laws against states that reject

²⁰⁸ U.S. Imperialism is based on roughly from five ideas: Emphasis on U.S global primacy U.S. military supremacy, rejection of multilateralism, unconstrained by international law and continued dedication to export liberal democracy by any means necessary.

See De Graaff and Van Apeldoorn, *Varieties of US Post-Cold War Imperialism: Anatomy of a Failed Hegemonic Project and the Future of US Geopolitics* 410

²⁰⁹ Institutions are strategically used to mask the political and economic intentions of the global powers. They allow global powers to push policies on countries in the developing with the appearance of global support that simply does not exist.

²¹⁰ Dunkan Blackie, "The United Nation and the Politics of Imperialism," *International Socialism Journal*, no. 63 (Summer, 1994), <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj63/blackie.htm> (accessed September 2015).

²¹¹ "it is this approach to multilateralism that the United States is particularly resisted. Within the major Institutions of global governance, the United States has participated in the on advantageous terms. As a veto bearing permanent member of the Security Council, or with weighted voting on the IMF board. Conversely, we saw the refusal of the United States to sign onto the Rome statutes of the international criminal court in the absence of a process that would effectively provide US nationals we community from prosecution".

See Joy Gordon, "When Unilateralism is Invisible: A Different Perspective on the Oil-for-Food Scandal," *Global Governance* 13, no. 1 (2007) 60.

the neoliberal paradigm.²¹² It also retracts funds from institutions that do not align with its own political objectives. The most recent example is the withdrawal of funds from UNESCO for voting in support of Palestinian membership.²¹³

International law and sanctions

International law is applied rather disproportionately throughout the global system.²¹⁴ States that align with the United States and its neoliberal paradigm are above the law. They often evade conviction or even refuse to acknowledge the presence of criminal acts.²¹⁵ U.S. allies such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt (under Mubarak and Al-Sisi) and other Persian Gulf states persistently commit international crimes that elicit no reaction from the United Nations.²¹⁶ States that refuse or inhibit neoliberalism or other U.S. objectives in the region, in any way, are besieged with sanctions and U.N. approved laws. These actions are intended to cripple the

²¹² Allain, *Orientalism and International Law: The Middle East as the Underclass of the International Legal Order*, 391-404.; Manochehr Dorraj and James E. English, "China's Strategy for Energy Acquisition in the Middle East: Potential for Conflict and Cooperation with the United States," *Asian Politics & Policy* 4, no. 2 (2012): 173-191.; Peggy Kozal, "Is the Continued use of Sanctions as Implemented Against Iraq a Violation of International Human Rights?" *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* 28, no. 4 (2000): 383.

²¹³ "U.S. Pulls all Funds for UNESCO After Sweeping Vote to Support Palestinian Membership." Democracy Now, http://www.democracynow.org/2011/11/1/us_pulls_all_funding_for_unesco

²¹⁴ Allain, *Orientalism and International Law: The Middle East as the Underclass of the International Legal Order*, 391-404.

²¹⁵ Sussman, *The Myths of 'Democracy Assistance': U.S. Political Intervention in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe*, 15.

²¹⁶ Israel's refusal to except its borders, its denial of nuclear weapons (denial to even speak of their existence) and its apartheid style regime illustrate that international laws are designed to advance objectives of global hegemon.

See Hinnebusch, *Europe and the Middle East: From Imperialism to Liberal Peace?*, 18.; Pollack, *The Arab Awakening :America and the Transformation of the Middle East*, 381.; Mohammed Ayoob, "The Arab Spring: Its Geostrategic Significance," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 3 (2012): 84-97.; Hooshang Amirahmadi, *The United States and the Middle East :A Search for New Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 491.

regimes.²¹⁷ The United States essentially uses global institutions such as the U.N. to control the economic environments in a way that advances the interests of its own elite. Targeted Sanctions²¹⁸ are used exclusively for this purpose. They permit the United States to single out and economically crush regimes that are hostile or merely resistant to broader U.S. interests in the region.²¹⁹ Evidence of this approach is illustrated in the cases of both Iraq and Iran. In both circumstances the United States utilized U.N. Institutions to apply economic pressure to shift policies within the regimes.²²⁰

²¹⁷ “Not only did a Security Council resolution authorize a US-led multinational force to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991, it also imposed various measures such as an economic embargo, a disarmament regime, and the establishment of the Iraq– Kuwait border, in a bid to restore international peace and security. The irony was that throughout the subsequent decade, when the Security Council was asserting itself in an overwhelming manner against Iraq for its occupation of Kuwait, Israel remained in occupation of southern Lebanon”. ALLAIN, *Orientalism and International Law: The Middle East as the Underclass of the International Legal Order* 400.

²¹⁸ “Targeted sanctions, like the indiscriminate indirect sanctions, aim to influence a country's political leadership by debilitating that political leadership through foreign travel bans or by freezing its foreign assets. Sanctions can be comprehensive, including the entire foreign trade and financial exchange of a country, or selective, prohibiting the import or export only of certain goods, such as in arms embargoes”.

See Roger Normand and Christoph Wilcke, "Human Rights, Sanctions, and Terrorist Threats: The United Nations Sanctions Against Iraq," *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems* 11, no. 2 (2001) 302.

²¹⁹ Paul Findley, "Dangerous and Unconstitutional Acts of War in the Middle East," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 32, no. 5 (2013): 15.; Ellen Brun and Jacques Hersh, "Faux Internationalism and really Existing Imperialism," *Monthly Review* 63, no. 11 (2012): 36.; Mordechai Chaziza, "Soft Balancing Strategy in the Middle East: Chinese and Russian Vetoes in the United Nations Security Council in the Syria Crisis," *China Report* 50, no. 3 (2014): 243-258. Christopher Wall, "Human Rights and Economic Sanctions: The New Imperialism," *Fordham International Law Journal* 22, no. 2 (1998): 577.

²²⁰ U.S.-Iraqi relations have been shaky as a result of continued disputes regarding Iraq's right to what became the nation-state of Kuwait as a result of Western intervention. After the discovery of oil in the 1930s's Kuwait became even more important to the West. Its autonomy from neighboring Arab countries was important to western economic interests. Kuwait's Western drawn borders from Iraq essentially landlocked Iraq, cutting off its access to the Persian Gulf. Most of the US is interest is fueled by the presence of oil Iraq and its ability to accept its borders with Kuwait.

Economic aid

The United States utilizes existing economic structures to advance its goals in the Middle East and North Africa. The World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are additional tools often used to enforce its agenda.²²¹ Regimes that agree to the constraints of the neoliberal system are awarded grants and loans that sustain them.²²² This is the method that enabled Hosni Mubarak to remain in power for over thirty years (See Table 5 data on loans and grants to countries in the MENA). Mubarak agreed to neoliberal reforms, specifically the transitioning of the Egyptian economy via privatization, to gain access to IMF loans.²²³ These

U.S.-Iran relations, those slightly different, is based on similar disagreements; one of which is its nuclear program. Iran's 1979 revolution allowed for it to essentially remove itself from the dependent economic role that it with the Western world, thereby giving the state more autonomy in terms of political and economic policies. Its nuclear program is an extension of its desire to become a regional hegemon without having to adhere to the constraints of neoliberalism.

²²¹ "IMF and the WTO regulate global finance and trade. Neo-liberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse, and has pervasive effects on ways of thought and political-economic practices to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way we interpret, live in and understand the world" David Harvey, "Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 610, no. 1 (2007) 145.

²²² One quantitative study found that "coefficients capture donor-recipient specific effects, that is, they show the linkages between donor and specific recipients, which include long-term strategic relations, economic linkages, colonial ties, etc. As can be seen from donor interest, as represented by the fixed effects coefficient, has a strong positive effect in the allocation of US aid to Israel and Jordan, two of the most strategically important US allies in the region, and a strong negative effect on US aid allocation to Iran, Sudan, and Yemen, countries traditionally hostile to US foreign policy in the region."

See Jane R. Harrigan and Hamed El-Said, "The Economic Impact of IMF and World Bank Programs in the Middle East and North Africa: A Case Study of Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, 1983 - 2004," *Review of Middle East Economics and Finance* 6, no. 2 (2010): 1-25.

²²³ Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond*, 349.; Vincent Cannistraro, "Arab Spring: A Partial Awakening," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2011): 36-45.; Onn Winckler, "The "Arab Spring": Socioeconomic Aspects," *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 4 (2013): 68-87.

loans were used to maintain relations with Mubarak and to further U.S. and elites' objectives, specifically in regards to the protection of Israel.²²⁴

Patron-client state relations: vehicles for neoliberalism

The United States maintains a series of relationships in the Middle East that enable it to extend its influence beyond the capability of its military. Essentially, this is the role of conservative Arab regimes. They not only supply oil and natural resources, which are essential to maintaining the global economic system, but they also serve as allies and vehicles for a neoliberal agenda, which the global system is founded upon.²²⁵ Their lack of economic diversity makes them particularly prone to falling victim to this type of exploitative relationship with the US. The problem for these Arab states, however, is that it becomes a cyclical relationship that they are unable to disengage from. As discussed in previous chapters, the patron-client relationship essentially discourages Arab regimes from diversifying economically and from addressing the demands of their citizenry. These states, therefore, remain reliant on the maintenance of such relationships for survival. The relationship also enables dictators that would have otherwise been unable to gain popular support to remain in power.

²²⁴ Haim Bresheeth, "The Arab Spring: A View from Israel," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 1 (2012): 42-57. Bresheeth, *The Arab Spring: A View from Israel*, 42-57.; Morton and Shortt, *The Arab Spring: Implications for Israeli Security*, 34-51.

²²⁵ Amin, *U.S. Imperialism, Europe, and the Middle East*, 13-33.; Samir Amin, "Imperialism and Globalization," *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 53, no. 2 (06, 2001): 6.; SLUGLETT, *An Improvement on Colonialism? the 'A' Mandates and their Legacy in the Middle East*, 413-427.; Brownlee, *And Yet they Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neopatrimonial Regimes*, 35-63.

Preventing democracy

The United States often claims that intervention in the MENA is due to democratization of the region. Policies in the region, however, indicate that democracy is not the objective. These claims are merely rhetoric used to justify intervention that furthers the economic and political objectives of neoliberal policies. Newly declassified documents indicate that the United States began to gain footing in the MENA through covert political operations dating back to the 1950's.²²⁶ Its first official intervention in the Middle East was intentionally kept under the radar to maintain the positive, non-threatening image that most countries in the MENA once had of the United States. It was completely different than the European approach to imperialism, which relied on direct physical control through cultural domination. Its role in the region began when the U.S. used clandestine operations to assist Britain in regaining its oil contracts with Iran, which it had lost as a result of nationalization.²²⁷ U.S. intelligence orchestrated a coup in 1953 to overthrow the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mussedgh who was responsible for nationalizing British-controlled Iranian oil. The U.S. feared the further spread of nationalist ideology throughout the MENA, so it strategically executed a coup rather than using direct physical intervention, to prevent further anti-imperialist sentiments from emerging in Iran. The United States viewed Mussadegh's presence as a threat to the economic interests of the global system because nationalist rhetoric was a danger to the extractive nature of Western

²²⁶ Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The CIA's TPBEDAMN Operation and the 1953 Coup in Iran," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 4 (2013): 4-24.; Sussman, *The Myths of 'Democracy Assistance': U.S. Political Intervention in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe*, 15.; Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²²⁷ Prior to the 1950's, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, however, were mostly responsible for imperialist policies in the region

relations with the entire MENA.²²⁸ Furthermore, Britain's presence in the southern portions of Iran was necessary for deterring Soviets from expanding further throughout the country.²²⁹ The U.S. government's goal for the coup, though not entirely successful, was to return control of Iran's oil industry back to Britain by helping reinstate the Shah to power. Their aim was also to prevent further spread of Soviet influence.²³⁰ The coup enabled the Shah to be reinstated. However, public opposition to British oil contracts largely prevented the British from regaining their monopoly over Iranian oil. The U.S. led coup was nonetheless successful in enabling the British to regain 40 percent of Iran's oil contracts through the construction of a consortium. This was no doubt better than completely losing access to Iranian oil and was perceived as a win for America's first official act of intervention in the Middle East.

U.S. strategy in the Middle East, since its advent in the 1950's, has been to secure its and its allies vital political and economic interests. The MENA is the source of 50 percent of the Earth's petroleum and just over 40 percent of the Earth's natural gas. Therefore, it is a vital asset of the neoliberal agenda.²³¹ Uninterrupted access to these resources requires constant intervention. Because of its military strength, those countries belonging to the core nations, though not always in agreement with the United States, allow it to take the lead in this process of intervention. Essentially, this allows the United States, Canada, Europe and parts of Asia to have unremitting access to the resources that are needed to sustain their economic role in the global system. Intervention is designed to maintain the political and economic domination of the core in the MENA. The process occurs through an amalgamation of political and economic policies,

²²⁸ Gasiorowski, *The CIA's TPBEDAMN Operation and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, 4-24.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Reza Shah was the king of Iran that was replaced (democratically) by Muhammad Mussadegh.

²³¹ Terry Lynn Karl, "The Perils of the Petro-State: Reflections on the Paradox of Plenty," *Journal of International Affairs* 53, no. 1 (1999): 31-48.

which consist of both covert and non-covert action used in unison to destabilize and prevent development in the MENA. This level of control essentially allows the United States to shape the region by strategically producing conflict and instability to achieve its own objectives. This instability may not be inherent or indigenous to a specific regime in power. Direct military intervention is far less common now because the United States has the ability to control these regimes internally by applying sanctions. This intervention can cause the states to essentially destabilize from the inside rather than through physical intervention from the outside. The global system, the structure upon which neoliberalism operates, relies heavily on the manipulation of events and circumstances to advance its agenda. As the global hegemon, the United States intervenes in the region in an effort to control as much politically and economically as it can. This is why the United States often encourages fragmentation and conflict rather than diplomacy. Instability in the region allows for the U.S. war machine to profit from weapon sales and gain access to oil for its allies, who rely on it to sustain the cycle of consumerism that neoliberalism promotes around the globe.

Chapter Four

Impact of the Arab Uprisings and The Future

Domestic Impact

The Arab uprisings have triggered changes in some of the internal political components of the nations in which they occurred by awakening and reinvigorating segments of society that were suppressed by the previous regimes. Though still fragile, civil society is growing and is ushering in the emergence of new actors into the political sphere. These uprisings have brought attention to the important role in which oppositional groups have in initiating political change in the Arab world. Islamist groups, in particular, have taken center stage in the Arab spring because of their grassroots approach to politics.²³² This approach has, in some cases, essentially enabled them to become the voice through which the social and political demands of Arab people are made. Islamists were able to increase their presence in the political sphere by shifting their ideals to be more in line with the greater Arab population.²³³ Additionally, their micro institutionalized structure has enabled them to reach out to large segments of the Arab populous. The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt illustrate how dangerous these groups truly are to the status quo and the longevity of conservative Western-backed regimes of the Arab world.

²³² “As the most organized force among Egypt political actors, the Muslim Brotherhood, with its widespread and deeply entrenched grassroots network is eager to play its part in Egypt post revolutionary regime”

See LENA BAE, "Big Brother Politics: The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt," *Harvard International Review* 33, no. 3 (2011): 10-11.

²³³ “Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots chief among them — removed explicitly Islamist content from their platforms and became more ideologically flexible, backing away from calls to institute shari‘a and focusing their demands instead on “democratic reform, publicly committing themselves to alternation of power, popular sovereignty, and judicial independence.”

See Michele Penner Angrist, "Understanding the Success of Mass Civic Protest in Tunisia," *The Middle East Journal* 67, no. 4 (2013) 566.

Oppositional groups

The electoral victories of Ennahda in Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt illustrate the new political realities of the Arab world. Islamist groups are gaining support by shifting their focus to social and political issues that concern the Arab people of today, thereby gaining a relevant role in Arab politics that less institutionalized oppositional groups are not afforded.²³⁴ Arab leaders will have to start taking Islamists more seriously because of their capacity to garner support from the masses.

Radical Islamist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIS/ ISIL have gained appeal throughout the Arab world because of their anti-Western, anti-imperialist stance. Groups such as these are using the uprisings as a platform to illustrate the damaging effects of secular, Western capitalist policies. They are attempting to sell Islam as the only viable way to combat the corrupt nature of Arab politicians.²³⁵ The Salafists in Tunisia have even begun to compete against Ennahda²³⁶ by staging protests and making death threats because of the secular approach that moderates are

²³⁴ Tunisians, and much of the Arab world have been apprehensive about aligning with Islamist groups because past cases, specifically Iran, have left Arabs fearful of the potential outcome of allowing radical Islamists in the leadership mechanisms of the state. Some believe that if they align with Islamist, bring them to power and support them in the consolidation process, they may actually be worse off because after the "...Islamists takeovers in Iran, Sudan, and the Palestinian Authority, many came to perceive the radical Islamists model as a failure in terms of bringing either prosperity or establishing accountability"

See John R. Bradley, *After the Arab Spring :How the Islamists Hijacked the Middle East Revolts*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 247.; Shadi Hamid, "The Rise of the Islamists," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 3 (May, 2011): 40-47.; Lancaster, *Tunisia: A Catalyst for Change?*, 18-19.

²³⁵ Pollack, *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East* 77

²³⁶ The moderate Islamist group that gained a majority through the 2011 elections in Tunisia.

adopting to win the support of the populace. They want their brand of Islam to dominate, not a moderate form that allows freedom.²³⁷

Radical Islamist groups are constantly forcing these regimes to increase internal security to prevent terrorist attacks. This is the case of ISIS/ISIL in Syria and Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Arab regimes are largely responsible for the radicalization of these groups because their oppressive policies have marginalized large segments of the Arab people who have turned to radical Islam for help.

These Uprisings, the attempt on behalf of the Arab people to instigate change, have resulted in the emergence of non-state actors, especially Islamist groups in the political sphere. These groups are divided into two basic categories, those that are moderate and willing to institutionalize and those that are radical and unwilling to compromise. These groups have distinct perspectives in terms of their role and the function of Islam within Arab politics. Moderate Islamist groups have proven to be more pragmatic in the region.²³⁸ These groups can also be divided in terms of sectarian allegiances, further complicating politics in the region.²³⁹ Radical Islamist groups have proven to be quite difficult to work with. Their existence has no doubt been a challenge to all political forces in the region, as their insertion into politics has forced states to reevaluate whom they negotiate with and how they negotiate.²⁴⁰ The spread of

²³⁷ A. I. Dawisha, *The Second Arab Awakening: Revolution, Democracy, and the Islamist Challenge from Tunis to Damascus* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013)122.

²³⁸ Moderate Islamist groups will have to be more pragmatic because they will risk losing legitimacy and political influence through their institutional approach. Their capacity to influence politics is based on their ability to garner the support of the populace.

²³⁹ “The Islamist elites will be challenged at home by forces to both the right and left of center. Regionally, they will be pulled in opposite directions by Iran and Hezbollah, on one side, and Saudi Arabia and the GCC, on the other”. Nabeel A. Khoury, "The Arab Cold War Revisited: The Regional Impact of the Arab Uprising," *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 2 (2013) 75.

²⁴⁰ Malley et al. explain that the emergence of Islamist groups, unfamiliarity with them “gives the United States much less leverage. Washington has much less familiarity with the new

radical Islamist ideals and their ability to recruit based on fundamentalist philosophies that integrate Islam with anti-imperialist rhetoric has enabled these groups to become problematic in terms of regaining stability in the region.

The youth have also become a legitimate oppositional force in the MENA because of their size and capacity to mobilize.²⁴¹ The younger generation in the Arab world is exceedingly disadvantaged as a result of economic conditions within their countries.²⁴² Their lives and their ability to marry and settle down, values which are very important in the MENA, have essentially been stunted by their inability to find jobs, even with college degrees.²⁴³ Unemployment and inflation, paired with corruption have largely kept the college educated youth from establishing themselves in society.²⁴⁴ Heightened awareness of the outside world, as a result of technology, has allowed the Arab youth to access what exists outside of the authoritarian states where they reside. The youth have become more aware of their conditions and this awareness has

actors and a much less powerful position from which to influence actors on the ground”. See Robert Malley, Karim Sadjadpour and Ömer Taşpınar, "Symposium— Israel, Turkey and Iran in the Changing Arab World," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 1 (2012) 4.

²⁴¹ Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond* 106

²⁴² “The economic recession was exacerbated by significant demographic changes across the MENA region. Youth populations significantly increased, stretching the limited resources of the respective states. MENA youth were also much more likely to be educated than previous generations”.

See Julie Harrelson-Stephens and Rhonda L. Callaway, "You Say You Want a Revolution: The Arab Spring, Norm Diffusion, and the Human Rights Regime," *Human Rights Review* 15, no. 4 (2014) 421.

²⁴³ “They were economically excluded by high unemployment and the difficulty of securing what are considered to be good jobs in the formal sector; they were politically excluded by authoritarianism and state repression; and they were socially excluded by the limbo of “waithood” or prolonged adolescence as marriage and entry into adulthood was delayed, in part due to the high cost of marriage”. Diane Singerman, "Youth, Gender, and Dignity in the Egyptian Uprising," *JMEWS: Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 9, no. 3 (2013): 1-27.

²⁴⁴ Michael Rubin, "The Road to Tahrir Square," *Commentary* 131, no. 3 (03, 2011) 22.

encouraged them to seek freedoms that have been largely absent in the Arab world.²⁴⁵ Because of their ability to communicate rapidly via social media and text messaging, they have become a powerful oppositional force. Though they often lack the cohesive structure that Islamists possess, their ability to communicate with each other, combined with the free time they have due to their lack of employment, makes them a large and powerful oppositional group.²⁴⁶

Elections and change

Sadly, to the dismay of those involved in mobilization, the uprisings have in most cases not resulted in vast social, political, and economic change. This is perhaps because most of these nations simply lack the political and fiscal autonomy necessary to invoke rapid and substantial change from within.²⁴⁷ Elections in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya indicate a push toward the adoption of pluralist processes that might have the capacity to bring about change. As these states are still in flux, how influential elections will be in terms of representing the diverse needs of their people is yet to be determined. Islamists essentially served as placeholders for the force behind the interim governments that came to power, but were later replaced by more secular forms of government. The Tunisian elections initially resulted in Islamists coming to power. However,

²⁴⁵ “There were several master frames of the Egyptian uprising: One coalesced around justice and demanded the fall of the regime, the end of corruption, and the prosecution of Mubarak and his family. Another called for huriyya (freedom): freedom to vote, freedom to participate in free and fair elections, freedom of the press, freedom to choose their own leaders, and freedom from fear. For young people, this demand also meant personal freedom and voice”.

See Singerman, *Youth, Gender, and Dignity in the Egyptian Uprising*19

²⁴⁶ “The predicament of youth in Egypt has been accentuated by increased education and communication capabilities, on the one hand, countered by a lack of economic opportunity on the other”.

See Korany and Rabab El-Mahdi, *Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Beyond*107

²⁴⁷ Their dependence on the global system, and conditions in the MENA largely prevent these nations from actually changing their political and economic structures in a way that could better serve their people.

since 2014, secular forces, specifically the party known as Nidda Tounis, have gained a majority in the Tunisian state and are sharing power with Enahdha.²⁴⁸ It is not certain as to what this new secular government means in terms of freedom for the Tunisian people. Some claim that the new secular president associated with Nidda Tounis may have ties to the Ben-Ali regime. If that is indeed the case, then Tunisia may experience minimal change. In Egypt, Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood president who came to power through democratic means in 2012, was ousted²⁴⁹ from office and arrested within just a year. This was due to his outlawing of democratic protests.²⁵⁰ Egypt's current president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi was not democratically elected. He came to power by overthrowing Morsi, who coincidentally was responsible for elevating el-Sisi to the role of the leader of the Egyptian armed forces. Libya's approach to representation has been a bit more successful. Its new constitution specifically banned members of the Ghaddafi regime and those affiliated with the military from politics, thereby ensuring a cleansing of the political system.²⁵¹ After the uprising, however, Libya has already experienced the resignation of one democratically elected head of state.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Dale Sprusansky, "Tunisia Makes Democratic Strides with Successful Elections," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 34, no. 1 (2015): 63.

²⁴⁹ Through a coup de tat

²⁵⁰ Tara Vassefi, "AN ARAB WINTER: THREATS TO THE RIGHT TO PROTEST IN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES, SUCH AS POST-ARAB SPRING EGYPT," *American University International Law Review* 29, no. 5 (2014): 1097.

²⁵¹ "...Law No. 4 of 2012 (Law No. 14 of 2012, which divided Libya into 13 electoral constituencies, delineating districts and seats within them. Law No. 29 on the creation of political parties provides equality for all (Article 7) but, at the same time, bars members of the armed forces and the judiciary from being members of political parties (Article 6). Article 9 of the same law speaks to the immediate Libyan context and bars all parties from having militias or engaging in violent activity".

See Larbi Sadiki, "Libya's Arab Spring: The Long Road from Revolution to Democracy," *International Studies* 49, no. 3-4 (2012) 308.

²⁵² Giuma Ahmad Atigha replaced Mohammed Yousef el-Magariaf in May of 2013.

Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have experienced elections but the legitimacy of these elections are questionable as none of these states indicate a move toward democracy. Libya is now a failed state and Syria has become more repressive because the uprisings have shifted into what is now a civil war with heavy external influence. The uprisings have been successful (in the case of Tunisia and Egypt and Libya) removing despotic leaders that discouraged the growth of civil society. For this reason, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya are beginning to experience the growth of civil society groups, which is particularly important in the process of democratization., if that should happen.²⁵³ The most visible problem, however, is that with the exception of Libya,²⁵⁴ these governments have experienced very little internal change.²⁵⁵ This is particularly true in the case of Egypt where the institutional elements of the state are still heavily controlled by the same elites that were in power during Mubarak's reign.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Bassam Haddad, Rosie Bsheer and Ziad Abu-Rish, *The Dawn of the Arab Uprisings: End of an Old Order?* (London: Pluto Press, 2012) 31.

²⁵⁴ "Libya underwent a total regime change. There is little left of Qaddafi's state. There isn't even much left of his family. The army has been completely replaced by the rebels, although some of them are former army officers. Institutions and courts have to be built up from scratch by people with hardly any experience in modern politics".

See Michael J. Totten, David Schenker and Hussain Abdul-Hussain, "Arab Spring Or Islamist Winter? Three Views," *World Affairs* 174, no. 5 (2012) 27.

²⁵⁵ "Despite free speech and newly organized political movements, the government is still in the control of the old order, old elites, and a parlous economy that is threatened even further as tourism has not revived".

See Cannistraro, *Arab Spring: A Partial Awakening* 41

²⁵⁶ "Subsequently, Libya and Tunisia instituted some transitional justice processes. Libya set up an Integrity Committee to vet candidates for election and high office. Tunisia tried old-regime security officers, whereas Egypt's recently- appointed minister for transitional justice seeks to limit his investigations to violations by Morsi's regime and the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, essential steps toward altering political and administrative systems were taken in Tunisia and Libya, but not in Egypt, where the deep state remains entrenched".

See Ann M. Lesch, "Troubled Political Transitions: Tunisia, Egypt and Libya," *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 1 (2014) 67.

Libya is flooded with weapons that fuels tribal based militias' fighting.²⁵⁷ Due to this ongoing instability, Libya's oil exports have declined significantly, thereby worsening economic conditions throughout the country.²⁵⁸ Economic conditions have not improved in any of these nations, as they have all experienced huge declines in tourism and foreign investment.²⁵⁹ These conditions will, however, likely improve if and when these governments stabilize. Whether the uprisings have actually resulted in any of the internal alterations demanded by those involved remains questionable. With the exception of the emergence of new political forces in to the political sphere, major policy changes have been absent.

Regional Impact

Some of the anti-systemic ideals of the uprisings have spread throughout the region. Arab leaders of neighboring nations are becoming worried about the prospects of such events taking place within their own states. This has essentially encouraged some Arab leaders to reconsider their domestic policies in an attempt to prevent mass popular mobilization. Saudi Arabia has resorted to bribing its populace through policies, strategically designed to alleviate some of its financial pressures.²⁶⁰ King Abdullah of Jordan replaced his entire cabinet in an effort to appease

²⁵⁷ Totten, Schenker and Abdul-Hussain, *Arab Spring Or Islamist Winter? Three Views*31

²⁵⁸ "Libya Economy: Quick View - Oil Exports on the Brink of Total Collapse." *Economist Intelligence Unit: Country ViewsWire*2014.

²⁵⁹ "As early as February 2011, the occupancy rate in Cairo hotels declined to only 17 percent. Although the number of hotel nights in Egypt declined only slightly, from 136.4 million in 2009-10 to 131.8 million in the FY 2011-12, the number of tourists from North America and Europe declined sharply".

See Winckler, *The "Arab Spring": Socioeconomic Aspects*76

²⁶⁰ " King Abdalah has tried to head off unrest in the kingdom with a series of economic reforms valued at 135 billion Saudi rials (US\$36 billion). The new initiatives, aimed at Saudi citizens, include housing subsidies, unemployment benefits, and a program to give permanent contracts to temporary government workers. State employees will receive 15 percent raises." Cannistraro, *Arab Spring: A Partial Awakening*42

the Jordanian people.²⁶¹ He also reformed laws pertaining to public gathering/protest and gave up his right to appoint the prime minister and executive cabinet members.²⁶² Uprisings in Algeria resulted in constitutional reforms, increased access to national television and radio, and changes to the electoral code to allow for the emergence of new political organizations.²⁶³

It is no secret that leaders of surrounding Arab countries have been shaken by the prospects of revolution. Most are attempting to prevent scenarios like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria by taking two fundamental steps; increasing the strength of the coercive apparatus, while also making minor concessions to appease their citizenry. Bahrain's government received military assistance from Saudi Arabia to prevent what was close to, what some would say, a revolution in the nation.²⁶⁴ The Algerian government increased pay for police and security personnel by 50 percent and increased military pay by 40 percent. The government also introduced three-year back pay packages for those in working in security, to keep them firmly committed to the regime.²⁶⁵ Surrounding nations are, however, still experiencing protests due to

²⁶¹ Khoury, *The Arab Cold War Revisited: The Regional Impact of the Arab Uprising* 78

²⁶² "Jordan's King Abdullah tried to defuse the protests by sacking his entire cabinet. The new Prime Minister, Marouf Bakhit, promised economic and political reforms, but the firings—Abdullah's perennial response to domestic unrest—did little to dampen the protests."

See Cannistraro, *Arab Spring: A Partial Awakening* 42

²⁶³ Frédéric Volpi, "Algeria Versus the Arab Spring," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 3 (2013) 112.

²⁶⁴ "Saudi Arabia, sent about 1,500 soldiers and police officers to the island. Thus reinforced, the monarchy launched a full-scale crackdown".

See Sean L. Yom and F. Gregory Gause III, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 4 (2012) 81.

²⁶⁵ "The rank-and-file security personnel have benefited, too. In December 2010, the government announced that the wages of most police forces—totaling 170,000 personnel—were to increase by 50 percent and would include a three-year back-pay deal. Similarly, in December 2011 military personnel saw their salaries go up by 40 percent, also with a three-year back-pay package."

See Volpi, *Algeria Versus the Arab Spring* 111

unemployment, high food prices and general lack of freedom.²⁶⁶ Though not as strong and organized as those in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria, they may still have the ability to evolve in to larger movements, if conditions remain as they are.

The Sunni — Shi'a divide

The Arab uprisings have highlighted underlying Sectarian issues within Arab politics. These divisions have been present since disputes emerged over the Prophet Muhammad's successor.²⁶⁷ Sunni Muslims follow the Sunna²⁶⁸; they accept only the first four caliphs as legitimate successors to Muhammad and leaders of the Muslim community. Shi'ites, however, believe that Ali²⁶⁹ as the successor of Muhammad and that the caliphate was mostly a political body created to control the people rather than carry out Muhammad's teachings.²⁷⁰ These ideologies deeply ingrained in the Muslim world have re-ignited disputes pertaining to leadership in the Muslim world.

Mass anti-systemic movements in Syria and Bahrain in particular, have brought attention to political realities associated with sectarian divisions in the broader MENA; sectarian political issues that had been mostly concealed until the Iraq war.²⁷¹ Growing Shi'a influence a result of the power vacuum that came with the Iraq war have led to fears of what some conservative Arab

²⁶⁷ Jackson Diehl, "Lines in the Sand: Assad Plays the Sectarian Card," *World Affairs* 175, no. 1 (2012) 12.

²⁶⁸ The Sunna are the teachings and traditions of Mohammed

²⁶⁹ The son in law of Mohammad

²⁷⁰ Heinz Halm, *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), 176.

²⁷¹ "The US invasion of Iraq had the unintended consequence of reopening the Sunni– Shiite conflict across the region. While Shiite and Sunni militias battled for Power in postwar Baghdad, Iran in the Gulf States lined up on opposite sides".

See Diehl, *Lines in the Sand: Assad Plays the Sectarian Card* 13

regimes refer to as the emergence of a powerful Iranian-backed “Shi’a crescent”.²⁷² This is because the U.S. led war in Iraq destroyed the minority Sunni regime that had ruled for decades. This resulted in the empowerment of Iraq’s majority Shi’a population, which subsequently brought about a Arab Shi’a government. It built a visible crescent shaped range of influence reaching through Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.²⁷³

The uprisings have brought attention to how these sectarian differences influence the treatment of minorities in these authoritarian states. In Bahrain, the majority Shi’a population is led by a Sunni regime that aligns with Saudi Arabia.²⁷⁴ The uprisings in Bahrain, though not initially sectarian in nature, evolved into one as a result of the involvement of regional actors, specifically Saudi Arabia and Iran. Saudi Arabia is particularly concerned about the prospects of a Shi’a political revival in Bahrain because of its proximity to the nation. Saudi Arabia’s fears the influence of democracy and Shi’ites spreading into its own kingdom. Sectarian differences that appear to lean more in the favor of Iran are incredibly troubling for the Saudi regime that relies heavily on oppression, and Western support rather than legitimacy, for survival. Though the Saudi regime has accused Iran of inciting protests in Bahrain, Iranian’s influence has been mostly through religious involvement with the clerical establishment, rather than direct military involvement.²⁷⁵ The Saudi regime itself has worked diligently to suppress its own Shi’a

²⁷² “In December 2004, King Abdullah of Jordan famously warned of a Shi’a “crescent” emerging in the region, connecting Hizbullah in Lebanon to the rising Shi’a power in Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran.1 King Abdullah named Syria as part of this grouping, suggesting the emergence of a continuous crescent”. Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Iran and Daesh: The Case of a Reluctant Shi'a Power," *Middle East Policy* 22, no. 3 (2015) 45.

²⁷³ Vali Nasr, "The Shia Revival," *Military Review* 87, no. 3 (2007) 9.

²⁷⁴ Simon Mabon, "The Battle for Bahrain: Iranian-Saudi Rivalry," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 2 (2012) 89.

²⁷⁵ “Although there is ambiguity as to the extent of Iranian involvement in the protests across Bahrain, the veracity of ties between Bahraini Shi’a clerics and Tehran is obvious. Indeed, Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassem, the spiritual leader of the main opposition party, Wafaq, and the

population, out of a fear for its own safety.²⁷⁶ This is why the Saudi regime found it necessary to send military support to Bahrain and to focus specifically on dismantling protests in Shi'a dominated communities in Bahrain. Conservative Arab regimes have also been actively attempting to downplay the uprisings in Bahrain to prevent further Shi'a mobilization, through the suppression of major Arab media outlets. Saudi Arabia and other news networks have worked diligently to prevent not just the Shi'a population, but also the entire global community from learning the true nature of their presence in the Bahrain.²⁷⁷

The conflict in Syria is similar in nature to that of Bahrain's as it is largely founded on sectarian distinctions and schismatic favoritism that is incorporated into the structure of the state.²⁷⁸ Syria's majority Sunni population is led by a Shi'ite, specifically an Alawite, Baathist regime that is in ideological opposition to the conservative Arab regimes that dominate the Arab world. Syria's anti-imperialist, anti-Western stance is a result of the ideological underpinnings of the

leader of Friday prayers at a mosque in the predominantly [Shia]-populated Diraz City, "is a religious representative of Khamenei, collecting taxes for the Supreme Leader, propagating his religious authority, and encouraging people to follow him rather than other 'sources of emulation'".

See Simon Mabon, "The Battle for Bahrain: Iranian-Saudi Rivalry," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 2 (2012) 89.

²⁷⁶ "Worrying Times; Shia Muslims in the Gulf." *The Economist* 396, no. 8701 (2010): 60.

²⁷⁷ "The under-reporting of Shiite protests in Bahrain is supported by televised interviews with over four ex-Al-Jazeera employees who resigned as a protest against the biased coverage, like Ghassan Bin Jada and Hassan Shaaban".

See A. K. Al-Rawi, "Sectarianism and the Arab Spring: Framing the Popular Protests in Bahrain," *Global Media and Communication* 11, no. 1 (2015) 27.

²⁷⁸ As explained by Kojoori-Saatchi and Mehran Tamadonfar, *Why Stalemate?: The Syrian Conflict and the Sectarian Divide*, 1. : "Alawite domination of the state has resulted in an unequal distribution of power, which has therefore alienated various segments of the Syrian population. This estrangement has led to several challenges to authority, specifically by the Sunni segments of society, which account for nearly 58 percent of the state's population Ideological discrepancies and the treatment of non-Alawites by the regime has led to various forms of resistance throughout the years. The Syrian government's policies overwhelmingly favor the Alawite minority and undoubtedly put the Sunni population at odds with the regime". Ibid.

socialist philosophies of the Baath party, and a broader pattern of Shi'a marginalization.²⁷⁹ Like Bahrain, Syria has become a playing field for regional and global powers to exert political influence. The situation in Syria, however, is reversed because Iran rather than Saudi Arabia is providing direct physical support to the regime through money, weapons, training and Shi'a based military personnel, often directly associated and with the approval Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei.²⁸⁰ Iran's support for Syria is also attributed to its defense treaty signed in 2006 with Syria, which enabled it to get access to Syrian supply routes to Hezbollah in Lebanon and to Palestinian factions that are devoted to Damascus.²⁸¹

The Syrian conflict has evolved into a much larger civil war because external actors, regional and global. All of the parties involved see Syria as strategically important in terms of carrying out their respective political agenda.²⁸² Though not publically admitting to it, Saudi Arabia has and is continually funding Sunni Islamist groups that oppose the Assad regime. This is particularly important for Saudi Arabia because like Iran, it would like to see more regimes

²⁷⁹ "The regime perceives imperialism as its greatest threat and therefore focuses greatly on anti-imperial rhetoric and policies that are centered on eradicating it from the region. Furthermore, domestically the regime initially maintained much of the socialist guidelines embraced by the Ba'ath party by challenging the bourgeoisie's monopoly over the means of production, especially through the mobilization of Ba'ath party peasants and workers. Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Shahram Akbarzadeh explains that: "In February 2014, Reuters reported that Syria was receiving increased military assistance from Iran to boost the Assad regime's capacity to collect intelligence and train fresh recruits".

See Akbarzadeh, *Iran and Daesh: The Case of a Reluctant Shia Power*, 44-54.

²⁸¹ Imad Mansour, "Iran and Instability in the Middle East: How Preferences Influence the Regional Order," *International Journal* 63, no. 4 (2008)949.

²⁸² Nabeel Khoury explains that: "The Saudi and Iranian approaches to the Arab Uprisings cannot broadly be labeled revolutionary or counterrevolutionary; instead, realpolitik considerations carry the day. Thus, both states buttress friendly regimes that face protest movements, but they also find themselves in the uncomfortable position of fanning opposition when it threatens their adversaries".

throughout the region that are politically in line with its regional hegemony.²⁸³ The Syria situation has caused Iraqi leaders to worry because the fall of Assad could mean that its own majority Sunni provinces that border Syria could also fall victim to hardline Sunni Islamists.²⁸⁴ For this reason, Shi'ite militias from Iraq and Lebanon, with military and financial support from Iran, are assisting the Assad regime, though they may not fully align with Baathist ideals of the regime itself.

The spillover of circumstances in Syria has forced neighboring Turkey to also involve itself with the conflict, though to a much lesser extent than Iran and Saudi Arabia. Its initial support for the Free Syrian Army (FSA) will likely be problematic though, if the Assad regime is to survive.²⁸⁵ As a majority Sunni Muslim country with strong ties to the West, however, its stance in the conflict was no surprise. By hosting the FSA, Turkey essentially opened itself to the regional complications associated with the power struggle between Shi'a dominated Arab countries and Western backed conservative Arab regimes. It has also further complicated its ties to Iran that were already shaky due to the regime's decision to house early missile defense shields for NATO.²⁸⁶ Turkey's role in the conflict, however, has been limited mostly because of its desire to remain on moderately good terms with all the players in this regional and global

283 Khoury states that: "In the end, for Saudi Arabia, as well as for Iran, the Arab Uprisings are not about which ideology prevails, but rather about their own rivalry for regional supremacy. Khoury, *The Arab Cold War Revisited: The Regional Impact of the Arab Uprising* 77

²⁸⁴ Diehl, *Lines in the Sand: Assad Plays the Sectarian Card*, 7.

²⁸⁵ "In October 2011, Turkey began hosting the Free Syrian Army (FSA), a militia composed initially of deserters from Syria's armed forces. The Syrians have accused Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia - the last is especially disturbed by the Assad regime's close ties with Iran — of providing the FSA financial support used to acquire weapons; while such is the case with the two Arab Gulf states".

See Bishku; *Is it an Arab Spring Or Business as Usual? Recent Changes in the Arab World in Historical Context* 6

²⁸⁶ Yaşar Yakış, "Turkey After the Arab Spring: Policy Dilemmas," *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 1 (2014) 105.

chess game that is playing out in the MENA.

Global Impact

Mass migration/ refugees

Syrians specifically but others also in the MENA are fleeing their respective countries because of poor economic circumstances and the dangers brought about by turmoil (See Table 7 for data on net migration flows). Economic conditions have significantly deteriorated in Egypt, Bahrain, Syria and Libya thereby leading to an even higher rate of unemployment and of course “brain drain”²⁸⁷; the loss of the more educated segments of society. If and when these conflicts end, these countries will have trouble competing globally as most of the educated segments of their populace will have emigrated elsewhere for better employment opportunities.²⁸⁸ These countries will experience a lack medical professionals, scientists etc. that are not only needed now but will be needed in the process of rebuilding, when and if that happens.

Instability in the MENA has instigated a worldwide refugee crisis that is beginning to

²⁸⁷ Brain drain is “defined as the large-scale emigration of a group of intellectuals and professionals with high qualifications and unique technical skills and knowledge. This phenomenon results in significant socioeconomic consequences as a result of the continuous loss of practitioners and trainees as well as losing their social value and financial support to their country of origin. Many countries suffered from brain drain to variable extents particularly during the second half of the 20th century, following World War II. In contrast, many countries have markedly gained form this movement leading to remarkable development of their economy and educational systems due to the significant contributions made by the immigrating professionals to their respective fields”.

See Muhamad Arabi and Abdul Ghani Sankri Tarbichi, "The Metrics of Syrian Physicians Brain Drain to the United States," <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3507067/> (accessed October, 2015).

²⁸⁸ “Major factors contribute to this trend on physicians’ immigration from Syria including the large differences in incomes and standards of living, the scarcity and instability of professional and academic opportunities, and the “culture of emigration” among physicians in training. The majority of the recipient countries provide a proper professional atmosphere, better academic freedom, and flexibility with much better overall living conditions”. Ibid.

deepen global demographic and healthcare problems already present throughout the world. The crisis has become exceedingly problematic for Syria's neighboring countries Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan that are hosting much of the Syrian refugees. The process of providing healthcare, housing and basic amenities for the Syrian refugees, which are continually growing in numbers, is not an easy task for host countries. Turkey is currently hosting 1.7 million Syrian refugees, with over 200,000 in 22 camps throughout country. Lebanon is housing 1.2 million registered refugees from Syria, and there are close to another 300 to 500,000 more that are not registered.²⁸⁹ Though much of the funding for the camps is from outside sources; global institutions that are mostly funded by the West,²⁹⁰ the monetary cost of sustaining these camps has proven to be bigger than what these institutions are capable of handling. The United Nations, the largest provider of aid is cutting food to Syrian refugees thereby complicating living conditions for those who are already struggling as a result of displacement, forcing refugees to seek other forms of income.²⁹¹ Because refugees are not legally permitted to work within their host countries, they are forced to rely on the informal sector for wages; income, which is not only unstable but also exceedingly low due to high competition.²⁹² This causes economic concerns for those belonging to the lower socio-economic spectrums of society within host countries as they are now forced compete with refugees for employment.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Karen AbuZayd and others, "The Syrian Humanitarian Crisis: What is to be done?" *Middle East Policy* 22, no. 2 (2015) 7.

²⁹⁰ "2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile: Turkey." UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48e0fa7f.html> (accessed October, 2015).

²⁹¹ "Funding Shortfall Forces UN Agency to make Cuts in Food Aid to Syria Refugees." United Nations News Centre, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51312#.Vhf36mCprII> (accessed October, 2015).

²⁹² Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, "Development and Protection Challenges of the Syrian Refugee Crisis," *Forced Migration Review*, no. 47 (2014) 6.

²⁹³ Zeider and Raudel explain that: "In terms of micro-economic impacts, housing rent levels

Europe is also beginning to experience the impact of the unusually high flow of migrants from the MENA. Some of the smaller Eastern European countries such as Hungary are taking brutal initiatives to prevent migrants from staying. Their approach has, however, highlighted the presence of a fusion of xenophobia and the very real fear of the monetary cost associated with absorbing such large populations.²⁹⁴

Though the short-term cost of hosting migrants in Europe will be costly for the European nations that choose to host them; migration could have some long-term benefits for the social democracies that rely heavily on taxes to maintain their systems.²⁹⁵ Migrants from the MENA will ultimately become a large base that will help offset the fiscal problems associated with funding social services as a result of exceedingly low birthrates.²⁹⁶ Migrants will, however, shift

are rising steeply, pricing the local population out of the market. Substantial spikes in unemployment, depressed wage rates and limited employment opportunities, mainly for low-skilled labour, are widespread. Despite the official restrictions on working, some refugees gain employment and the surge in labour supply has deeply affected labour markets, increasing market prices for basic commodities. While cash transfers/ vouchers to assist refugees have enhanced their purchasing power it causes prices to rise in local markets, accentuating the livelihood vulnerability of an increasingly large number of local households” Ibid.

²⁹⁴ "2015 UNHCR Subregional Operations Profile - Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe." UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48dd76.html> (accessed October, 2015).

²⁹⁵ One article highlights the European Union’s demographic issue and how this refugee crisis can actually be benefit the long term interests of Europe: ”More than one-fifth of Europeans will be 65 or older by 2025, placing great strain on social services and health care. Integrating young migrants could provide a much-needed demographic boost. And unlike Jordan, Turkey, or Lebanon, Europe has far more resources to integrate them. As reported by CNBC, Pierre Moscovici, European commissioner for economic and financial affairs, has stated that the current migration and refugee crisis should not just be seen in terms of cost, but opportunity”. Keith Proctor, "Syria's Refugees are a Golden Opportunity for Europe," *Fortune Magazine*, <http://fortune.com/2015/09/15/syria-refugees-europe/> (accessed October 8, 2015).

²⁹⁶ “The labor income tax rate balances the government budget. The main driving force of the model over the 21st century is the evolution of the population structure. In particular, aging will put a strong pressure on pension systems that will be reflected by rising tax rates”.

See FRÉDÉRIC DOCQUIER and LUCA MARCHIORI, "The Impact of MENA-to-EU Migration in the Context of Demographic Change," *Journal of Pension Economics and Finance* 11, no. 2 (2012) 262.

the ethnic composition of these European countries and likely cause internal social and political changes in the years to come; changes that may ultimately result in an alteration of policies not just toward the MENA but also the entire global system.

Power Struggle, Proxy Wars and Terrorism

Conflicts and instability in Middle East and North Africa caused a power struggle to emerge among the United States, Iran, Russia, and the U.S. backed conservative regimes that essentially serve as a conduit for U.S. policies. All of these actors are interested in exploiting conditions in the MENA to advance their objective. US policies in the region, its financial and support for Bahrain and opposition groups in Syria are all designed to help sustain the strong patron client relationship that it has with conservative Arab regimes financial and political relationships that help bolster U.S. interests (See Table 7 for data on U.S. military aid to countries in the MENA). The sale of U.S. military tankers to Bahrain, though an act that could be perceived as contrary to the promotion of democracy, was intended to help secure the Sunni regime from Shi'a opposition.²⁹⁷ This decision by the Obama administration has helped preserve U.S. military capabilities in the region, particularly the fifth fleet's presence in the waters of Bahrain, it is responsible for U.S. naval operations in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea and East African coast all the way to Kenya.²⁹⁸ Though the United States only recently confirmed its role in the Syrian conflict, it had long been involved in arming anti-regime

²⁹⁷ "...Bahrain's government provoked shock with its brutal response to peaceful protests, the Obama Administration announced it would sell it armored vehicles for which the government had, in the judgment of the Washington Post, "no plausible use other than against its own people."

See Jamie O'Connell, "Common Interests, Closer Allies: How Democracy in Arab States can Benefit the West," *Stanford Journal of International Law* 48, no. 2 (2012) 344.

²⁹⁸ Ayoob, *The Arab Spring: Its Geostrategic Significance* 86

oppositional groups²⁹⁹, some of who are now using U.S. weapons to achieve their own political objectives.

Iran on the other hand, continues to fund and arm Syria, Hizbullah and other Shi'a Islamist groups, though in secret, as it does to most of its allies, in order to maintain its influence and political influence throughout the region. Iran retains military operations in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to strengthen ties with Shi'a Arabs and strategically protect its nuclear facilities from military strikes by Israel.³⁰⁰ Russia's objective in supporting the Assad regime is tied to a series of factors. One, its only international naval base is located in Tartus Syria and two, Iran's attempt to increase its influence throughout the MENA in an effort to become politically relevant after a long period of U.S. global hegemony.³⁰¹

The Arab uprising has also caused significant setbacks for the global war on terror by empowering and arming Islamist groups that seek to spread radical Islamism throughout the region. Lawlessness from the uprisings has enabled Islamists imprisoned by the previous regimes to escape and create Islamist controlled areas throughout segments of Syria, Iraq and Libya. The disbursement of weapons throughout the MENA as a result of not just the uprising, but also the presence of proxy wars has inadvertently enabled Islamist groups to obtain weapons that have been used to forcibly gain control of villages throughout Iraq and Syria.³⁰² Islamist groups like ISIS/ISIL, are gaining ground and becoming a huge threat not just in the region but also around

²⁹⁹ ISIS/ ISIL

³⁰⁰ Mohammed Ayoob explains that "Syria is Iran's trump card in the Arab world; it acts as a conduit to Hezbollah, augmenting Tehran's potential for retaliation against Israeli and American targets for attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, should such attacks take place". Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ayoob also explains "The fact that Russia's sole military base outside the countries that formed the former Soviet Union is located in Tartus, Syria, should not be underestimated, especially since its psychological value to Moscow is greater than its strategic worth" Ibid.

³⁰² Dale Sprusansky, "Understanding ISIS: Frequently Asked Questions," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 33, no. 7 (2014): 19.

the world.³⁰³ Their radical perspective of social and economic ills of Western imperial culture has renewed anti-Western anti-secular paradigms. This is particularly true among the younger segment of a society that desperately searches for a way to combat structural barriers, whether real or imagined, in the MENA. This power vacuum and lack of authority has enabled new groups such as the Islamic State to become a relevant, a very real and dangerous form of opposition to all dominant political actors in the MENA.³⁰⁴

The prospects for structural transformation

Though not a global power, Iran is indeed making big strides at gaining influence throughout the MENA.³⁰⁵ Its control of much of the Shi'a Crescent proves that it is now a legitimate force in the Middle East. Much of its ability to gain political relevance is credited to mistakes the United States made in terms of invading Iraq, specifically its inability to control the nation after the Saddam Hussein's ouster.³⁰⁶ That power vacuum enabled Iran to move in and increase its sphere of influence. Because of these circumstances, Iran is now more powerful than it was in the past. Its power, namely in terms of its influence throughout the Shi'a crescent through the use of proxy wars will likely be utilized to stabilize its economy and further its nuclear ambitions, in an effort to become the regional hegemon. Sunni Arab states, particularly those that are politically aligned with the United States, are all concerned with Iran's nuclear

³⁰³ Tara Vassefi and Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Perceptions of the "Arab Spring" within the Salafi-Jihadi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 12 (2012) 838.

³⁰⁴ United States, Iran and Russia

³⁰⁵ "Iran is not a marginal state like Libya or Syria, but neither is it a great power. It has few friends and fewer allies." Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Power in Context," *Survival* 51, no. 1 (2009) 181.

³⁰⁶ Iran "... has leveraged US mistakes in the last few years as its principal source of influence in the region. Playing on regional frustrations and anger, Iran has positioned itself as a spoiler and given rejectionism a new fillip in the Arab street". Ibid.

ambitions. A nuclear Iran will force neighboring regimes, previously unwilling to negotiate with their Shi'a citizens to take their concerns more seriously and make concessions they may not have made in the past.

Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab regimes are starting to see their power diminish in the region as a result of the United States' declining power and Iran's growing influence. These client states have been highly dependent on their ability to use coercion to maintain pro U.S. policies in exchange for trade deals and aid that will benefit a small segment of their population. These Arab regimes will have to address the social, political and economic concerns of their citizenry or risk being overthrown.³⁰⁷ Conservative Arab regimes will have to decide between becoming more repressive to slightly extend the longevity of the regimes or to begin making costly concessions in exchange for remaining in power. Their continuity will also be tied to their short-term ability to play nice with Israel in order to prevent Iran from becoming the regional hegemon; which appears to be happening.³⁰⁸ Either way, the future looks grim for these client states that lack the legitimacy to maintain control without coercion.

Emergence of a more autonomous MENA

The growing presence of Islamist groups is forcing the United States and other Western powers to reevaluate their role in the Middle East and to reconsider the value of maintaining a significant political presence in the region. The U.S. will be forced to reevaluate its policies in the

³⁰⁷ These Arab regimes will have to consider the approach they use to remain in power, particularly in regards to the rentier nature of their states.

³⁰⁸ "Saudi Arabia had agreed to allow access to its airspace for any military operation against Iran's nuclear program; this has not been denied by Israel and only half-heartedly by Riyadh".

See Stephen Ellis and Andrew Futter, "Iranian Nuclear Aspirations and Strategic Balancing in the Middle East," *Middle East Policy* 22, no. 2 (2015): 80-93.

region because of its growing energy dependence on the region and the economic impact of an intervention. The global community must prepare for a more autonomous Middle East with less Western, specifically U.S. influence, because the United States will have to reconsider the cost of intervening in the region, the financial costs, and if the American people are willing to continue paying for this intervention.

Israel is clearly the state most affected by the uprisings because its existence as a state has greatly depended on the U.S.'s ability to broker deals with its Arab neighbors. The continuity of its hawkish policies has been contingent on two main factors: political fragmentation among its Arab neighbors, and the presence of autocratic regimes that maintain patron client relations with the U.S.³⁰⁹ Israel will be forced to become more independent and choose a more diplomatic route if the United States does indeed decide to reduce its presence in the MENA.

The fall of Mubarak may be the scariest outcome of the uprisings for Israel because much of its border security was purchased from Mubarak. The U.S. government utilized aid as a tool for buying Mubarak's support. Egyptians believe that Mubarak traded the autonomy of his own country to line his pockets with money from the U.S. government, his personal wealth and the wealth of his family was no doubt due to his ability to play nice with the United States. With Mubarak no longer in power and U.S. influence waning, Israel's relations with Egypt will certainly be called to question.³¹⁰ The Peace treaty between Israel and Egypt that was reached through the Camp David Accords in 1978 essentially provided Israel with the security it needed

³⁰⁹ Morton and Shortt, *The Arab Spring: Implications for Israeli Security*70

³¹⁰ Haim Bresheeth explains "This striking difference between the sentiments in Israel and the rest of the world can only be explained by the many decades of instrumental colonialism, in which colonial reality forms consciousness, and being/ action dictates thought. One is what one does, after all, and it is impossible to continue to uphold liberal and progressive values if one is involved with occupation, brutalities and injustice on a daily basis". Bresheeth, *The Arab Spring: A View from Israel*58 Haim Bresheeth, "The Arab Spring: A View from Israel," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 1 (2012): 42-57.

to focus more of its resources on the West bank. With Mubarak gone, however, these peace treaties may be at risk of being dismantled. In fact, surveys indicate that much of the Egyptian community is opposed to treaties with Israel.³¹¹ Though not likely to occur, the potential of losing Egyptian support is certainly troubling for the Jewish state.

The prospects of a nuclear Iran have been of exceeding concern for the Israeli state because although political strategists know that the use of nuclear weapons by Iran is almost impossible,³¹² just having them permits the Iranian state to gain far more influence in the region. If Iran becomes a nuclear power, Israel will lose the nuclear monopoly, though not publically declared, that it has in the MENA.³¹³ Though Iranian dialogue toward Israel is mostly political rhetoric designed to gain the support of the greater Muslim population, it is loosely based on how the Iranian government and the greater Iranian population feel about Israel and its bullying throughout the region. A nuclear Iran will be less tolerant of Israel's inability to play fair with its neighbors. This is why Israel is now attempting to work with Sunni Arab states in effort to protect itself from the prospects of a nuclear Iran.³¹⁴ The Israeli state, its borders, and its lack of self-sufficiency essentially force the state to maintain an identity that is driven by fear and based

³¹¹ "The popular revolt in Egypt that toppled Mubarak, however, has brought to the surface public resentment over the Camp David Accords. A Pew poll taken shortly after the fall of Mubarak revealed that a majority (54 percent) of Egyptians favored ending the treaty". Morton and Shortt, *The Arab Spring: Implications for Israeli Security* 70

³¹² Avner Cohen, "Israel's Nuclear Future: Iran, Opacity and the Vision of Global Zero," *Palestine - Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 16, no. 3/4 (2010): 6.

³¹³ Ellis and Futter argue that: "For Israel, a nuclear-capable Iran would be a highly threatening strategic development. Its emergence would end the nuclear monopoly the Jewish state has enjoyed in the Middle East for the past four decades. There is the calculation in Jerusalem that such a development would significantly weaken Israel's power and prestige".

See Ellis and Futter, *Iranian Nuclear Aspirations and Strategic Balancing in the Middle East* 84

³¹⁴ "There have been indications of intelligence sharing between Israel and a number of Sunni Arab countries regarding Iran and its nuclear program" Ibid.

on preemptive force.³¹⁵ Its short-term goals will be to build alliances, secret ones of course, to achieve its goals. It will eventually, however, be forced to engage in dialogue, unless of course it decides to use its nuclear weapons, in which case, everything in the region, and the global system will be changed for forever.

Israel may be forced to reconsider its policies toward Palestinians and eventually come to an agreement in terms of defining its borders with Palestinians. Its expansionist policies will no longer be sustainable if democracies should emerge around it, as Arab democracies will no doubt favor the Palestinian cause.³¹⁶ With that said, the likelihood that Israel will actually consider working with the Palestinians in the near future is slim. Its existence as a state is based on its aggressive expansionism that is often driven by anger and fear from past events in Jewish history.

It is important to note that Israel's security and stability is also highly tied to its ability to maintain its economy and extensive military apparatus. Its economy is reliant on petroleum and natural gas, much of which is provided by Egypt or delivered by ways of Egypt.³¹⁷ Without these

³¹⁵ Cohen, *Israel's Nuclear Future: Iran, Opacity and the Vision of Global Zero*, 6.

³¹⁶ "Democratic governments in the Arab world will, by definition, be less reliable from the Israeli-Zionist point of view, but they may, one hopes, be less corrupt, less pliable to pressure from Israel and its western allies, less willing to serve its interests, and less willing to subdue the Palestinians on Israel's behalf".

See Bresheeth, *The Arab Spring: A View from Israel*, 42-57.

³¹⁷ Morton and Shortt explain that: "Despite its modest population size, Israel's advanced economy and the sophistication of its people consume a disproportionate amount of energy, ranking forty-eighth in the world in electricity consumption, fifty-second in oil consumption, and sixty-ninth in natural gas consumption.18 While Israel has been able to establish self-sufficiency in electricity, it remains dependent on the importation of large quantities of oil and natural gas. Disruptions to the flow of oil or natural gas from abroad would constitute a grave threat to Israel's economy, political system, and state of military preparedness. Egypt supplies roughly 40 percent of Israel's natural gas needs under a 2005 agreement authorized by the now-deposed Mubarak government. Natural gas is supplied at a below-market price via an undersea pipeline from the Egypt".

See Morton and Shortt, *The Arab Spring: Implications for Israeli Security*47

resources Israel simply does not have the capacity to survive as a state. The Israeli government will have to learn to negotiate with whoever comes to power around it and accept the realities of the policies it has pursued from the time of its inception.³¹⁸ Its energy usage may be difficult to sustain if neighboring countries refuse cooperate with the state. This will be a difficult transition for a state that has been almost entirely maintained through U.S. support. The state will have to reconsider its energy usage and make an effort to be more self-sufficient in order protect itself and its economy.

Global powers: United States, Russia and China

The United States will likely begin to see its influence slightly wane throughout the region, it will attempt to maintain its client states the best that it can. It will have to step back and reconsider the costs of its imperialist policies and if these costs outweigh the benefits; the loss of American lives as a result of war and the psychological cost of being perceived in a negative light. Europe on the other hand, will be busy working on plans to integrate the massive amounts of migrants from that will continue to pour in from the MENA; issues that the United States mostly avoids because of distance. Meanwhile, Russia and China will take advantage of U.S. missteps in the Middle East and North Africa to achieve their own political and economic

“Traditionally, Israel has had very limited indigenous energy resources. In 2009, the country’s total petroleum production was 4.03 thousand barrels per day (tbd); crude production, 0.10 tbd; consumption, 235.00 tbd; net imports, 230.93 tbd; and proven reserves, 0.00. The figures for coal are even worse: total production, 0.000 short tons; consumption, 13.935 million short tons; net imports, 13.935 million short tons. The natural-gas sector is relatively better: total production, 55 billion cubic feet (bcf); consumption, 115 bcf; imports, 60 bcf; proven reserves, 1 trillion cubic feet”.

See Gawdat Bhaghat. 2011. Israel's energy security: Regional implications. *Middle East Policy* 18 (3): 25-34.

³¹⁸ Recent surveys have indicated that less than 5% of the Arab world has a positive view of Jewish people and this due to its treatment of the Palestinian people. Ibid.

objectives. In summary, though the Middle East is in shambles, the United States, Europe and Israel are also on the losing end. Policies will have to eventually be amended to encourage democracy; not democracy for U.S. friends, but democracy for all.

Russia is making a come back by strategically positioning itself in the Syrian conflict. Its long-term goal is to become a major player in the global system and to do that it must help its allies in the region; those that rely on it for support.³¹⁹ Russia views Assad as a better alternative to what may come if he is overthrown; specifically if Islamists comes to power. Its objective, therefore, is partially based on helping the Assad regime both militarily and financially in an effort to prevent Islamists from gaining ground.³²⁰ This is a move that will set Russia on the path to becoming globally relevant in the multipolar system that will likely emerge in the coming years. Profits from weapons exports are not an important factor for helping the Assad regime; in fact it renegotiated much of the Syria's weapons contracts in favor of the Syrian state.³²¹ For Russia it is about building a presence in the region, not just to counter U.S. presence but also to gain relevancy in global political arena. Its future political endeavors will likely mimic some of the characteristics of old Soviet-U.S. rivalries, with Russia taking a more prominent role not just from its support for Syria but also from its relations with Iran.

If this were a game based on which actor benefits most from the conditions in the global system, China would be the indisputable winner. Its global image as a neutral, friendly business

³¹⁹ Chaziza, *Soft Balancing Strategy in the Middle East: Chinese and Russian Vetoes in the United Nations Security Council in the Syria Crisis* 250

³²⁰ Matthew D. Crosston, "Cold War and Ayatollah Residues: Syria as a Chessboard for Russia, Iran, and the United States," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2014) 98.

³²¹ "Russia's desire to maintain global diplomatic significance and ensure its place as a legitimate international influence peddler. To that end, Syria is a tool to help facilitate those endeavors. It is not about any special infatuation with Syria; rather, it is about Russia satisfying its own global stage perceptions. This need for global recognition and legitimacy has a long and documented history within the Russian diplomatic psyche" Ibid.

partner will be particularly advantageous to it in the MENA because these states will be more apt to trust its intentions.³²² China appears to be taking a different approach than Russia; it will likely continue a neutral stance in an effort to sustain relations with both the United States and the MENA; both of which are particularly important to its economic wellbeing.³²³

China has essentially been able to utilize U.S policies in the region to its advantage, especially in regards to its energy needs. U.S.-E.U. sanctions against Iran and other countries have enabled it to offset U.S. economic influence while also securing oil and natural gas at below market prices.³²⁴ Its relationship with Iran is strong and it is unlikely that the United states will be in a position to make an offer strong enough to encourage China to completely cut ties with Iran. It is impossible, and all parties involved, China, Iran and the United States are aware of that. Iran produces 3.7 million barrels of oil per day, has the world's 3rd largest oil reserve and 2nd largest natural gas reserve.³²⁵ Access to these a is enough to keep China interested in

³²² “China enjoys a number of advantages over the United States (and other great powers such as Great Britain, France, Germany, or Russia) in the Middle East. First, it lacks the religious, colonial, and historical baggage that weighs down many other nations. By refusing to get entangled in violence between Arabs and Israelis, China has demonstrated that it holds no preference between Jews and Muslims. China has also avoided the quagmire of picking sides between competing Muslim sects. Plus, geographic and demographic divisions in the Middle East cannot be attributed to the Chinese”.

See Qian Xuming, "The One Belt One Road Strategy and China's Energy Policy in the Middle East," <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/one-belt-one-road-strategy-and-china-s-energy-policy-middle-east>

³²³ The United States is particularly important to the Chinese economy because huge portions of its manufactured goods are exported to the United States, its relations with the U.S. and the MENA are therefore both critical its economic growth.

See Dorraj and English, *China's Strategy for Energy Acquisition in the Middle East: Potential for Conflict and Cooperation with the United States* 176

³²⁴ “While the United States expended considerable political capital attempting to rally the global community against countries such as Iran, Venezuela, and Sudan, China stepped in to gain access to their energy resources and to counterbalance U.S. influence, not only in these countries but also in the larger developing world...” Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

maintaining good relations with Iran, but its ability to almost have exclusive buying rights to these resources makes the deal even better for China.

China has also been able to benefit greatly from circumstances in Iraq because while the US government has been largely occupied with trying to rebuild the nation as a result of the nearly 10-year war, China has had the opportunity to move in and begin investing in the Iraqi energy industry.³²⁶ Unlike the United States, the Chinese Government has been focused on a more diplomatic approach to gaining influence around the globe. Its efforts are paying off, as it has already begun the process of constructing a modern-day Silk Road that is founded on strengthening ties between China, Central Asia, Russia, and parts of Europe.³²⁷

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ “The Silk Road Economic Belt—a series of land-based infrastructure projects including roads, railways, and pipelines—focuses on strengthening links between China, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe (particularly the Baltic). China will gain improved access to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia, and to the Indian Ocean through Southeast Asia and South Asia. coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific region”.

See Xuming, *The One Belt One Road Strategy and China's Energy Policy in the Middle East*

Conclusion

Citizens of the global community have begun to question the viability of policies centered on capital accumulation and military domination. The Arab Spring may actually be the catalyst that forces elites to reevaluate and alter the philosophical principles that encourage such exploitative policies throughout the globe. The sustainability of neoliberalism has come under question. Elites from around the globe will have to reconsider their approach to maintaining control, if the neoliberal paradigm is even an approach that will be allowed to continue. These uprisings illustrate the ills of Western intervention and the frustration and deprivation that Arabs are experiencing. Arabs can no longer be fooled into thinking that intervention in the region by the West is humanitarian or democratic by any means. These people are well aware that the United States is capable of promoting democracy in the MENA if U.S. political elites really had the desire to do so. Those who support the neoliberal paradigm have not had an interest in promoting democratic ideals in the region. Instead, they have been interested in pursuing objectives that are detrimental to the overall wellbeing of the Arab people. This is now more visible to the Arab people than it has ever been.

Socio-economic disparity in these countries has become far more pronounced than it was in the past. Power and wealth is concentrated among a rather small group of individuals and this group is incessantly decreasing in size, which therefore causes further concentrations in wealth and power. Neoliberalism, the philosophy that this approach is based on, is deteriorating the world at a very rapid pace. This is becoming more visible to the masses because social interaction has evolved to include communication between people that were largely unconnected in the past. The global system is still in the beginning phases of learning and adapting to the impact of this newly connected world that has emerged as a result of heightened social

interaction via the Internet. Technology is changing not just the pace but also the medium in which political information is transferred. This is no doubt a game changer for the elites in both the Core and the Periphery. Political elites will have two choices. They will either have to become more accountable for their actions and address the concerns of their citizenry, or they will have to increase state mechanisms to maintain their population via oppression. Either way, this will pose further challenges for leaders that lack legitimacy. Arab dictators will face more obstacles in terms of maintaining control of their countries. It will not be as easy to stay in power, as these new mediums for communication enable citizens to interact and rapidly discuss the political issues that concern them on an entirely new level.

While the Arab uprisings may have not been as domestically transformational as those participating in them intended for them to be, they will likely result in long-term changes for both U.S. led policies in the region and more general global decision-making. So while these uprisings did not necessarily result in the democratic, pluralist transformations that organizers intended for them, they have indeed brought attention to the realities of the ills of the global capitalist system. The Arab spring was not a single event. It was the start of a succession of events that aimed to challenge the authority of those in power. This sequence of heterogeneous events will continue to result in changes for years to come.

This dissertation illustrates that the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria can be attributed to a series of factors. Domestically, discontent is tied to the state's inability to consistently deliver on even some of the most basic needs of the citizenry, such as access to employment and reasonable housing and food prices. Exceedingly high rates of unemployment and underemployment leave the Arab youth, which consists of over 70% of the Arab population,

with little hope for the future. Arabs also tend to lack basic social and political rights that they so rightly deserve. Dysfunctional institutions and high levels of corruption further complicate circumstances as Arabs are left with no way to voice their concerns/demands to the state. Because of these circumstances, Arab leaders utilize coercion to maintain control of the populace. Pervasive repression is used to prevent opposition to the political authority and its policies, thereby creating an environment that is particularly hostile. This environment, to varying degrees, was present in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria.

Externally, the structure and dynamics of the global system and the policies pursued by the Western world often assist in the sustenance of autocratic regimes that lack the necessary public support to remain in power through democratic means. Global institutions such as the United Nations and Western financial institutions serve as mechanisms for carrying out the interests of Western elites. These institutions are used to apply unequal pressure to achieve the overarching ideals of neoliberalism. In the case of Egypt, aid in the form of weapons and loans have been used to stave off threats to the United States' most vital ally in the region, Israel. External support for Mubarak and his repressive policies were greatly responsible for Egypt's internal issues. In Libya, continued global sanctions on oil while Ghaddafi was in power, were strategically used to reduce the economic benefit of maintaining the regime's anti-western stance. Also, the U.S. and NATO support for anti-Ghaddafi factions were indeed responsible for the 2011 uprisings that led to the ouster and eventual demise of Ghaddafi and his regime. In the case of Syria, the U.S. and Saudi support for anti-regime factions were used in an effort to destabilize a regime that was steadily growing closer to Iran. IMF loans and grants to Tunisia have been used to strategically encourage policies of privatization that further the broader

interest of Western powers. Tunisia's the West's limited interest in Tunisia has ironically helped more meaningful transformation of the post Ben-Ali regime.

This dissertation illustrates the complexities of studying the Arab world. There is not one particular cause or source of mobilization. It would be a serious mistake to explain the nuances of public mobilization by relying on singular factors. Methodologically speaking, one must account for multiple factors that are shaped by the cultural determinants of societies in explaining when, how, and why the public undertakes mobilization to dislodge unwanted authoritarian systems. In addition to internal factors, global interdependence makes Arab states vulnerable to external forces that undermine public rights and their desire to control their destiny. The current mobilization theories are too simplistic to offer a comprehensive explanation for such a complex phenomenon as public mobilization. This dissertation is a first step towards building a theoretical framework that could capture the dynamics of public mobilization. Of course, greater empirical work is needed to refine this framework in its cross cultural application.

Appendix

Table 1

Perceived Levels of Corruption in the Public Sector, Selected Countries, 2010*

Egypt	3.1 (ranked 98 out of 176 countries)
Syria	2.5 (ranked 127 out of 176 countries)
Tunisia	4.3 (ranked 59 out of 176 countries)
Yemen	2.2 (ranked 146 out of 176 countries)

0-10 scale, with lower values indicating more perceived corruption.

Source: Transparency International (2011). Full citation. Transparency International, “2010 Results,” <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2010/results> (accessed November 11, 2015).

Table 2

Food Price Volatility

Country	Year		
	2000	2005	2010
Egypt	21.6	67.8	71.8
Libya	N/A	N/A	N/A
Syria	16.9	13.6	41.6
Tunisia	18.0	10.8	27.0

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States

Note: “This is the measure of variation of the Domestic Food Price Level Index It has been computed as the Standard Deviation (SD) of the deviations from the trend over the previous five years”. <http://www.fao.org/data/en/>

Table 3

Oil and Gas Revenue as a Percentage of Total Government Revenue, Selected Countries

Country	2005	2011
Egypt	17	10
Libya	93	91
Yemen	67	63
Algeria	76	67
Saudia Arabia	88	90
Iraq	68	97

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, as cited in National Resource Governance Unit (<http://www.resourcegovernance.org/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iraq/overview>)

Table 4

Internet Users (per 100 in population), Selected Countries and Years

Country	Year		
	2000	2005	2011
Egypt	0.64	12.75	25.6
Libya	0.18	3.92	14
Yemen	0.08	1.05	14.9
Algeria	0.49	5.84	14
Saudia Arabia	2.21	12.7	47.5
Syria	0.18	5.65	22.5
Tunisia	2.75	9.65	39.1

Source: World Bank Development Indicators, 2015.

Table 5

U.S. Aid to MENA

Country	Year	
	2005	2011
Egypt	\$1,790,549,933	\$1,529,204,296
Libya	\$127,700	\$117,864,687
Yemen	\$29,218,116	\$133,813,587
Algeria	\$2,504,582	\$10,927,045
Saudia Arabia	\$1,366,684	\$1,600,289
Syria	\$350,573	\$26,285,036
Tunisia	\$12,417,525	\$35,326,842
Bahrain	\$35,000,000	\$17,700,000

Source: usaid.gov

Table 6

Total U.S. Assistance to Middle East 1971-2001 (loans and grants in millions)

<u>Country</u>	<u>Economic</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Total</u>
Israel	28,402.9	50,505.7	78,908.6
Egypt	25,095.8	27607.0	52,702.8
Jordan	24,40.1	2,137.2	4,577.3
Lebanon	470.5	273.7	744.2
Palestinians	703.4	0.0	703.4
Syria	539.0	0.0	539.0

Source: "U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Middle East: Historical Background, Recent Trends, and the FY2011 Request".

Table 7

Net Migration Flows (thousands) for selected Countries, 2012*

<u>Country</u>	<u>Migration amount</u>
Egypt	-216,000
Syria	-1,500,000
Tunisia	-33,000
Libya	-233,000

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, Table 6.13, 2015.

Table 8

Summary of Case Studies

Country	Regime type	Internal issues	External factors	Economic dependence	Outcome
Tunisia	Authoritarian Via Coup	Unemployment, Underemployment Corruption, Security concerns, high urban housing & food prices	Relations with West, export of oil, Neoliberal economic reforms, privatization	Oil exports Foreign Aid/ Loans Debt 52% of GDP	Ben Ali overthrown
Egypt	Authoritarian Assumed control after assassination of Sadat	Unemployment, Underemployment Corruption, Security concerns, high urban housing and food prices	Relations with West,(Neoliberal economic reforms, privatization, Israel	Foreign Aid Suez Canal Cotton Oil Debt 85% of GDP	Mubarak overthrown
Libya	Authoritarian via coup	Corruption, Internal and security concerns, clan based divisions, political repression (Islamists)	U.S./ NATO intervention, support for anti- Gaddafi forces	Oil exports Debt 4.8% of GDP	Gaddafi overthrown via outside intervention
Syria	Authoritarian Via coup	Corruption, Security concerns, sectarian divisions, urban housing and food prices	Conservative Arab regimes and West support anti Assad rebels	Agriculture Oil Debt 58% of GDP	No regime change/Iran & Russia

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Curriculum Vitae

Autoosa Elizabeth Kojoori-Saatchi

Email:Asaatchi@unlv.nevada.edu

Education

Ph.D. University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV (Fall 2015) Global Studies-
International Relations, Comparative Politics, American Politics

M.A. University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV (May 2010) Political Science-
Comparative Politics, International Relations

B.A. University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV (May 2005) Political Science

Dissertation and Thesis

- Ph.D. Dissertation: "The Arab Uprising: An assessment of the Roots and Implications of Contemporary Mobilization in the Arab World"
- Thesis: "The Culture of Revolution: Revolutionary Transformation in Iran", August 2010

Conferences, Presentations and Talks

- Conference paper presentation: "Why Stalemate: The Syrian Conflict and the Sectarian Divide", A paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 2013
- Guest lecturer: "Sectarian Conflict in Syria"- The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, April 2013
- Guest lecturer: "Civil Society and The Iranian Revolution" -The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, March 2012

Teaching Experience

Instructor

Political Science 100-5-Nevada Constitution, Fall 2011-present

Political Science 100-6-Nevada Constitution, Fall 2011- present

Political Science 100-7-Nevada Constitution, Fall 2011-present

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Political Science 411H.1 Comparative Law, Spring 2013

Political Science 405.K International Relations of the Middle East & North Africa, Spring 2013

Political Science 411.A- Constitutional Law of the 1st Amendment, Spring 2012

Political Science 302, Political Science Research Methodology, Fall 2011

Political science 407.I- Politics and problems in developing Areas, spring 2011

Political Science 407.D.1- Political Systems of the Middle East and North Africa, Fall 2010

Political Science 101.9- Introduction to American Politics, Spring 2010

Political Science 407.O- Islamic Politics, spring 2010

Political Science 211.1- Introduction to Comparative Politics, Fall 2010

University Involvement

Graduate and Professional Student Association Representative- Fall 2008-Spring 2009

Professional Organizations

Pi Sigma Alpha-National Political Science Honor Society

American Political Science Association

International Studies Association

Midwest Political Science Association

Languages

English (Fluent)

Persian/ Farsi (Fluent)

Software Knowledge

STATA, SPSS, Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Numbers, Pages, Blackboard