Still Awake: The Beginnings of Arab Democratic Change

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THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
and
THE FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

STILL AWAKE:
THE BEGINNINGS OF ARAB DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

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Executive Summary

1. This report reviews five cases of political transition in the Arab world. **Despite considerable variations, each of these cases matches with one of four classical transitional models: pact, imposition, reform or revolution**. Pacted transitions most often produce corporatists and consociational democracies. In these cases, competition is regulated to respect the original compromise struck between the actors (Egypt). Imposed transitions—either from the inside or outside—are likely to give rise to conservative democracies in which multi-party competition might remain incomplete or even take the form of electoral authoritarian rule (Yemen). Transitions through reform have empirically been found to have the best chance to lead to a competitive multiparty democracy, but are also particularly vulnerable to authoritarian reversal in case the reform process deadlocks (Tunisia). Revolutionary transitions usually have a good chance to lead to one-party "democracies." For the time being, Libya and Syria seem to fit the hybrid imposed-revolutionary model.

2. There are no silver bullets or shortcuts to political transitions. **Saudi Arabia or Bahrain are hardly examples of pacted transitions, but rather attempts to redefine the authoritarian ruling bargain**. When it comes to Jordan, and perhaps Algeria, the prospects for more significant changes appears slightly better, even though it is difficult to believe that even here reforms are entirely genuine. Even Morocco's "third way" is facing serious challenges.

3. While the international community caries a large burden of responsibility to assist ongoing transition processes and encourage reform laggards to increase their efforts, **any outside interference remains a double-edged sword**.

4. The international community itself has to change together with the Arab world. In security-dominated foreign policies, the Arab Awakening still constitutes a threat. **It remains a fundamental challenge for the American and European governments, which have substantial geopolitical interests in the region, not to securitize their relations with the Middle East**. This means that for now, western security policies are based on a reverse priority list with Iran on top and democratic transitions further down. In effect, they remain under strong influence of two security-driven states in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia and Israel. While specific recommendations for EU member states in this regard would not be realistic, it is vital that the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy acts with those considerations in mind and works towards a more balanced approach.

5. In the first year of the Arab Awakening there was an ongoing race among donors to bring aid to the transforming Arab countries. **While the region indeed is becoming more and more competitive, international, and specifically, European efforts may weaken as media coverage settles down to a slower, less spectacular pace of changes**. While the states that are traditionally associated with the southern dimension of the ENP will most likely keep up the speed of the initiatives, the northern European states should make additional efforts to sustain their engagement in the Arab world.

6. Despite common statements, the **EU has struggled to find a common language in response to the Arab Awakening**. National policies once again dominate member countries' positions. The EEAS has all the more important task of mitigating these differences. One such division emerged with regard to the Islamist parties' domination as a result of the free elections in Tunisia and Egypt. Some European countries are deeply suspicious of the Islamist political agenda and would not provide Islamist governments with aid, while some encourage the integration of the Islamists into the political process and seek to engage them. The EEAS, taking the latter stance, has therefore devoted resources to placate the former's anxiety.

7. In the past decade, the visceral, deep-rooted problems of Arab countries have increased. The UNDP has explained this by pointing at i) fragile political, social,

economic and ecological structures, ii) lack of human-centered policies and iii) vulnerability to foreign intervention. **None of these three problems has gone away as a result of the Arab Awakening, but at least reform has been undertaken with regard to each of the three**.

8. **The logic of demography (about 70% of Arabs are under 30) suggests that in a decade, it is unavoidable that the young will dominate, possibly also in politics, in Arab countries.** Although the revolutions may only bear fruit in the long term, they have already demonstrated the generational gap between the young majority and the old minority. They allowed people to cross the barrier of fear of the state and let them feel empowered by their own actions. In a time of a more politically aware individual, a global intifada, Arabs finally stood up as well, not only against state authorities but also sons and daughters against their fathers and grandfathers, women against men, employees against employers, the weak against the strong—and that change will last decades.

Introduction

By Timo Behr and Patrycja Sasnal

This report offers a structured overview of the dramatic political transition processes that are currently playing out in the Arab world. Following a swift and seemingly uniform wave of political uprisings that have toppled a number of Arab dictatorships, these transitions have taken a variety of forms. These variations result both from the central role of political agents during these processes and reflect the somewhat different starting conditions of the transition countries. Based on these, this report identifies five distinctive models of change, each based on the developments in an example country:

1. **The Egyptian model**—a negotiated peaceful change in which the direction of change is determined primarily by domestic elites, resulting in a pacted transition.
2. **The Libyan model**—political change brought about by external actors via international military intervention, resulting in a hybrid transitional model.
3. **The Yemeni model**—political change supported by external actors via diplomatic pressure, resulting in an imposed transitional model.
4. **The Syrian model**—smouldering civil war without clear outcome driven by domestic elites and geopolitical competition, resulting in a blocked transition.
5. **The Moroccan model**—incremental top-down reforms, supported by part of the opposition, with the potential of either leading to deeper change or a reversal of reforms.

Apart from the similarities that lay at the roots of the regional awakening we focused on features that allowed us to distinguish between these different models of change. The transitions were either largely peaceful (Egypt, Morocco) or violent (Libya, Yemen, Syria). In some cases, rival political elites to the incumbent power existed (the army in Egypt and Yemen, regional authorities in Cyrenaica in Libya) and in some there was no replacement (Morocco, Syria). The position and strength of the military also varied across the countries, making the changes both more and less probable: a strong and unified army in Egypt or divided generals in Yemen.

Another factor was the strength of the opposition, especially with regard to how prone the West was to support it—where the opposition was united, such as in Libya, it drew widespread support from the international community, while a fractured opposition, as in Syria, did not draw similar international backing. Interestingly though, the opposition was in reality fractured almost everywhere in terms of real support in the society—only the brief, initial moment of change brought people together. After that unifying moment, old and new political divisions re-emerged in Egypt, Libya and Yemen, jeopardising the democratic transition. These included long-standing divisions between secularist and religious forces, regional and tribal divisions, as well as an increasingly bitter Sunni–Shia divide that has been fuelled by heightened regional divisions and geopolitical competition.

A country's wealth was another factor that differentiated the change models. The importance of a country to the global economy, the distribution of wealth and the control over national industries, and later in the transitional phase the strength of the economy, were all factors that weighed on the pace of transition. In this regard, the report includes several extreme cases: Yemen (one of the poorest Arab countries), Libya (an oil-rich, rentier economy) and Egypt (the biggest one, with perhaps the greatest potential in the region).

Media played an immensely important, albeit diversified role in those transitions. Public state-owned media disseminated an image favourable to the existing powers, while foreign media outlets—TV and internet—portrayed it in favour of the opposition. Citizen journalism in the form of bloggers, uploaded video footage and "unverifiable" reporting further contributed to the opaqueness of the situation and led to a politicisation of information. The lack of clearly-verifiable information enabled some media outlets, such as Al-Jazeera, to broadcast

explicitly political messages and rally international support behind the cause of the revolutionaries. In Libya, international reporting on human rights abuses perpetrated by the regime of Muammar al-Qaddafi enabled the building of an international coalition that provided strong support for the NTC and which eventually toppled the regime. Similarly, in Syria, media reports on human rights abuses enabled the building of a strong sanctions regime against the al-Assad government, but it failed to rally a coalition for regime change. While this disproved the omnipotence of the "Al-Jazeera effect," its strong role in facilitating an international reaction was confirmed.

Together these factors shaped the resulting transitional models that are being discussed in this report. Understanding the different bargains and compromises that are part of these different models is important, because they are likely to influence domestic politics for a long time to come. Indeed, each of these models is likely to give rise to a different form of political organisation; and not all of them might resemble Western multiparty democracies for the time being. However, it is important to note that political transitions are anything but predetermined, and some countries might switch from one path to another throughout this process. While some of the transitions provide ample ground for pessimism, it is important to remind ourselves that current events are only the beginnings of Arab democratic change.

Arab Spring, Indicators by Country

*Statistics from 2011 unless otherwise specified

Country	Egypt	Libya	Morocco	Syria	Yemen
Population (July 2012 est.)	84,688,164	6,733,620	32,309,329	22,530,746	24,771,809
Birth rate:	2.94	2.90	2.19	2.85	4.45
Ethnic Groups:	91% Egyptian	97% Berber and Arab, 3% other	Arab-Berber 99%	90.3% Arab; 9.7% Kurds, Armenians, and other;	Predominantly Arab; but also Afro-Arab, South-Asians, Europeans.
Religious Denominations	90% Muslim, 9% Coptic	97% Sunni	99% Sunni, 1% Christian	74% Sunni; 12% Shia; 10% Christian; 3% Druze	53% Sunni; 45% Shia
Literacy rate:	71.4%	82.6%	53.3%	79.6%	74.3%
GDP per capita:	$6,500	$14,100 (2010)	$5,100	$5,100	$2,500
Inflation rate:	13.3%	6.1%	1.9%	7%	20%
Unemployment rate:	12.4%	20.7% (2009)	9.2%	8.1%	35% (2010)
Youth Unemployment (15-24 years)	24.8%	n.a.	21.9%	19.1%	n.a.
Pop. below poverty line	20% (2005)	n.a.	15% (2007)	11.9% (2006)	45.2% (2003)
HDI Ranking 2011 (change)	113 (-1)	64 (-10)	130 (0)	119 (-1)	154 (0)
Corruption Perception (Rank)	112	168	80	129	164

Sources:

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html

http://data.worldbank.org/country/libya

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http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD

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Human Development Report 2011, Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All

Corruption Perception Index 2011, Transparency International

Chapter 1
Political Revolution vs. Social Evolution[1]

by Patrycja Sasnal

In the second year of the transformations in the Middle East, it is high time to look beyond analysis of the roots of the Arab Awakening and the overpowering enthusiasm to considerations about the scope, pace and possible impediments to the current political transitions. In other words, a look at the relationship between political and social change is needed. Did one precede the other, or did they coincide? Will political developments beget a social transformation, or will social deficits impede—and possible reverse—political progress? What has not changed? And what patterns are emerging from the ongoing processes of political transition across the region?

The Greatest Grievances Have not Vanished

By making a simple test of looking at the seven threats to human security in the Arab world, enumerated in the now famous and renowned 2009 UNDP Arab Human Development Report, and checking them against the current state of affairs, one can come to the conclusion that only one of those threats has lessened as a result of the Arab Awakening and all remain.

The first report from 2002 predominantly discussed three deficits: freedom, women's strength, and knowledge.[2] The 2009 report listed seven threats: (1) people and their insecure environment, (2) the state and its insecure people, (3) the vulnerability of those lost from sight, (4) volatile growth, high unemployment and persistent poverty, (5) hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity, (6) health security challenges, and (7) occupation and military intervention.[3]

The changes brought about by the Arab Awakening have occurred under Point 2 (the state and its insecure people), but even those are far from being conclusive. The report made the assessment that citizens do not accept a state that does not abide by international charters pertaining to human rights and abuses its monopoly on the means of force, coercion and power in general. The notion of citizenship was underdeveloped. Instead, a variety of smaller identities abounded. Social tensions originated partially from biased access to political power, wealth and representation. Behind the façade of lawful constitutions were gaps between what the state claimed it legally guaranteed and what it did in practice. Overall, some of those grievances have now eased, but most persist.

Other threats on the seven-point list show no sign of lessening, among them the most precarious, such as threats driven by population and demographic pressures, weak growth, unemployment, inadequate educational systems, inequalities, corruption, poverty and environmental degradation.

The State Runs Deep and Society Is Still Authoritarian

In most parts of the Arab world, civil society (universities, the media, and culture, broadly speaking) has been swallowed up by political society, whose main form is the state.[4]

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[1] Original version of this article can be found in the Fall 2012 issue of "Insight Turkey".

[2] "Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations," United Nations Development Programme, 2002, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf.

[3] "Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries," UNDP, 2009, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2009e.pdf.

[4] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, London, 1993, p. 361.

Changing a country's political system entails not only a transformation of the foundations of state institutions. It also requires a change in the mindset of people constituting these institutions. Such change rarely happens immediately with revolutionary changes as it requires a deeper, more profound social adaptation, which emanates into people's lives. Such is the case in most Arab countries—certainly in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Ideally, the new attitude requires abandoning the deeply ingrained arrogance and authoritarianism that existed at every institutional level in favour of a sense of service to the society. This new mindset settles in slowly, not momentarily or simultaneously with political changes. It requires strong examples from supervisors and explicit repetition of new rules. Corruption, however, impedes this process, as people have grown accustomed to reaping additional benefits from poorly-paid public sector positions, and ending that practice immediately is close to impossible. So how deep does the state run?

The high-employment rate in the state sector has always been a method for the regime to secure its power. However, this patronage system has led to a broadly inefficient public administration, in which employment is not necessarily based on skill but on loyalty. State institutions are disconnected from citizens' needs and operate beyond democratic control.[5]

In the epitome of the Awakening—in Egypt—the state runs deep and wide. The notion of a "deep state" has only recently been applied to Egypt, but in its original sense it assumes the existence of an influential group of people who *de facto* run the state from the back seat.[6] These can include the military, intelligence agencies, the judiciary, and big business. In Egypt, it has been used to describe those elites that remain impervious to the changes brought about by the fall of Mubarak, mostly the military, which has been in power ever since, and the judiciary, which collaborates with the ruling elites. Their actions are driven by the fear of losing their grip on power and money. Even though the concept might be valid in such a narrow meaning, it makes even more sense to spread it to all state institutions. Overall, there is significant over-employment with about 6 million people working in the state sector. That group (roughly 8% of the society) nearly in its entirety is determined to maintain its members' tiny, local-scale privileges. Clerks together with potent institutional decision-makers are the real deep state that runs not only vertically, throughout the bureaucratic strata, but also horizontally across each and every village.

The regimes—even the most unpopular ones—are products of the societies they govern; [in order] to grasp the nature of the problem we have to start by looking at society's building blocks. While presidents and kings hog the limelight, their style of government is replicated in countless other situations: in factories, offices, schools and homes.[7]

The social change that would bring about a qualitative difference in the functioning of state institutions has yet to arrive. Its arrival has been further delayed by a particular family model in which individual liberties give way to community values. Family in that sense is a microcosm of society with the father as ruler. However, there are signs that the needed social change might be coming, or perhaps has already begun. Indeed, the Awakening would have not been possible without the politicisation and emancipation of younger cohorts.

Absent Intellectuals

In a stark contrast to the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990, prominent secularist intellectuals are mostly absent from the scene in the Middle East. The revolutions and transitions lack an intellectual Arab conscience, with the exception perhaps of

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[5] "BTI 2012 | Egypt Country Report," Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012, www.bti-project.org/country-reports/mena/egy/.

[6] In literature, it is a term in Turkish political life: *derin devlet.*

[7] Brian Whitaker, *What's Really Wrong with the Middle East*, Saqi, London, 2011, p. 49.

one of the most well-known Egyptian writers, Alaa al-Aswany, who engages in the public debate about safeguarding the revolution, although he tries to stay out of mainstream politics.

Possibly the most prominent contemporary Arab poet, Adonis, is rather undecided on what his opinion about the events in his motherland of Syria should be—perhaps it is a prudent attitude, but Adonis does not want to spread his thoughts and responds only when asked.

Sadiq Jalal al-Azm, one of the best-known Arab philosophers, concluded in April 2011: "… the intellectual plays an even more important role in societies with a high rate of illiteracy. Not because he's especially important or his thinking is particularly profound, but because his significance must be viewed in proportion to the education and culture of his environment."[8]

A Democracy that Cannot Deliver will not Last

The Arab street is across the board mostly preoccupied with who will rule their countries, not so much how, which in a transitional period is understandable but detrimental to the real state of affairs. That's because many of the current grievances, i.e., unemployment and inequalities, originate in the pitiful state of the economy. A democracy that cannot deliver will not last. Unfortunately a period of populist politics is seemingly starting in Egypt and elsewhere, reinforcing the preoccupation with political games rather than real work. The responsible politicians should know better, but they acquiesce to the general mood on the street.

For example, before the Awakening in 2011, Egypt was among the so-called CIVETS,[9] second-tier rising powers after BRICS,[10] and even during the economic crisis the Egyptian economy grew 5% annually. After the fall of Mubarak, investments began to flow out of the country while economic growth plunged to 0.3% in the second half of 2011. Standard and Poor's rating of Egypt dropped from "BB" to "B." The fear of losing popularity and short-term actions rather than a long-term strategy drive economic policy. In fiscal year 2011/2012, subsidies (mainly food and fuel) rose by 42% while state salaries increased by 27%, adding to an already substantial budget deficit and shrinking foreign reserves to $15 billion (from $35 billion).

In the current budget (2012/2013) presented to parliament for approval, the deficit will reach $23 billion, which amounts to 10% of Egypt's GDP, while more than 75% of budgetary spending will be eaten up by subsidies, salaries for the six million-strong state workforce, and debt service payments. Securing adequate funds while the deficit is growing and fluidity and reserves are contracting will not be possible without outside help. The fundamental challenge for the new government will be to secure those funds, curb economic deficiencies, and counterbalance the negative long-term trends.

The way forward for the Arab countries in transition is undoubtedly economic growth, although ways to incite it remain uncertain. The world economy is in recession, and so are most of the biggest trade partners of the Arab countries: the countries of the European Union. With large portions of state budgets consumed by public sector salaries, debt payments and subsidies on food and fuel, continued instability and investors leaving, the countries in transition will not be able to cope without outside help.

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[8] "A New Spirit of Revolution," interview with Sadiq Jalal al-Azm, Qantara.de, 1 April 2011, http://en.qantara.de/A-New-Spirit-of-Revolution/15850c15992i0p163/index.html.

[9] These include: Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa.

[10] Rising economic powers Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

Inadequate Outside Response

It is not cultural or dynastic legacies but this modern formation, and the links of this formation to external structures of military, economic and political power, that explain the character of contemporary Middle Eastern states.[11]

From the moment the Arab Awakening started, Europe and the U.S reacted to it with fear and uncertainty, rather than with joy. More than a year and a half through the events, after hundreds of policy papers on how these changes are positive and welcome, this fact tends to be overlooked. There is no universal response to the Arab Awakening by the international community, and in fact it has been mixed. The U.S. principally has tried to grasp the opportunity to present itself as a supporter of Arab democracy. The EU admitted its failures and embarked on a refreshed partnership, willing to support the transforming states. Within the EU, however, Member States have had different ideas on how to react to Islamists winning elections or calls for liberalised trade with the region.

Not only does the response vary from state to state but also among different societal groups within a state. There is the political view (the need to end up on the right side of history), the military view (the need for stability and security while preparing for the worst) and the public's view (to support the underdog and the revolution). In Egypt, EU politicians may support the Freedom and Justice Party, the American military may support the Egyptian army and European societies may place their sympathies in the young revolutionaries who do not want to get involved in current politics.

Admittedly, the West is losing influence in the transitioning Arab states. Their policies will inevitably respond to popular sentiment, which is that the new authorities should formulate a more independent foreign policy. This does not mean, however, severing ties with Israel or becoming instantly friendly with Iran, though those themes were used by the former regimes to gain legitimacy for their rule internally and internationally, which can no longer be the case on a similar scale.

If there is anything the transitioning Arab countries need from the international community it is, perhaps, financial aid. Last year, the Deauville partnership—the G8 and international organisations—offered Egypt $20 billion in aid. The pledge only covers reform projects on political and economic transformation, and according to the donors, those have not yet been implemented. In effect, the financial aid is not forthcoming and cannot be spent, for example, on service payments of foreign debt, which nears $35 billion (10.2% of it is German, 10.9% French, and 9.3% North American). If an agreement with the IMF is reached, Egypt could apply for negotiations with the Paris Club on its foreign debt relief. Even though the results of the relief may only be felt in the long-run, the EU and U.S. should encourage Egypt to pursue those negotiations, but if it is unable to meet the criteria, they should offer debt relief on a bilateral basis. The same applies to other Arab countries in economic difficulties, notably Yemen.

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[11] Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 45.

Chapter 2
The Egyptian Path: A Pact of Conservatives

by Hanaa Ebeid

After 18 days of a massive popular uprising, on 11 February 2011, President Hosni Mubarak, the three decade-long ruler of Egypt and linchpin of Egyptian regional and foreign relations, was forced to resign from the presidency. Mubarak's powers were handed over to the Supreme Council for Armed Forces (SCAF), made up entirely of military officers who had assumed leading positions under Mubarak. Hence, SCAF oversaw the transitional path in the name of the revolution and by virtue of Mubarak's resignation.

SCAF's power over the ensuing process of change stemmed from its actual monopoly on the means of "force" and legitimacy based on an image that the army "protected" the revolution. Declaring itself a "guarantor" for achieving the aims of the revolution, and acting in effect as a custodian or a guardian of "the nation," SCAF gained the ability to influence the path of the transition, which remained characteristically pacted and played out through the interaction between SCAF and various democratic opposition actors, in the context of intermittent public pressure for democratisation that lead to some episodes of violence.

The culminating path, although reflecting the power of mass mobilisation and longing for change and democracy, was decidedly conservative and elite-driven, specifically by SCAF and the Islamist opposition. This pact came under increased stress towards the supposed end of the transitional stage and the deadline for handing over SCAF's power to a democratically elected president, owing to the tension between its two main proponents. The future of the transition seems to hang between continuing on that flawed or restricted path, on one hand, and an imminent democratic reversal on the other.

Ferments of a Revolution: Structures vs. Agents

The structural factors leading to the popular uprising in Egypt are in accordance with the modernisation hypothesis and democratisation and the influence of socio-economic pressures on dismantling an autocratic bargain. The role of the Egyptian middle class and urban youth in the Egyptian revolution and the strong resonance of socio-economic grievances in the symbols and slogans of the protests, all render the Lipsetian analysis of social requisites for democracy's renewed validity.

Growing socio-economic pressures have proved central to creating the Egyptian democratic "opening." Although Egypt—as well as Tunisia—had been considered an economic success story by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) because economic growth rates were at considerably high levels in the years preceding the Arab Spring, one fifth of Egyptians lived below the poverty line at that time and another fifth hovered around it.[12] Although poverty is hardly new to Egypt, the past decade has seen a constant rise in the number of Egyptians joining the ranks of the poor, where the poverty headcount rose from 16.7% of the population in 2000, to 19.6% in 2005, and reached 22% in 2008.[13]

The lack of universal social security coverage and access to basic social and economic rights has exacerbated the social marginalization of wide segments of the poor and the lower

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[12] Hanaa Ebeid, "The Egyptian Revolution Crashes World Bank Credibility," *Al Ahram*, 16 April 2011.

[13] Indicators of malnutrition, unemployment and vulnerable employment all build up a picture of deteriorating living standards of the poor along the past decade. See World Bank data http://data.worldbank.org/country/egypt-arab-republic.

middle classes, in a country with a deep statist tradition, thus shaking the traditional tradeoff between social security or development on one hand, and freedom on the other.[14]

Moreover, the declining governmental resources have further put the governing bargain or social contract under strain, since the ousted government had increasingly been seeking more resources through taxes, thus antagonising larger segments of the middle class, and reviving the call for "representation" to go in hand with "taxation." In this regard, the new tax law (No. 91 for the year 2005) drafted in close consultation with the IMF, has increased tax revenue by applying a flat income corporate tax rate of 20%, which has ultimately put an increasing tax burden on individuals and the working class while avoiding progressive or capital gains tax in line with the cabinet's "business friendly" disposition. According to Reda Eissa, individuals in Egypt contribute almost 60% of the total tax revenue, and share a tax burden comparable to that of the French and Swedes, whereas Egyptians don't get comparable social benefits in return.[15]

Socio-economic pressures were augmented by a public "perception" of state hijacking, widespread corruption and cronyism. A public opinion poll conducted by Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in 2009 found corruption high on the public's agenda, with 10% ranking corruption to be the gravest challenge facing Egypt, following bread-and-butter issues, namely unemployment and poverty. An increasingly larger percentage of respondents thought corruption was either the cause or result of the country's main problems and grievances.[16]

The translation of this massive frustration into "agency" for change was building up in the decade preceding the revolution. Two kinds of social movements arose; namely those galvanizing around political rights and freedoms, and those calling for basic social or economic rights. Shehata mapped the various social protest movements and concludes they mainly worked outside the conventional institutional framework of partisan politics and trade-union activism, had a cross-ideological nature and rallied around specific issue-areas, and were predominantly composed of youth activists.[17] Against this background, the year preceding the popular uprising saw a record number of labour protests, demanding a rise in the minimum wage and a rollback of privatisation.[18] A closer analysis of the protest movements in the five years preceding the revolution shows a predominance of labour rights and economic-demand movements (60% of all protests in the period from 2004–2009) and a geographical concentration in urban areas, especially the capital and industrial urban areas.[19]

However, mounting popular dissent and massive street politics and mobility in the previous decade translated into meagre institutionalised opposition. The lack of institutionalised democratic opposition gave an intuitive edge to both Islamist forces and the military, whereas the new activism remained extra-institutional, and pertained to the realm of life or "street politics."

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[14] Nadine Sika, "The Political Economy of Arab Uprisings," *EuroMeSCo Paper 10*, March 2012, p. 17.

[15] Reda Eissa, "Just Taxation in Egypt: A Tax-Payer View," Center for Economic and Social Rights, Cairo, 2010, pp. 21–22. (In Arabic) The World Bank's "Paying Taxes: The Global Picture" reports (2008-2010) show that in terms of numbers and rates, profit taxes were much lower than labour taxes in Egypt.See www.pwc.com/gx/en/paying-taxes/.

[16] Gamal Soltan, "Egyptians Experiences and Attitudes Towards Transparency and Corruption," in Abdel Fattah Al Gibali and Hanaa Ebeid (eds.) *Towards a More Transparent Society in Egypt*, Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2009, pp. 208–209.

[17] Dina Shehata, "Youth Protest Movements: Youth for Change, Solidarity, and 6th of April," in Dina Shehata (ed.) *The Return of Politics: New Protest Movements in Egypt*, (Cairo: Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2010) pp. 270–272.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Emad Syam, "The Map of Peaceful Protests in Egypt: Preliminary Indicators of a New Civil Society," in Dina Shehata, *The Return of Politics*, ibid, pp. 54–56.

It is noteworthy that the influence of foreign actors in terms of structural or contextual forces pushing for change or explicit agency has been increasingly minimal in influencing the Egyptian transition.

In general terms, the conditions for a positive contribution by foreign actors in democratisation in the case of Egypt have always been weak. To start with, the Mubarak regime forged enduring foreign relations with Western powers revolving around his regime's role in maintaining the peace treaty with Israel, and as a force for "moderation", thus the existence of a foreign "will" to push for democracy and reform in Egypt has been weak at best.

Moreover, the ability of foreign actors to induce genuine reforms in Egypt is highly questionable. According to Way and Levitsky, Western leverage made possible by a government's vulnerability to international pressure and linkage to the West or the density of economic, political, and organisational ties to Western countries and Western-led multilateral institutions is the foundation for successful pressure, while linkage in general has had a more positive record of impacting domestic politics than leverage.[20] Although Egypt receives a handsome annual aid package from the U.S., the country is not aid-dependent and the percentage of aid has not exceeded 3% of national income for more than two decades, a state that does not allow for significant foreign leverage. Moreover, counter-leverage based on the country's regional role has always shielded Mubarak's regime from genuine pro-reform pressures.

Following the outbreak of revolutionary protests, it became evident that foreign powers, namely the U.S. and the EU, had a problem articulating a consistent pro-reform position, and their ability to influence developments in the country were increasingly marginal.

A Pact of Conservatives

The prominent role of the military and the unequal power distribution among partisan politics in which the Islamists enjoyed more resources (organisationally and financially) were reflected in a conservative pact that shaped the Egyptian transition. According to Stepan, "a pacted transition is one that entails the interaction of four sets of actors, hardliners and softliners within the regime, and conservatives and radicals in opposition."[21] However, the Egyptian path has been predominantly led by conservatives in charting out a path and initiating the pact for transition.

In this regard, almost all political forces accepted the role of SCAF as referee and guarantor of the transition, while opposition to SCAF remained at the fringes and came mainly from uninstitutionalised movements. Hence, SCAF was able to chart the way, through an implicit pact with the dominant political institutionalised opposition: the Islamists (the Muslim Brotherhood's FJP and Al-Nour Salafi Muslim Party, which came into existence after the revolution), and the non-religious or secular democratic opposition (old liberal and leftist parties, and new parties galvanised around revolutionary demands). The non-institutional opposition (the revolutionary youth) that constituted the radical factions of the democratic opposition has been gradually marginalised, leading to their exclusion from the pact.

Owing to its popular legitimacy and *de facto* hold on power, various democratic opposition actors had a stake in pacting where SCAF played a major role and became the prime agent. For the Islamists, especially the MB, the new "legitimacy" bestowed on their political party (FJP) was perceived as a political opportunity not to be missed or jeopardised, and the conservative and hierarchical nature of both actors (MB and SCAF) allowed for the convergence on dismissing the radical and revolutionary views for change held by the youth activists and

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[20] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Linkage and Leverage: How Do International Factors Change Domestic Balances of Power?" in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition,* ed. Andreas Schedler, Lynner Rinner Publishers, Boulder, 2006, p. 199.

[21] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996, p. 300.

coalitions. Paradoxically, the secular opposition also found in SCAF a "safeguard" against being overpowered by Islamists, who enjoyed a deeper organisational structure and grassroots reach.

Against this background, an implicit pact in the sense of an "agreement between contending actors which defines the rules of governance on the basis of mutual guarantees for the vital interests of those involved" was born.[22] Parties to the pact were mainly the military junta (SCAF) and the institutional democratic opposition, among whom the MB or Islamists in general enjoyed unequal power over formulating the pact. The non-institutional democratic opposition, comprising mainly youth coalitions, students, and sports fan groups (the ultras), were the major losers of this strategic interaction.

In the absence of legal legitimacy, SCAF was in need of constitutionalising its extra-legal position by adding a provision that would allow its assumption of authority. On 13 February 2011, SCAF decided to dissolve parliament and to suspend the 1971 Constitution. This step was widely accepted as a necessary condition for democratisation, as the 2010 parliament was put in place through highly fraudulent elections and its members were predominantly from Mubarak's National Democratic Party NDP. Moreover, the 1971 Constitution stipulated almost unchecked presidential prerogatives, further worsened after highly controversial amendments in 2007.[23] However, with the move to suspend the constitution, SCAF became the highest authority in the country, monopolising the presidential and parliamentary powers until elected bodies were sworn in and a new constitution was drafted.

Two main approaches regarding the path to transition were struggling at this early stage; namely the "constitution first" approach and the "elections first" approach. The foundational bargain was one that favoured the procedural, reformist or evolutionary "elections first" approach, under the guardianship of SCAF, and which refuted a more radical change under the "constitution first" view, which could have ended SCAF's primacy early on.

The actors who backed the "elections first" view were overtly Islamists and, covertly, SCAF, whereas secular political parties and most revolutionaries and activists, and the Coptic Church were in clear preference of drafting a new constitution before elections. The Islamists wanted to have the elections first because they were more confident about the outcome than other options.

Although evidence for an explicit or written pact are wanting, SCAF unilaterally appointed a Constitutional Reform Committee in charge of amending some provisions of the abolished 1971 Constitution and composed of eight members, including a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and headed by Tarek al-Bishri, a prominent Islamist thinker. The committee was given 10 days to draft the amendments, mainly articles concerning the eligibility criteria for the presidency, term limits and judicial supervision of elections: Articles 76 (presidential elections process), 77 (duration and number of presidential terms), 88 (judicial supervision of the elections), 93 (challenges regarding parliamentary elections), and 189 (procedure for constitutional amendments).

MB endorsed the amendments and fiercely advocated a popular "yes" vote, on the assumption that it would allow the reform process to move forward and parliamentary elections to be organised as scheduled. This was highly desirable given that MB had the most solidly organised party, and knew that they could do well in the coming parliamentary elections. They declared that voting "no" would entail the risk of extending the transition period, and let the military junta entrench itself.[24]

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[22] Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 1, October 1990, p. 9.

[23] Nathan Brown, Michelle Dunne, Amr Hamzawy, "Egypt's Controversial Constitutional Amendments: A Textual Analysis," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 23 March 2007, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/egypt_constitution_webcommentary01.pdf.

[24] Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron, "Egypt's Path to Transition: Democratic Challenges Behind the Constitution Reform Process," *Middle East Law and Governance*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1–2, p. 47.

Although SCAF had no explicit position before the amendments were subject to public referendum, its members subtly emphasised that the adoption of the amendments was key to ending the then-current period of instability and chaos, and restoring order and hence, jumpstarting the stagnating economy.

Most liberal and secular parties, as well as Copts through the Coptic Church, campaigned against the amendments, calling for a "constitution first" approach. In the end, 77.2% of the voters voted in favour of the proposed amendments, with an unprecedented genuine voter turnout of 41% of eligible voters.

The result of the referendum was interpreted as a victory for the SCAF–MB nexus, or the conservative, reformist path to change, as many of the voters opted for "yes" as a way to regain "normalcy" and revive the economy. Hence, the issue was presented to the public not as one of a choice of a democratic path, but rather one of calculated risk that had profound meaning to many who were concerned about their livelihood.

The Process: Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

The process of a transition that saw two elections and the enactment of different laws was thus a reflection of the "foundational" bargain whereby the conservatives or reformists were declared "victorious," until the initial pact started to come under strain with signs of tensions between SCAF and MB leading to outright confrontation.

This foundational bargain bore all the future flaws or "birth defects" that perpetuated the SCAF–MB monopoly and sidelined other democratic opposition actors. This monopoly has in effect impeded the process of transition by fostering the role of SCAF as the prime agent for change. The main features of the bargain and the subsequent process were:

1. SCAF as the balance holder, in charge of the temporal and procedural crafting of the path to transition;
2. accentuating the reformist/radical dichotomy and declaring the first triumphant;
3. highlighting the religious/secular polarisation, which played out during the campaigning for the plebiscite, where the MB used religious arguments to publicize a "yes" vote, while the secular opposition and the Coptic Church advocated a "no" vote.[25]

After the public referendum, and the majority "yes" vote, both SCAF and the Islamists cited "democratic legitimacy" in the face of the street protests that continued unabated and called for more revolutionary reforms of the security apparatus or clear measures for trials of the ousted regime.

However, the majority "yes" vote for SCAF's sponsored constitutional declaration and the subsequent majority won by the Islamists in the parliamentary elections have reinforced the conservative pact. Thus, the Islamists clearly opted for a gradualist reformist approach overseen by SCAF in which the Islamic opposition enjoyed a privileged position while liberals and leftists came under SCAF's "guardianship".

In this regard, SCAF saw fit to issue a political statement in July 2011 (SCAF Statement No. 69) denouncing street demonstrations calling for more radical changes and denouncing the 6 April movement as enticement and serving "special agendas," in an implicit accusation they were instruments of foreign meddling.

Similarly, MB's discourse was one of solidarity with SCAF, and calling for "respect of legitimacy" and institutionalised politics and an end to "street politics," and refraining from participation in most popular protests, and at times casting the revolutionaries as

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[25] Hanaa Ebeid, "The Violence of Dichotomies in the Revolutionary Aftermath," *Siyasa Dawliya,* April 2011, http://digital.ahram.org.eg/articles.aspx?Serial=473797&eid=3120.

chaos-inspiring "anarchists". Secular institutional opposition became more and more alienated from their street-base and have become the weakest spot of this pact of conservatives.

Early signs of discord within this pact began before the parliamentary elections with the Al-Selmy communiqué. Deputy Prime Minister Ali al-Selmy, in charge of the democratic transition, proposed in early November supra-constitutional principles that would "guarantee" basic rights and freedoms, decide the criteria for member-selection of the constituent assembly assigned to draft the constitution, and outline the future role of military in politics.

The Islamists considered the communiqué an attempt to strip any new parliament of the right to draft a new constitution, which they considered ordained by the constitutional declaration, and opposed it.[26] Other opposition forces did not publicly endorse the communiqué because of its many controversial articles.[27]

The parliamentary elections signalled the continued sidelining of the secular partisans and revolutionary opposition while the rift over the drafting of the constitution and the future role of the military was widening. The Islamists came in full force in the People's Assembly elections, surpassing their majority in Tunisia and constituting a comfortable majority in parliament, and hence had a potential monopoly over the drafting of the constitution. The majority achieved by MB and the Al-Nour party made it possible for the Islamists to pass legislation without significant compromises or cross-party deliberations.

Figure 1. Election Results: Number of Seats Won by Each Party

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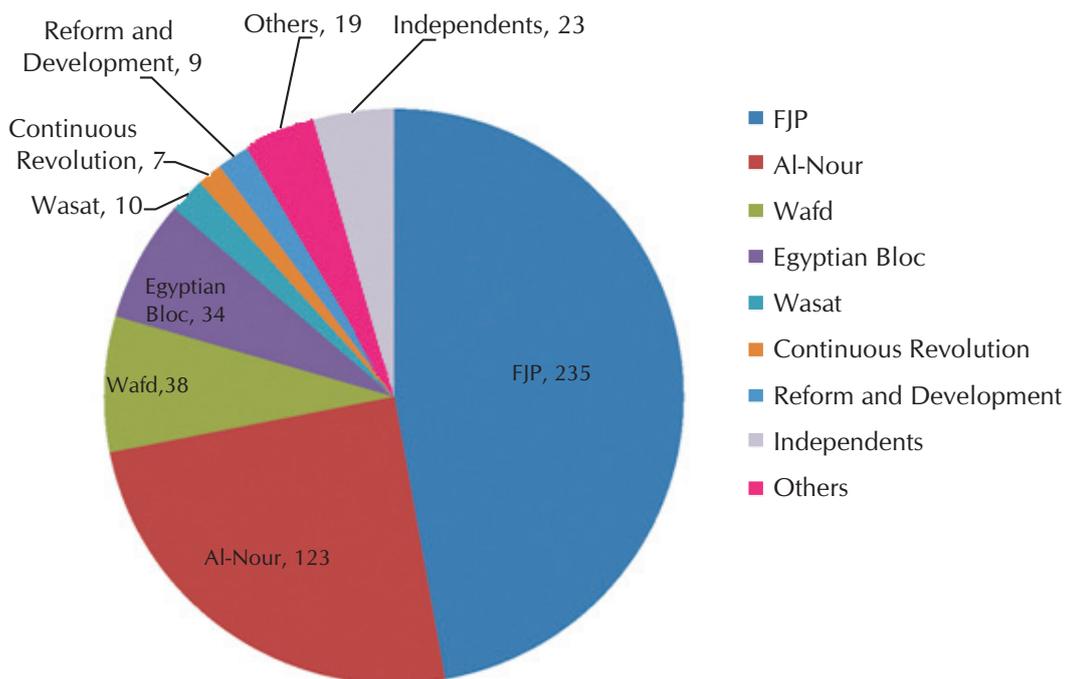
[26] Yasmin Fathy, "SCAF's Proposal for Constitution Abuses Will of the People, Charge Critics," *Ahram Online*, 3 November 2011, http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/25802.aspx.

[27] Article 9 of the communiqué stipulated that the army "protects the constitutional legitimacy of the nation… and that only the armed forces has the right to discuss matters related to the armed forces or discuss its budget … and the president can only declare war after gaining the consent of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces." The second article in Part 2 of the communiqué stipulated that if the new constitution includes any articles that violate the constitutional decree announced last March, the armed forces has the right to ask the assembly to revise the said article within 15 days. Article 3, maintains that if the constituent assembly fails to draw up a new constitution within six months, the SCAF, as acting president, has the authority to create a new assembly to do the job. Ibid.

The Islamist majority within the legislature led to a deeper rift between the Islamist and secular or non-Islamist opposition forces, rendering more power to SCAF as a referee or balance holder. The MB not only nearly had a simple majority but also a comfortable majority when aligned with the salafists, and they could pass legislation easily without prior consultation or bargaining with other party members or independents within parliament.

This proved detrimental both to the prospects for cooperation among the "democratic opposition" and perpetuated the religious-secular polarisation within the opposition. The tension among democratic opposition factions played out in the constitutional draft impasse. The constitutional declaration had stipulated that parliament would choose or elect a 100-person committee to draft the constitution without being clear about the criteria for choosing those persons or whether the committee should be selected from among parliamentarians.

Tension between the Islamists and the secular opposition was at its highest, since the Islamists favoured having a majority of MPs (which gave them an automatic edge since they made up almost 70% of parliament), while the secular side preferred an independent committee made up of law professionals and public figures. A bloc vote of the MB and Al-Nour Salafi Muslim party made it possible for the Islamists to overlook the criticism and decide on the committee's formation. Signs began at this point that SCAF, the secular opposition, and wider segments of society had become weary of a Brotherhood "takeover" of the transition process.

Furthermore, the initial pact was coming under strain since the MB sought to form a government and had become highly critical of the SCAF-appointed transitional government, to the extent of suspending parliamentary sessions for one week in protest against the performance of the government.

In an escalating move, MB decided to compete for the presidency, and the parliament passed a disenfranchisement law that aimed to ban officials who had served in top positions during the last 10 years of Hosni Mubarak's rule, including Ahmad Shafiq and Omar Suleiman, from entering the presidential race or running for public office for five years.

The features of a power struggle became more manifest as cases were filed to dissolve the elected parliament on the basis of the unconstitutionality of the parliamentary elections law enacted after the revolution, which would render the parliament (the main seat of the Islamists' power) unconstitutional.

The confrontation between SCAF and MB became even more spelled out with the results of the first round of presidential elections in which the candidate of the MB's FJP ran against ex-Mubarak MP Ahmed Shafiq, who was widely seen as SCAF's contender in the race.

Thus, the SCAF–MB faceoff played out on two fields, one legal and one electoral. On the legal field, MB came out as the outright loser when the High Constitutional Court (HCC) announced mid-June (a few days before the presidential runoffs) that both the lower and upper houses of Egypt's parliament were null and void. Moreover, the court refuted the disenfranchisement law, calling it unconstitutional and thus allowing Shafiq to compete in the runoffs.[28]

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[28] The Egyptian Judiciary enjoys an image and actual record of independence from executive power, and many Egyptian judges individually and through their forums were outspoken advocates for political reform in the years preceding the revolution. However, speculations about SCAF's influence on the judiciary have been on the rise, especially after three judges assigned to cases about foreign funding for NGOs withdrew, citing feelings of "unease," after which the foreigners accused in the case left the country in a prearranged agreement with their governments. Suspicions of SCAF influence over the judiciary became even more spelled out with the Supreme Court's ruling two days before the elections that kept Ahmed Shafiq in the presidential race and dissolved the newly elected parliament. Other red flags were raised against the Supreme Presidential Electoral Commission (SPEC) for taking more than one week to announce the results of the electoral elections. In a subtle implication that the Supreme Constitutional Court's decisions concerning the dissolution of parliament and refuting the political disenfranchisement law were politicised, Tarek Al Bishri (a member of the Constitutional Amendments Committee) attested that it was a historic precedent that the Supreme Court issued its ruling, posited the legal arguments behind the ruling, and the ruling was published in the official newspaper all on the very same day. Tarek Al Bishri, "Five Days that Shook the Revolution (1–2)," *Shorouk*, 26 June 2012.

Moreover, SCAF abruptly announced an addendum to the military-authored March 2011 Constitutional Declaration on the second day of the presidential runoffs, which gave the ruling SCAF unfettered powers, diminished the presidential prerogative, and retained legislative power with SCAF until a new parliament could be elected. The addendum also gave SCAF veto power over the constitution drafted by the Constituent Assembly, the body tasked with writing the constitution. Many of the stipulations of the addendum were reformulations of the earlier El Selmy supra-Constitutional Communiqué.[29]

The dissolving of the parliament's lower house meant that SCAF had assumed full legislative and executive authority over the country. SCAF's moves were interpreted by the non-partisan and revolutionary political opposition (youth coalitions and protest movements) and some segments of the public as a subtle coup. Many youth movements that had previously had a sour relationship with the MB explicitly sided with Morsi. For its part, the FJP presented its candidate as a participant in the revolution who was running against a Mubarak regime representative and SCAF's attempted coup. The MB promised to forge links with the revolutionary and non-religious democratic opposition, and signs of a "renewed" alliance were evolving. In effect, the MB resorted to the moral power of the revolution and promised drastic democratic changes, and power-sharing with non-religious opposition.

The MB's candidate won the elections powered by the revolutionary alliance formed against Shafiq and SCAF's exceptional measures. However, this new alliance is unlikely to drastically alter the initial conservative pact, since a major change in the power of the various actors or their ability to influence vital interests has not occurred.

Although MB will arguably seek more collaboration with the secular democratic opposition, the crux of power remains with the two conservative actors, namely MB and SCAF, who seem willing to renegotiate the pact and re-establish the rules of the game while setting boundaries on each other's roles and prerogatives. In this new pact, SCAF seems to be clinging to amnesty and retaining a role for itself in the post-revolutionary regime.

Conclusions

The process of transition in Egypt is still ongoing and it's difficult to foresee the final outcomes. The path to transition so far has seen pacting among the most conservative elements of the elite, namely the military-backed SCAF and the MB, at the expense of more progressive and revolutionary factions. The power structure in the aftermath of the revolution together with the rising legitimacy of SCAF allowed the latter to impose its own view, pace, and bargain on the path to transition.

Although the "original sin," or "birth defects," hypothesis is cast in doubt in the literature on transition, it is widely held, especially among radical factions of the opposition and revolutionaries, that the path to Egypt's transition was distorted by the "original sin" of handing over full power to and bestowing legitimacy on SCAF. Procedurally, the foundational bargain that bred the whole range of defects in the transition, according to the same perspective, was marked by the constitutional referendum of 30 March 2011, and the preference expressed in it for an "elections first" approach, which thus consolidated the Islamists' hegemonic position.

The interplay of structure and agency in the origin and outcome of the Egyptian path exhibits the influence of structural factors in shaking autocratic rule, while actual transition remains contingent upon agency. The failure to date of translating the momentum of mass mobilisation into powerful institutional actors climaxed in the competitive first presidential election run-off between a candidate representing the military establishment and the old regime and the MB candidate.

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[29] See footnote 27 for more information.

The Egyptian path accentuates the uncertainty in transition in a full sense. A year and half after its onset, the Egyptian path seems more uncertain than ever, with a constitutional court ruling that ordained the dissolution of the elected parliament, a constitutional addendum by SCAF that undermines presidential prerogatives and maintains a heavy military grip on politics, and a pact that drafted a very conservative path for reform facing an impasse. Although the presidential elections and first non-military president in 60 years has averted an immediate crisis, prospects for the Egyptian path seem blurry, and signals of democratic reversals cannot be totally overlooked.

Egypt: Timeline

Date	Event
1953	Egypt declared a republic by President Muhammad Naguib
1956	Gamal Abdel Nasser becomes President
1970	Nasser dies, replaced by Vice-President Anwar al-Sadat
1971	Egypt renamed Arab Republic of Egypt, introduces new constitution
1978	Camp David Accords for peace with Israel signed
1981	Sadat assassinated by jihadists, national referendum appoints Hosni Mubarak as the new president
1981	Mubarak reinstates "emergency law", allowing authorities to arrest and hold citizens without charge
2005	Anti-government demonstrations, multiple candidates allowed to stand in presidential elections by constitutional amendment
2005	Mubarak re-elected for fifth consecutive term
2006	Mubarak promises democratic and constitutional reform in address to parliament
2011, 25 January	Popular uprising calling for the downfall of Mubarak's regime
2011, 28 January	Mubarak appoints Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman as vice president
2011, 29 January	Mubarak appoints Minister of Aviation Ahmed Shafiq as prime minister
2011, 11 February	Mubarak is toppled and power handed over to SCAF with revolutionary legitimacy
2011, 13 February	SCAF suspends the 1971 Constitution and dissolves the 2010 Parliament
2011, 15 February	SCAF appoints a Constitutional Amendment Committee
2011, 3 March	Ahmed Shafiq resigns, bowing to popular pressure and mass protest
2011, 19 March	Public referendum on constitutional amendments yields a 77.2% "yes" vote
2011, June	Muslim Brotherhood opposition party declared legal
2011, 9 October	The Maspero incidents occur, when thousands of Copts marched to Maspero TV headquarters demonstrating against the military's silence over the burning of a church and violence breaks out; an estimated 30 people are killed
2011, 1 November	The announcement of the Al Salmy Supra-Constitutional Communiqué

Date	Event
2011, 19 November	Muhammad Mahmoud Incidents occur, which were protests against the Interior Ministry
2011, 28 November 2012, 10 January	Elections for parliament's lower chamber
2011, 16 December	Cabinet clashes end with military police attacking a sit-in in Tahrir Square
2012, 29 January – 22 February	Elections for parliament's upper chamber
2012, 25 March	Formation of the first constituent assembly for drafting the constitution through an MB–salafist-dominated vote
2012, 10 April	Court rules the dissolution of the constituent assembly to be unconstitutional
2012, 23–24 May	First round of the presidential elections
2012, 14 June	The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled that a law governing the parliamentary elections is unconstitutional in a landmark case that results in the dissolution of parliament. The court also strikes down the political disenfranchisement law, allowing Ahmed Shafiq to stay in the presidential race.
2012, 16–18 June	Second round of presidential elections
2012, 17 June	The military issues a constitutional addendum limiting presidential prerogatives and regaining legislative power until a new parliament is elected
2012, 25 June	Final result of the presidential elections is announced: Dr. Mohamed Morsi wins with 51.73% of votes; he is declared president of the country
2012, 30 June	Morsi is sworn in as Egypt's president in front of the Supreme Constitutional Court in an implicit acknowledgment of the military's constitutional addendum

Chapter 3
The Libyan Case: Building from Scratch

by Stanisław Guliński

The Libyan revolution—contrary to other disturbances in the Arab world—eventually led to the complete elimination of the former regime, thus creating space to build something new. What exactly that "new" will be is difficult to predict given the current state of acute anarchy all over the country.

One has to remember that—in contrast to Egypt, Syria or Yemen—Libya is a country with a very short history of political sovereignty and statehood. Tripolitania was historically associated with the Maghreb, and Cyrenaica with Egypt. Only lately and under foreign duress was Libya transformed into one political entity. The common (to some extent) struggle against Italian colonialism provided Libyans with a sort of foundation myth, but it was not until 1951 that this entity gained, for the first time in history, its independence. Ironically, Adriaan Pelt, the UN diplomat charged with negotiating conditions for Libya's independence, allegedly had more trouble persuading his Libyan partners than foreign powers about the viability of the Libyan state to come.

The short period of monarchical rule (1951–69) couldn't produce a robust enough foundation to build on since the young country was troubled by an extremely inefficient economy and shifting forms of administration. King Idris, knowledgeable as a Sufi and master of tribal politics was at loss when forced to deal with the rapid development of dilemmas that surfaced with oil-generated wealth. Instead of prosperity, oil—which started to be extracted in large quantities in 1959—created enormous cleavages between different sections of society. It should be remembered that on the eve of independence, Libya had only several men with high-school degrees and another handful of secondary-school teachers at its disposal. So when the oil boom came, it had to be managed almost solely by heavily paid foreigners, creating deep resentment amongst the wider population. In this situation, the only question was which of the widespread conspiracies would be successful. The Free Unionist Officers with 27-year old Muammar Abu Minyar proved to be the one.

There's no room here to summarise the history of the rule of Muammar Qaddafi (as he later chose to call himself, evoking his tribal allegiance). It's worth mentioning, however, that in trying to dissociate themselves from all what Qaddafi created, the revolutionaries of 2011 are somewhat returning to nowhere because the revolution of 1969—for good and mainly bad—really created Libya as the country we came to know.

Direct Causes of the Revolution

Discussing the reasons for what happened in Libya in 2011, one should keep in mind that Qaddafi's Jamahiriya ("state of the masses") was one of the least penetrable countries in the world. Information concerning the real mechanisms of Libya's politics was scarce and often based rather on gossip and stipulation than any verifiable material. The actual balance of power and the intricacies of decision-making were the constantly changing, unpublished and undocumented personal shifts in Qaddafi's "court." Even hardened diplomats and long-time experts in the Arab world found it difficult to accurately understand the state of affairs.[30]

Not long before the revolution, the aging Qaddafi lost his grip on media coverage the Libyans followed. As in other Arab countries, Al-Jazeera and, to lesser extent, Al-Arabiya became the primary source of information about the surrounding world for Libyans. Although

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[30] For one account of pre-2011 Libyan history, see Dennis Summut, "At Forty, the Libyan Revolution Finally Matures," *Mediterranean Politics*, November 2009, Vol. 14, Issue 3, pp. 437-442.

much less connected to the internet (not to mention Facebook or Twitter) when compared with Tunisia and Egypt, Libyans developed a profound trust in Al-Jazeera. Interestingly, during the last months before the uprising, the Qatar-based TV station seemed to enjoy some support from the Libyan regime, being clearly allowed to research and broadcast news about minor internal troubles not covered by other media outlets (such as the hunger strike of three men in Tobruk, cases of abject poverty in Cyrenaica or signs of dissatisfaction among Benghazi's police officers). Consequently, when the revolution started and Al-Jazeera chose to provide the revolutionaries with its full support, Qaddafi found himself already defeated on the information battlefield.

Probably the early spark of unrest was ignited by the first batch of materials released on Wikileaks, including cables from the U.S. embassy in Tripoli describing some strange habits and facts of the personal life of Qaddafi. It wasn't that Libyans didn't gossip about these subjects, but for the first time they could read them from reliable source. What's more, Libyans felt personally insulted being ruled by a man scorned by the world. The immediate reaction of the Libyan authorities was swift, and the U.S. ambassador was recalled to Washington. But the effect the leaks generated persisted. Even long before that, Libyans travelling abroad often felt unease being identified as "Qaddafi people" ruled by a "crazy" and—more important—"comical" leader. Libya being in fact to a large extent a Bedouin, tribal society, their deep sense of honour was thus injured.

One of the now least-remembered events that led to the Libyan revolution of 17th February 2011 happened on 13th January (and the following days), when delays in the distribution of housing units across the country turned into occupations of the units. Interestingly, the occupations of the buildings (mainly constructed by foreign developers) began after a direct proposal by Col. Qaddafi, who, during a conference in the southern city of Sabha, openly encouraged a complaining citizen to grab his two-years overdue flat. The next day thousands of flats were taken over. Keeping in mind that the Tunisian revolution had already managed to remove President Zine El Abidin Ben Ali, which had a profound impact on Qaddafi, many observers and diplomats based in Tripoli concluded that encouraging his people to occupy housing units was just a means to ease the tensions and let Libyans "revolt in a controlled way." But Qaddafi heavily miscalculated. Once on the streets, the protesters—even if still waving the green flags of the Jamahiriya—felt their power, all the more so when police were instructed not to intervene. Noticeably the "squatters movement" was most massive and violent in Cyrenaica, which after a month erupted in all-out revolution.

Another factor of major importance leading to the revolution was the removal of President Hosni Mubarak from office in Egypt on 11 February. The toppling of the long-ruling presidents in both neighbouring Arab countries had a tremendous effect on Libyans, especially young Libyans. Only then did they understand that change was really at hand, and they called for a "day of rage" on 17 February.

Revolution Begins

What came to be known as the 17th February Revolution started in fact on the 15th day of that fateful month. In the evening, several hundred protesters gathered in front of the police headquarters in Benghazi demanding the release of a lawyer, Fathi Tarbal. Marching through the centre of the largest city in Cyrenaica, the protesters damaged cars and hurled stones. Police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons. In the end several people were injured. Following those clashes, protests in other Cyrenaican cities and Zintan (100km south of Tripoli) erupted.

The 17th of February was chosen as a "day of rage" by the Libyan opposition because of the events that had taken place five years earlier when regime forces responded with live ammunition on crowds attacking the Italian Consulate in Benghazi after a minister of the Italian

government publicly wore a t-shirt with a reproduction of the famous Danish cartoons depicting the prophet of Islam.

On 18 February, Qaddafi ordered the withdrawal of his troops (mainly the so-called security battalions) from Benghazi. Even in the capital, Tripoli, some government buildings were burned and looted. Within a few days, the withdrawal of government forces from huge areas of Cyrenaica followed, leaving protesters with a vast "liberated territory".

From the outset of the revolt, Al-Jazeera and Western media adopted a very biased pro-revolutionary approach, accusing solely the Qaddafi forces of using violence and depicting protesters as peaceful. Until the end of the revolution in Libya, Al-Jazeera—in an often distorted way—succeeded in dictating the language in which the events in Libya were described around the world.[31] Saving the revolutionaries from the unpleasant dilemma of fighting their fellow countrymen, the media coverage portrayed the Qaddafi forces as almost exclusively composed of mercenaries and renegades (which was not the case).

Thus, the initial fighting started in three isolated locations: Cyrenaica, Zintan, and after a couple of days, in Misrata. "Liberated" Cyrenaica encompassed a large area with roughly one-third of the Libyan population and several major cities (Benghazi, Ajdabiya, al-Baida, Derna and Tobruk). Since they maintained sympathy for the late King Idriss, its inhabitants were convinced that Qaddafi treated them as second-class citizens, depriving Benghazi of the once-held "second capital" status. Additionally, Cyrenaica in general and some of its areas in particular had a reputation for breeding Islamist militancy (especially Derna) or as being the most conservative in the whole country (al-Baida). Cyrenaica (or al-Barqa, as Libyans prefer to call it) also provided the rebels with a major lifeline to the outside world, a land border crossing to Egypt in Musaid/al-Salloum. Taking over such a large area also eased NATO's decision to intervene from the air while providing necessary space for undercover operations on the ground for the revolutionaries' Arab friends.

With about 35,000 inhabitants, the town of Zintan was barely known to foreigners living in Libya before the revolution. Perched on a high range of the Nafusa Mountains (Libyans call them the "western mountains"), Zintan itself is inhabited by Arabs, but the surrounding villages and towns are often Berber (Amazigh). To make matters even more complicated, the Arab tribes of the area differed according to their proximity to the regime. To the immediate east of Zintan lived the Mshaysha Arab tribe, which stood firm with Qaddafi until the end of the revolution and which is now paying dearly for that allegiance. In fact, the Nafusa area are rather atypical mountains and seems more to be a giant 500-metre high step, falling abruptly to the north (in the direction of Tripoli, 100 kilometres away) but quite open and accessible from the south. The southern approach is made complicated by the large swathes of Hamada desert. Nafusa fighters managed with time to open for themselves another border crossing (Wazin/Dehiba) to Tunisia, thus creating another lifeline for the revolution. Eventually, these Zintan fighters were the first to enter metropolitan Tripoli after breaking through Qaddafi's defences at Bi'r al-Ghanem and marching into coastal az-Zawiya.

Misrata, the third-largest city in Libya (with some 450,000 inhabitants) and home to the largest seaport in the country had long nurtured enmity with the neighbouring tribe of Warfalla, one of the regime's pillars in the last years of the Jamahiriya. Home to another failed uprising against Qaddafi in 1993, Misrata benefited from its harbour and—albeit under siege—managed to get humanitarian aid from the world and military provisions from Benghazi and international friends.

By 23 March, Qaddafi suffered from several painful defections of his close associates, among whom the most prominent were Minister of Justice Mustafa Abdul Jalil (until August 2012 chairman of the National Transitional Council and all but in name the president of the

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[31] This was also the case in Syria. See Blake Hounshell, "The Qatar Bubble," *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2012.

new Libya) and Interior Minister Abdul Fattah Younis, who became chief of staff in the rebel army and was subsequently murdered at the end of July 2011.

But it wasn't until 19 March, when French and British planes checked Qaddafi forces as they were advancing on Benghazi, that the revolution was saved and with the support of the most powerful military alliance in the world could effectively await final victory. The reasons behind the international intervention are different for every country that initiated it[32]—France, the UK and the U.S.—though eventually it will most likely have little effect on the political developments of the country. With the passage of time, the average Libyan will tend to forget that without this forceful implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973, their uprising would have had a very scarce if any chance of success.

Deep Divisions Persist

For the 42 years of Qaddafi's rule, Libya was as Yugoslavia was after the similarly long tenure of Tito, like a fridge in which many multiple internal issues had been frozen until they seemed all but forgotten. But once forcibly unfrozen, the stored goods began to rot. All the seemingly forgotten tribal and personal rivalries surfaced, sometimes inherited from father to son (or grandson). Still, when compared to other states in turmoil, Libya has had good prospects to be quite an ethnically and religiously homogenous country with a high income secured by oil revenues. But the "new Libya" decided to build from scratch, putting aside the Qaddafi era, and that, given scarce political experience, can be a difficult starting point.

Libya seems to be hopelessly divided along tribal lines. With the noticeable distinction of the quite atomised society in Tripoli, tribal or clan identity is still predominant in the country, including in other big cities. However, only rarely can a tribe or clan claim exclusive domination, even in particular areas. Thus, negotiations and consensus are necessary to settle local strife.

But, as the civil war in Libya has shown, the tribes are too divided and territorially overlapping to create a base for a new system. The most a tribe can offer is a sort of personal security in the absence of law and state. So, during the strife between the revolutionaries and pro-Qaddafi forces, four regional rather than tribal centres of power emerged that to this day retain their influence:

- **Tripoli**: although in general it was quite indifferent to the revolution's cause until its capture by the rebels in Aug 2011, it retained its function as the capital and the only nexus effectively unifying the country;
- **Benghazi**: the cradle of the revolution and *de facto* second capital of King Idriss' Libya; Benghazi militias currently control most of Eastern Libya as far as the outskirts of Sirt (Qaddafi's birthplace) and al-Kufra Oasis (currently clashing with Tibbu);
- **Zintan**: its militia was among the first to enter Tripoli and effectively controls much of the capital and vast portions of Western Libya; Saif al-Islam Qaddafi is their POW; it remains in bloody strife with the long-time pro-Qaddafi Mshaysha tribe;
- **Misrata**: the bulwark of the Libyan Revolution, the militia here defended the city against attacks for three months, even when it was partly under siege; it controls parts of the capital and most of the Qadhadhfa tribal territory; the new authorities removed the whole population of the town of Tawurgha because of the residents' alleged sinister role during the siege; they are traditional rivals of the major Warfalla tribe.

As a country with very basic infrastructure, a potential break-up of Libya would lead to the emergence of less-viable entities with very limited qualified material and human resources. Such a scenario cannot be completely eliminated. Because of the vast distances separating the

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[32] For an analysis of international intervention in Libya see Patrycja Sasnal, "Libya: Too Hot to Handle," *PISM Strategic File*, No. 14, March 2011.

major new centres of power, one can imagine they may maintain relative autonomy. Even a kind of divided sovereignty over oil fields is imaginable. What's more, neighbouring countries are not in a position to impose their influence over internal Libyan affairs, or have no ambition to do so (contrary to the situation in Iraq). A divided Libya would inevitably turn into a failed state with open borders to non-state actors.

However, the possibility of an all-out civil war in Libya is still limited because of the restrained goals of the locally warring parties. With an important exception of Cyrenaican federalists (who do not have the upper hand in their region), the ambitions of all the centres of power do not exceed the regional level. The 7 July elections to the National Congress were anxiously awaited by those aspiring to rule the country. If not satisfied with its outcome, they probably would have tried to make up for the perceived losses with arguments that they possess weapons, control over oil fields, and high-level POWs, whom they've kept as bargaining chips. Even though they have not used those chips they still possess them, which may prove a potential destabilising factor in the future.

Libya: Timeline

Date	Event
1969	Col. Muammar Qaddafi ousts King Idris in a military coup
1992	UN levies sanctions on Libya in an effort to make it turn in two Lockerbie bombing suspects
2003	UN lifts sanctions after Libya compensates Lockerbie bombing victims
2006	U.S. plans to restore full diplomatic ties with Libya
2011, February	Large scale protests sparked by human rights campaigner; Qaddafi attacks protesters with aircraft
2011, February	Two Libyan pilots defect to Malta after orders to bomb civilians
2011, 17–19 March	UN backs no-fly zone over Libya, operation "Odyssey Dawn" begins
2011, April	NATO takes over military command from U.S., France, UK
2011, August	Rebels take over Qaddafi fortress compound; Qaddafi goes into hiding; Libyan Transitional National Council (NTC) sets up government in Tripoli
2011, October	Qaddafi found and killed by Libyan rebels, nation declared "liberated"
2011, October	NATO ends military operations in Libya, 11 days after Qaddafi's death
2011, November	Saif al-Islam captured, the last fugitive Qaddafi relative to be caught or killed
2012, January	Former rebel forces clash over issues of NTC governance
2012, July	Elections to the Public National Conference

**Chapter 4
Syria: Neither Spring, nor Peace**

by Silvia Colombo

At the beginning of 2011, Syria seemed to be insulated from the wave of popular uprisings sweeping the North African and Middle Eastern regions. When the former dictators Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak were toppled by popular unrest in Tunisia and Egypt, few expected Syria to follow. In an unprecedented interview with the Wall Street Journal, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, claimed that Syria was stable because of the regime's closeness to the beliefs of the people.[33] Indeed, since his rise to power in 2000, the new president had confronted a number of international and domestic challenges that had increased his standing among the population and contributed to forging the idea of a stable country. In particular, despite suffering from some 40 years of authoritarian rule and facing similar socio-economic challenges that had triggered rebellion elsewhere, Syrians appeared to support their president. This situation changed dramatically in March 2011 when protests eventually reached Syria and were violently crushed by the regime's security forces. Indeed, the protests were unexpected and their outbreak cannot be understood without taking into account the factors of contagion and psychological empowerment stemming from their Tunisian and the Egyptian precedents.

Since March 2011, the Syrian path to an Arab Spring has taken the form of an increasingly harsh confrontation between an entrenched regime and its security apparatuses, on the one hand, and more than one opposition, both within Syria and exiles abroad, on the other. After months of violence, the country is caught in a civil war in which sectarian divisions are becoming increasingly entrenched. This contribution to the report examines the events in Syria and attempts to pinpoint the causes, actors and possible outcomes of Syria's bloody Arab Spring.

It is not possible to talk about any kind of transition process until the violence stops and a phase of reconciliation and structural reforms begin, most likely without al-Assad. The bloodshed has reached new heights during the Summer of 2012 and both sides seem determined to carry on until the final destruction of the other. The transformation of the Syrian conflict into a zero-sum game is also the result of the fragmentation and increased violence on the opposition side and the indecisiveness and divisions of the international community represent major obstacles to a way out of this situation.

The Triggering Factors

A combination of trends can be cited as representing triggering factors of the uprising among some segments of the Syrian population against al-Assad's regime. Some of these trends were long-term structural problems with economic dispossession and social marginalisation similar to the causes of the unrest across the whole Arab world in 2011. These long-term structural resentments originated from the decade of economic reforms that were aimed at opening up the Syrian economy more rapidly than during the previous decades. These liberalisation and privatisation reforms led to a GDP growth of more than 5% a year since 2006 (Zallio 2010). However, they also entailed the creation of huge fortunes in the hands of a handful of entrepreneurs who enjoyed strong links to the regime and had access to government contracts and monopolies. The emergence of this new generation of crony capitalists fuelled resentment among the formerly supportive working class and peasantry, largely from Syria's Sunni Arabs, who make up the largest majority of the Syrian population. Subsidies to these sectors of the population were cut and public sector employment opportunities decreased at a

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[33] "Interview With Syrian President Bashar al-Assad," *Wall Street Journal*, 31 January 2011, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703833204576114712441122894.html.

time when the demographic boom of the 1980s was creating problems for the labour market in absorbing the glut of young people (Phillips 2012). The seeds of the sectarian conflict can be traced back to this decade in which the Alawis were among those who benefited the most from the reforms, while once prominent Sunni Arab families were increasingly marginalised. The difficult economic situation was further exacerbated in the countryside by four years of drought between 2007 and 2010. The mismanagement of agricultural resources and corruption prompted a wave of internal migration from the countryside to the overcrowded towns, thus further exacerbating the unemployment problem.

Politically, al-Assad's regime had the strong support of the population thanks to his foreign policy stance, which enjoyed widespread consensus and appeal in the country and in many parts of the region. Since the era of President Hafiz al-Assad, foreign policy in Syria has worked as a security valve for occasional domestic political tensions with a profound stabilising effect. Put simply, the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Syria's confrontations with Israel have allowed the regime to cultivate its nationalistic credentials and leadership of the resistance front. In many respects, foreign policy has provided a level of political legitimisation for the domestic regime, which tried to exploit it again in the recent domestic conflict by fashioning a narrative according to which the protests were supposedly the result of an external conspiracy against Syria because of its broader geopolitical position on the Middle Eastern chessboard (Colombo 2011).

Domestically, the last decade was marked by increased ossification at the political level as there has been no sign of any genuine opening. Although a number of long-awaited political reforms had been promised by the president in mid-2005, the regime did not deliver on this, rather becoming increasingly authoritarian. The fact that Bashar al-Assad was re-elected president in March 2007, while running unopposed and receiving 96.7% of the vote, is illustrative of the absence of political pluralism in the country. The short-lived experience of the Damascus Spring, which started immediately after the death of Hafiz al-Assad in June 2000, represented a parenthesis in the usually catatonic and subdued attitude of the elites towards the Syrian regime. Encouraged by the new political climate inaugurated by the young president, prominent figures from the political, economic and cultural establishment mobilised and called for comprehensive political reforms. Human rights groups, civil society forums and political parties re-emerged after years of apathy and silence. Willing to change the rules of the game, they began to publicly express critical views of the regime. The crackdown was harsh and made use of arbitrary arrests and security summons directed at the most prominent civil society and opposition leaders (Pace and Landis 2009). The season of the Damascus Spring was followed by the cold Damascus Winter, which was to last for one decade.

Despite these structural problems, the outbreak of the Syrian uprising cannot be explained if one does not take into account the strong psychological effect of empowerment and emulation triggered by the events in Tunisia and Egypt. The most disenfranchised sectors of the population in poor religious Sunni Arab areas such as Dera'a—where the Syrian uprising started—Homs, Hama and Douma, which became the focal points of the demonstrations, made use of the same techniques and slogans heard in Tunis and Tahrir Square. The radicalisation of the Syrian rebellion and the increased resort to violence by the protestors must also be linked to the success of Libya's civil war against Col. Qaddafi. The Libyan precedent provided the Syrian rebels with a host of claims and guerrilla techniques, which contributed to creating a virtual link between the two countries and their uprisings.

Increased Radicalisation on Both Sides

As we have seen, the apparent stability of the country contrasted with a number of broader underlying trends and structural socio-economic as well as political challenges, which rendered Syria far from immune from the wave of popular discontent. Under the surface of apparent stability, the situation in the country displayed signs of long-term unsustainability.

Prior to 2011, unauthorised public demonstrations in Syria were extremely rare. As in other Arab countries, the Syrian citizens have lived since 1963 under emergency laws that allowed for the forced detention of any person accused of threatening the country's security. The state of emergency was lifted on 21 April 2011 through legislative decree No. 53 following widespread unrest.[34] The few manifestations of discontent against domestic socio-economic problems and, in particular, rising levels of inequality and poverty before the Arab Spring involved a limited share of the population and did not include demands for political change. The most significant emerging trend during the past half-decade was the growing Islamist mobilisation in direct or indirect support of people protesting against socio-economic grievances. This increased the instances of confrontation between the Syrian regime, centred on the Alawi sect, representing about 10% of the population, and Sunni Islam. Other segments of the population, i.e., the Kurds that inhabit the northeastern regions, also rose up in March 2004 through protests and demonstrations aimed at confronting the power of the regime on the basis of their distinct ethnicity. The Kurdish *Intifada* coincided with the emergence of the Kurdish question in Syria, something that marked the relations between the Kurdish community and the regime until the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

When the uprising erupted in the southern town of Dera'a and spread elsewhere, protestors called on al-Assad not to resign but to reform. Arguably, even after the first protests, al-Assad had enough support that he could have brought the situation back to calm. In the first stage, the uprising seemed to be confined to some areas, particularly the south and the cities of Hama and Homs, while the capital Damascus and Aleppo, the other major city in the north, were spared by the furious conflict. Furthermore, the protestors took a while before reaching critical mass, and many Syrians continued to believe that the president was a reformist, or at least a moderniser, who was willing to see his country develop economically and peacefully. Promises of reforms were articulated in his much-anticipated address before the parliament on 30 March 2011 in which al-Assad insisted that the point was not whether to reform but how to proceed, making sure that any change was in line with the people's beliefs.[35]

The situation started to change for both the regime forces and the opposition in mid-summer 2011. On the one hand, the regime dramatically escalated the repression by undertaking military operations designed to crush the growing number of protests across the country. Syria's military and security forces were supported by civilian proxies, known as *Shabiha*, and neighbourhood vigilantes, mainly from the Alawi sect. Summary killings, disappearances, arbitrary arrests and other forms of abuse became part of what is known as the "security solution," namely the regime's decision to use any possible means to roll back the popular movement (International Crisis Group 2012). On the other hand, these tactics largely backfired, prompting the radicalisation of the opposition, from peacefully wanting reform to demanding regime change. The opposition methods changed, moving in the direction of guerrilla warfare largely influenced by the Libyan experience and the support lent to the opposition there by the international community.

A further turning point came with the mid-March 2012 series of bombings at security installations in Damascus and Aleppo, which resulted in massive destruction and civilian casualties. Regardless of who bears responsibility for these acts, they signalled the beginning of a new phase in the conflict. A further escalation of the conflict took place at the beginning of May when the Houla massacre and the intensification of violence on both sides marked the transformation of the conflict into a civil war in which more than 14,000 people are estimated to have already lost their lives (19,000 according to the rebels). Additionally, around 120,000 refugees have escaped Syria, finding safe haven in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

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[34] "Decrees on Ending State of Emergency, Abolishing SSSC, Regulating Right to Peaceful Demonstration," 22 April 2011, Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), http://sana.sy/eng/21/2011/04/22/pr-342711.htm.

[35] See al-Assad's speech in *Syria Comment*, 31 March 2011, http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/?p=8917.

Sectarian tensions have also exacerbated because of a number of incidents that pitted communities against each other. Sectarian intolerance is on the rise everywhere and communal-based strife is spreading even to places such as suburban Damascus where religious fundamentalism has not represented a prevalent feature of the two opposing sides until recently. Regime propaganda has indeed contributed to breeding the spectre of sectarianism among minorities. In particular, Alawis and Christians fear for their fate if the regime collapses. The former are concerned that they will be blamed for al-Assad's violence, while the latter harbours strong fears of the sectarian killings experienced by their Iraqi brethren after Saddam Hussein's demise. This is something new for Syria, a country that always has been portrayed as a model of religious tolerance and coexistence among the various religious sects.[36]

A Divided Opposition Confronting the Regime

The peculiar features of the Syrian way and the difficulties in bringing violence to an end and setting the transition in motion ultimately derive from a number of factors pertaining to the opposition and the behaviour of the international community. The opposition, both within the country and in exile, has proven unable to win over key segments of the Syrian population. Its weakness has arguably aided the regime by providing support to its claim regarding the absence of a credible alternative (Sayigh 2012). Much of the opposition's weakness derives from its being divided. In the first stage, al-Assad's opponents organised through Local Coordination Committees (LCC), acting on the ground and successfully organising demonstrations. These committees proved effective as they were mainly leaderless and maintained their connection to the Syrian population. However, the desire to obtain international backing and the Libyan precedent prompted the creation in Istanbul in August 2011 of a body reuniting the opposition in exile, the Syrian National Council (SNC). The SNC is seen as out of touch with the events on the ground, and internal divisions have exacerbated its inability to propose a clear solution to the stalemate and represent an alternative. The issue of whether to seek western military intervention has been particularly divisive. On a regular basis, talks between the SNC and the National Coordination Committee (NCC), the second most widely recognised opposition body, were postponed, thus highlighting the lack of coordination among the opposition, particularly on the possibility of dialogue with the incumbent Syrian regime. Further, the SNC has been criticised for lacking transparency and grassroots support, not adequately representing the ethnic and religious makeup of the country, and for being Muslim Brotherhood-dominated. All in all, the SNC has lost support within Syria itself as a result of its inability to produce concrete results, liaise with the opposition groups inside the country and develop a coherent political vision.

Speaking about the Council's role in opposing the Syrian regime, it has played a crucial role in having sanctions imposed on Damascus. However, now that the real centre of the opposition has shifted from Western capitals and organising the international community to impose economic sanctions on Syria to the militias battling the Syrian Army within Syria, the SNC's role has become more tangential. The opposition militias are organised under the Free Syria Army (FSA), created in July 2011 by Syrian army officers that had defected to Turkey. The defecting soldiers from the Syrian Army, mostly low-ranking Sunni Arab officers and soldiers, have swollen the FSA's ranks to approximately 20,000-25,000 units (Phillips 2012). They remain ill-equipped, however, and unable to challenge al-Assad's 400,000-strong military forces. This situation may progressively change as a result of Saudi Arabia and Qatar's effort to actively engage in arming the FSA, with the tacit support of the United States.

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[36] See the report "The Lebanonization of Syria," French Center for Intelligence Research, January 2012, http://www.scribd.com/Silendo/d/82131328-The-Lebanonization-of-Syria.

The Role of the International Community

The Syrian way to the Arab Spring is characterised by a distinct pattern of behaviour by the international community. Deep divisions within it and a lack of thinking beyond the appropriateness (or lack thereof) of a military solution have contributed to the survival of the incumbent regime and to the protraction and radicalisation of the conflict. Broadly speaking, three postures can be detected. First, the West, including Europe and the United States, remains trapped in a confused and ambivalent stance, having depleted all sources of diplomatic and economic carrots and sticks to push al-Assad's regime to change course. The military option is out of reach for fear of foreign casualties due to the better quality of the regime's air defences compared to Libya's. Civilian casualties resulting from a military solution in different shapes and forms—no fly zones, no kill zones, safe corridors—would most likely be much higher than those produced by the military intervention in Libya. The Libyan precedent has also heightened concerns about the use of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine to defend human lives in cases that border regime change (Gaub 2012). The West also appears to be worried about the void that would be left in the event of the fall of al-Assad, something that would increase the instability of a region already prone to it. These fears are compounded by the dangerous infiltrations of the Syrian rebels' ranks by elements associated with al-Qaida. The propaganda of groups such as the Al-Nursa Front for the People of the Levant or the Abdullah Azzam Brigades risks fuelling further violence and a spiralling ethnic-religious conflict. Second, China and Russia harbour outright opposition to any form of international interference in Syria's internal matters. Nevertheless, Russia has changed attitude many times, switching from vetoing any United Nations Security Council resolution condemning the Syrian regime, to sending signals that it no longer views President al-Assad's position as tenable. After months in which it has remained strongly committed to not demanding al-Assad step down, expecting him to stop the violence, and to starting an ill-defined dialogue with the opposition, Russia has said it would support al-Assad leaving power, but maintained that it can only be as part of a negotiated political settlement. Finally, the Syrian regime's allies, Iran and Hezbollah, continue to support it albeit with increased moderation as far as Hezbollah is concerned. Recent episodes of sectarian violence in Lebanon have heightened fears about a potential spill-over of the Syrian conflict into Lebanon. This has pushed Hezbollah, one of al-Assad's stauncher allies, to moderate its position. Similarly, Hamas quietly quit its headquarters in Damascus after the intensification of al-Assad's bloodshed was mainly directed at Sunni Muslims in early 2012.

Syria's strategic importance and its ethnic and sectarian composition have ensured continuous interferences from numerous regional and international actors as well as a degree of caution and paralysing divisions to avoid pushing the country into chaos. The divided and hesitant stance of the international community has compounded the dilatory tactics of the regime. The latest UN Special Envoy's initiative to end violence and initiate a political transition, the Annan Plan,[37] has further increased the scepticism that a solution to this bloodshed can be found in the short term. The Syrian regime's acceptance of this plan testifies to the extent to which, in its view, this initiative does not represent a threat to its survival. It is perceived as an opportunity to drag the process on and shift the focus from regime change to regime concessions.

After the violence spiked at the end of May-beginning of June 2012, diplomatic pressures against al-Assad's regime increased with some emerging alignment in the international community. Although this is not the result of a concerted and committed

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[37] The six-point Annan Plan, negotiated in March 2012, included a commitment to political negotiations, a UN-supervised ceasefire, guaranteed humanitarian access, the release of detainees, freedom of movement for foreign media and respect for the right to peaceful demonstrations. Following the Houla massacre of 25 May 2012, in which 108 people lost their lives according to UN statistics, and the consequent FSA ultimatum to the Syrian government, the ceasefire practically collapsed at the end of May 2012, as FSA began nationwide offensives against the government troops.

international agreement, this could be the beginning of the final act of the external actors' playing a waiting game. In this sense, the Houla massacre has been a game-changer as it has triggered condemnations not solely from Western governments. What remains to be defined is the content and the implementation of a political solution to the crisis. While few and unrealistic proposals circulate about a solution *à la Yemen* for Syria in light of the brutality of the confrontation between the incumbent regime and the armed opposition that makes a negotiated transition difficult to implement, it would also be wise to start thinking about post-conflict reconstruction, which will certainly be a long and costly endeavour. Bearing in mind the Libyan case and the numerous challenges of the transition, including restoring security, nation building, and putting in place the new political institutional architecture, it is possible to anticipate tremendous challenges looming ahead for Syria. The marked heterogeneity of the population from the ethnic and religious points of view bodes ill for the future of the country after such a period of destabilisation.

Conclusions

At the time of writing, the situation in Syria appears remote from any way out of the current bloodshed. The conflict has reached the heart of the country, and Damascus and Aleppo are now experiencing what has already been defined as the final battle. As regime violence continues and protests spread across the country, the only possible scenario in the short term is one of increased radicalisation and sectarian confrontation. The difficulty of either side prevailing over the other makes the confrontation harsher and likely to last for many days, weeks or even months. In light of the factors previously discussed along with increasing authoritarianism, compounding socio-economic grievances, a strong emulation effect, a sustained and violent reaction by the incumbent Syrian regimes and its domestic allies, growing divisions and radicalisation of the opposition forces, and the undecided and conflicting attitude of external actors, it is possible to picture a scenario in which the increased violence on one side will trigger violence on the other, unleashing a mutually reinforcing dynamic that could force the country to its knees for some time to come.

The spectre of sectarian conflict should not be dismissed, although this is partly the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy fuelled by the regime's narrative. Syria is undoubtedly trapped in a civil war dynamic that, when violence comes to a halt, will make the reconstruction and transition phases even more painful. Civil wars rarely have a discernible starting point. In the Syrian case, a combination of the factors discussed above has engendered such an outcome. Contrary to the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, talking about a transition in Syria is still far-fetched. Although parliamentary elections were held at the beginning of May 2012 and some measures of controlled pluralism seem to have been introduced with a view to relaxing the Ba'ath party's dominant role, the fiction of political dialogue and reforms has so far not provided any answers to the requests of the opposition. The Syrians are navigating their way through a season of conflict and violence, which will have a tremendous impact on the country's future development.

Syria: Timeline

Date	Event
1947	Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party founded
1958	Syria and Egypt join the United Arab Republic (UAR)
1963	Amin al-Hafiz becomes president
1966	Amin al-Hafiz overthrown in internal coup; Hafiz al-Assad becomes defence minister
1970	Hafiz al-Assad takes over the presidency
1973	Syria and Egypt go to war with Israel
2000	Haffez al-Assad dies; son Bashar al-Assad inherits power
2000	Beginning of economic reform, economy opened to foreign investment
2007	Bashar al-Assad re-elected president with 96.7% of the vote
2011, January	President al-Assad tells the Wall Street Journal that Syria is stable
2011, March	Syrian government crushes protests over tortured students; triggers nationwide demonstrations
2011, April	Assad orders security forces to fire on demonstrators and sends tanks into restive cities
2011, July	Defecting Syrian army officers create the Free Syria Army
2011, August	The Syrian National Council is created in Istanbul
2011, November	The Arab League expels Syria
2012, February	China and Russia block UN Security Council action
2012, March	A series of bombings target security installations in Damascus and Aleppo
2012, April	Both the regime and opposition declare ceasefire and adherence to Kofi Annan's plan
2012, June	In Geneva, the international community offers another peace plan for Syria
2012, July	Syrian ministers killed in suicide attack in Damascus, gen. Manaf Tlass defects
2012, August	Kofi Annan resigns as UN Syria envoy

Chapter 5
The Moroccan Exception: Island of Tranquillity or Silence before the Storm?

by Timo Behr

Morocco has frequently been portrayed as an exceptional case when it comes to the popular uprisings and protests that have shaken the Arab region over the past year. Like most of its neighbours, Morocco experienced a wave of mass protests throughout 2011 that were inspired by earlier events in Tunisia and Egypt and driven by a similar set of political and socio-economic grievances. However, in comparison to some other Arab countries, the level of social mobilisation has remained relatively low; never posing a serious challenge to the Moroccan monarchy. Moreover, King Mohammed VI reacted swiftly to the gathering storm by launching a set of social and political reforms that widened the space for political participation and enshrined some rights and freedoms, without seriously undermining the powers of the monarchy. The speed of the official reaction, the status of the Moroccan monarchy, and the relatively low level of police violence have meant that Morocco, so far, has escaped the turmoil experienced by its neighbours, earning it significant international praise and support.

Morocco, together with Jordan, therefore remains an exception to the flow of events, having successfully dodged an outright confrontation between the regime and the populous at large. However, it is still too early to tell whether Morocco's exceptional character is defined by the willingness of the Moroccan monarchy to lead genuine democratic reforms, or by its ability to escape the regional trend by institutionalising a form of benign authoritarianism and co-opting the opposition. Although Moroccans have shown their tacit approval for the current reform course—endorsing a new Constitution and voting in Parliamentary elections—the protest movement can still draw on some support and the situation remains tense. Moreover, given the largely cosmetic character of the reforms and their failure to address the severe socio-economic problems facing a large part of the population, there is a real possibility that Morocco's stability might yet turn out to be short-term in nature. And while many commentators currently perceive Morocco as an island of tranquillity, there is a chance that what they see is but the silence before the storm.

Morocco's Problems in Perspective

On the eve of the Arab Spring, Morocco was subject to many of the same socio-economic trends that have been identified as the principle causes of popular discontent elsewhere. A decade of structural reforms, market liberalisation and high profile investment projects brought economic growth and macroeconomic stability to Morocco, but hidden behind the veneer of a steadily modernising economy and a relatively efficient administration were severe socio-economic problems and imbalances. Economic inequalities, demographic imbalances, youth unemployment, and corruption have all been as pronounced in Morocco as they were in Egypt or Tunisia. Indeed, for some indicators, such as youth unemployment or levels of corruption, Morocco was even worse than most of its peers.[38] In addition, Morocco had to contend with a lower GDP per capita, higher rates of absolute poverty and one of the worst illiteracy rates in the entire Arab region.[39] All in all, therefore, the fruits of the economic growth and development that Morocco had experienced in recent years did not reach the majority of the population, creating socio-economic discontent that was especially pronounced amongst unemployed graduates (the so-called *diplômés chômeurs*).

King Mohammed VI sought to address some of these issues and to provide the monarchy with a liberal image by embarking on a number of high-profile reforms since his accession to the

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[38] Morocco was ranked 114 in the Human Development Index, one of the lowest scores in the region.

[39] GDP per capita $4,638; literacy rate: 56%; poverty rate: 15%.

throne in 1999. These included the often-cited reforms of the family code (*Moudawana*), the establishment of an Equity and Reconciliation Commission, as well as major public investment programmes, such as the National Education Emergency Support Programme 2009–2012. These initiatives succeeded in casting the king as a reformer, but failed to address the underlying socio-economic problems or to reduce the power of the *Makhzen*—the coterie of neo-patrimonial networks around the royal palace that continue to dominate large parts of political and economic life in Morocco.

Politically, Morocco's system of *alternance* allows for a level of, albeit largely superficial, political participation.[40] This system provided a pressure valve for popular grievances and allowed the royal palace to co-opt large parts of the political opposition, including one of the two major Islamist movements, the Justice and Development Party (*Parti de la Justice et du Développement*). Having accepted the "rules of the game," the PJD remains firmly focused on changing the regime from the inside and shies away from any action that might threaten its public status. Outright opposition to the regime remained limited to the banned Islamist Justice and Charity Movement (*Al-Adl wal-Ihsan*), as well as a number of less significant leftist organisations and individuals.[41] As a result, the monarchy has been more firmly in charge and the opposition more divided than in Tunisia and Egypt.

Despite the relative popularity of the monarchy and its firm hold on the levers of power, signs of popular discontent have been mounting for some years. Since the early 2000s, wage protests and manifestations have been on the rise, driven by the demands of the *diplômés chômeurs*. Islamist opposition, including to the reform of the family code, has also become more vocal and targeted. In a clear sign that the popular mood was shifting, participation in the 2007 elections declined to an all-time low of 37%. The Moroccan state reacted to these developments by clamping down more harshly on some forms of opposition. Arbitrary arrests and torture, although much less frequent than elsewhere, have increased in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca attacks.[42] More recently, media controls have been tightened, with the government closing down two opposition newspapers in 2010. All of this meant that although popular discontent was much less pronounced and organised in Morocco, the revolutionary examples and ideas from Tunisia and Egypt found fertile ground, especially amongst the younger urban generations.

<center>The Rise of the Protest Movement</center>

In comparison to other Arab countries, civil society in Morocco has been relatively free from public constraints, and there is a legacy of civil society activism even before the Arab Spring of 2011. NGOs and activists have been relatively free to voice their opinions as long as they respected the "red lines" of the Moroccan state—the status of the king, the sanctity of Islam and the state's unity with Western Sahara. This allowed an active, but small, protest movement to emerge from amongst the ranks of the *diplômés chômeurs* in the years leading to the Arab Spring that found its expression in a particularly vibrant blogosphere and in regular protests and public rallies.

Following the toppling of Zine El Abidin Ben Ali in Tunisia, it was from amongst the ranks of these activists that the 20 February Movement for Change (M20) was born in January 2011, and quickly developed into the public face of the protests in Morocco. Launched as a Facebook group, the movement managed to bring thousands of protesters to the streets in countrywide demonstrations that rallied around a limited list of demands. These demands included: a democratic constitution, the dissolution of parliament, an independent judiciary,

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[40]   James N. Slater, *Morocco: Challenges to Tradition and Modernity*, New York, Routledge, 2010.

[41]   The Justice and Charity movement is thought to have a broad popular membership, but its appeal remains difficult to estimate.

[42]   In May 2003, a group of suicide bombers connected to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) attacked a number of Western and Jewish targets, killing some 33 and injuring more than 100.

the recognition of Berber rights and language, the release of political prisoners and an improvement in social welfare and services. Unlike other protest movements, M20 did not call for an abolition of the monarchy or the toppling of the King, but rather advocated the creation of a constitutional democracy in which "the King reigns, but does not rule."

Spooked by the wider regional developments, the royal palace reacted swiftly to forestall a further spread of the protest activities. On 9 March 2011, King Mohammed VI embraced the protesters' demands by calling for radical democratic reforms, leading to the adoption of a new constitution by national referendum on 1 July 2011, and early parliamentary elections on 25 November 2011. Despite the fact that some of the subsequent reforms responded to the demands of the protesters—such as the formal recognition of the Amazigh language—M20 has denounced them as insufficient and has criticised the lack of popular involvement in the reform process. As a result, M20 together with the Justice and Charity Movement and some smaller leftist parties[43] boycotted the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections and have kept up their peaceful protests across the country.

Over time, the make-up, focus and size of the protest movement have changed considerably. While initially M20 was founded and dominated by middle class youth activists from the Rabat area, in time the movement became more inclusive and managed to unite secularists, socialists, conservatives and Islamists of various stripes. As the movement gained traction amongst the urban poor, the centre of protest activity gradually shifted away from Rabat to Tangier and Casablanca and the tone became more antagonistic; most notably some demonstrations in Tangier called for the overthrow of the king. There has also been much controversy surrounding the involvement of Justice and Charity with M20, giving rise to rumours of a silent take over by the Islamists. But rather than trying to infuse Islamist ideas into the protests, Justice and Charity has largely respected the ban on religious slogans and in June 2011, Justice and Charity leader Nadia Yassine for the first time endorsed the idea of a civil state on behalf of the movement.[44]

Despite the initial willingness of Justice and Charity to rally to the demands of M20, in time differences emerged, leading to the ultimate split of Justice and Charity from M20 in December 2011. The main problem appears to have been a disagreement over the form of government advocated by the movement, with Justice and Charity favouring a republican model over that of a constitutional monarchy. In the aftermath of the parliamentary elections and the split of the protest movement, the size of the popular protests decreased and there have been wide-spread speculations that it might collapse. More recently, however, protest activity once again increased and for the first time has targeted the freshly elected PJD for its failure to alleviate the deteriorating economic situation and failing to pursue a more reformist agenda.

Constitutional Reforms and Elections

The king's rapid reaction to the Arab Spring by announcing an overhaul of the constitution a mere two weeks after the outbreak of protests allowed him to take firm control of the process. Forestalling acrimonious debates over who should draft the new constitution and on what basis, King Mohammed VI entrusted the process to a committee of experts led by his advisor Abdellatif Menouni. A *mécanisme de suivi* composed of different political parties, human rights activists, and legal experts was meant to provide a level of democratic oversight, but was largely left in the dark and did not receive a written draft until 16 June 2011, one day before the general public saw it. The constitutional draft was submitted to a public referendum on 1 July 2011, a mere two weeks after its release, and approved by an implausible 98.5% of voters, with an official turn-out of 73% of registered voters.

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[43] The United Socialist Party (PSU), the Democratic Socialist Vanguard Party (PADS), and An-Nahj ad-Dimuqrati (The Democratic Way).

[44] Agence France Presse, 8 June 2011.

In its substance, the new constitution imposes a few new limitations on the powers of the monarchy. These include that the king must appoint the president of government (formerly the prime minister) from the largest party in parliament and approve a cabinet based on the suggestion of the president. In addition, the constitution makes some symbolic gestures, such as referring to the personality of the king no longer as "holy" but merely as "untouchable." Despite these measures, the constitution continues to provide the king with exclusive rights in the areas of religion, security, and strategic policy choices in which the king presides over the cabinet, and he retains the ability to dissolve parliament. Much of the practical implications of these changes will therefore depend on how these areas are defined and whether the cabinet and parliament are willing to exercise their new powers.

Other notable changes introduced by the constitution include the official recognition of the Amazigh language and culture, greater independence of the judiciary, and better protection for political parties and NGOs. These changes were complemented by a raft of reform measures that include a rise in public sector salaries and minimum wages, the launching of new social programmes and public hiring initiatives, a new decentralisation drive, and the announcement of early parliamentary elections. While some of these measures remain promises, reforms in other areas have been moving ahead at various speeds. Although the outcome of the referendum would suggest broad public approval, many commentators have suggested that this is in fact expression of public support for the king rather than approval of the reforms. Some analysts have also contested the accuracy of the results.[45]

The adoption of the constitution was followed by early parliamentary elections on 25 November 2011, which were meant to further boost the legitimacy of the reform process. But despite a clean electoral process and an open atmosphere, electoral turn-out of 45% was only insignificantly higher than it was in 2007, and some reports suggest that a full 20% of voters spoiled their ballots in protest.[46] In the elections, the moderate PJD for the first time eked out a narrow victory (107 seats) over the pro-monarchy "Coalition for Democracy" (101 seats). This led to the appointment of PJD leader Abdelilah Benkirane as the new prime minister and the formation of a coalition government under him with a number of left-leaning parties. While this is a significant change, there is little indication that the PJD is either willing or able to push for greater reforms from its position in power. Since having come to power, the PJD has continued to pursue an agenda of incremental change and has sought to provide moral leadership, by dispensing with some of the privileges of Morocco's former ruling elite. However, on its own, the PJD is too small (107 of 395 seats) to push real change and there is little sign that the party is willing to risk an all-out confrontation with the palace and the *Makzhen* which remains the single largest obstacle to reforms.

All in all, the king's strategy of preventive action appears to have been successful in not escalating the protest activities. Throughout 2011, the size of the protests has waxed and waned, but has never reached a critical level. However, the substance of the reforms and their inadequacy in tackling Morocco's underlying problems suggests that they have failed to provide a short-cut towards deep democracy and long-term stability in Morocco.

The Role of the International Community

Despite some of the significant shortcomings of the reform process in Morocco and the continuation of, albeit limited, protests, the international community has enthusiastically endorsed the Moroccan model as a positive example for the rest of the region. In the case of the European Union, High Representative Catherine Ashton and Neighbourhood Commissioner Štefan Füle fully endorsed the king's initial announcement of reforms by stating that "it

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[45] Marina Ottaway, Marwan Muasher, "Arab Monarchies: Chance for Reform, Yet Unmet," *Carnegie Papers*, December 2011.

[46] John P. Entelis, "Morocco's New Political Face: Plus ça change, plus c'est la męme chose," *POMED Policy Brief*, 5 December 2011.

represents a commitment to further democratisation."[47] The EU also greeted the results of Morocco's constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections without a word of criticism and over the past year has sent a consistent message to the Moroccan authorities that Europe unreservedly supports its "ambitious reforms." Based on this, the EU has included Morocco in the group of countries that are eligible for additional funding from the EU and launched a number of initiatives to support domestic reform initiatives.

The United States, similarly, has sent a consistent message of support for the reform programme of the king. Throughout 2011, the Obama administration repeatedly characterised Morocco as a "key strategic partner" and has endorsed the various reform initiatives launched by the king. Unlike the EU, however, the U.S. has maintained a relatively hands-off approach and has not offered any significant financial assistance to Morocco's reform efforts.

But most surprising has been the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which in an unexpected move offered to open membership negotiations with Morocco and Jordan in spring 2011.[48] While clearly aimed at staving off popular pressure for reforms and forging a conservative alliance of status quo countries across the region, the motion has been positively received by the monarchy, with the caveat that Morocco's primary interests remain in the Arab Maghreb Union. Although there are little prospects that Morocco will join the GCC in the short run, relations between the two have been strengthened since the announcement, and in September the GCC launched a five-year development cooperation programme for Morocco and Jordan, promising considerable financial aid.

Overall, therefore, the role of the international community has been to further legitimise and support the partial reforms initiated by King Mohammed VI. This has meant that there has been little external pressure on Morocco to further deepen its democratic reforms, and heightened GCC involvement is likely to provide another obstacle.

Morocco's Future Prospects: Benign Authoritarianism?

More than one year after the eruption of the Arab Spring protests, Morocco, like most countries in the region, remains in suspense. There is little doubt that the monarchy has won a significant victory and succeeded in staving off pressure for deeper political and socio-economic reforms, at least for now. The monarchy has been able to do so due to the considerable domestic popularity of the king and his ability to co-opt a significant number of political actors into the reform programme. The limited willingness and ability of the political parties to push for deeper reforms and the lack of any significant external pressure mean that a renewed impetus for reforms can only come from extra-parliamentary opposition. While the split of Justice and Charity and M20 weakened the cohesion of the protest movement, more recently the protests appear to be on the rise again because of the precarious economic situation.

In their current form, the king's reforms are neither likely to lead to full-blown democracy nor create sustainable stability for Morocco. Just as in case of the Gulf countries, their aim has been to block a process of political transition rather than to facilitate it. This means that Morocco, strictly speaking, fits none of the transition models identified in this report. Although it comes closest to a "pacted transition" – by the dint of involving established elites – in the case of Morocco, it would be more accurate to speak of a "pacted stability," instead of transition. While there is a chance that reforms will deepen in the months and years to come, there is so far little indication that the Monarchy is willing to pursue this process voluntarily.

With the original causes of the protests still very much in place, discontent is likely to smoulder, regardless of the divisions amongst some of the protesters. Whether this will lead to another eruption of protests is going to depend to a large extent on the performance of the PJD-led

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[47] European Union, "Joint statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Füle on Morocco's future constitutional reforms," 10 March 2011, A 110/11.

[48] Anouar Boukhars, "Does Morocco Have a Place in the GCC?," *Sada Journal*, 25 May 2011.

government as well as on the developments in some of the other Arab Spring countries. In case developments in Egypt and Tunisia take a turn for the worse, domestic reform pressure is likely to drop and Morocco will revert to a state of benign authoritarianism. If democracy in those countries succeeds, the king will have little choice but to deepen his own reforms. In the meantime, progress in Morocco will remain a half-way house, one that has avoided the turmoil and chaos experienced by some of its neighbours while failing to fully adjust to the needs of its people.

In the regional context, Morocco is likely to remain an exception. While Jordan and some of the Gulf monarchies have made an attempt to walk down the same path of gradual—and largely minimal—reforms to alleviate popular pressure, many of them face a very different environment. Jordan's large Palestinian population and geopolitical position, make it vulnerable to the evolving Levantine context, including events in Syria. The Gulf States, however, retain a bulging battle chest and significant international support, enabling them to variably ignore or buy-off domestic discontent. This means that Morocco's "model," if indeed considered desirable, remains difficult to emulate by other countries that lack either the convictions, or the ability, to steer a course of reforms in a similarly narrow direction.

Morocco: Timeline

Date	Event
1999	King Mohammed VI assumes power from his father, King Hassan II
2003	Casablanca bombings
2004	Family code (Moudawana) reform, establishment of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission
2007	Parliamentary elections receive record low participation of 37%
2009	National Emergency Education Support Programme
2010	Government shuts down two opposition newspapers
2010	Online movement against law penalising those who eat in public during Ramadan fasting hours
2011, January	20 February Movement for Change gains popularity on Facebook
2011, February	More than 10,000 people take to the streets for 20 February Movement for Change
2011, March	King calls for radical democratic reforms to appease protestors
2011	Obama administration praises Moroccan efforts throughout the year
2011, April	Bombing in Marrakesh café kills 15—Morocco's deadliest bombing since Casablanca in 2003
2011, May	Gulf Cooperation Council invites Morocco and Jordan to apply for membership
2011, June	Nadia Yassine endorses civil state on behalf of Justice and Charity
2011, June	Experts designated to provide democratic oversight to the constitution receive a draft only one day before the general public sees it
2011, July	Moroccan vote for constitution reforms passes in national referendum
2011, November	Morocco holds early parliamentary elections—first since protests
2012, May	Tens of thousands take to the streets in protest of Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane's failure to carry out promises of social justice

Chapter 6
The Yemeni Path: Imposed Transition

by Jakub Sławek

Yemen: Geography and Revolution

Yemen's geographical location combined with its modern political tradition, at least since the 1962 revolution, explain the specificity of its political transition. Geographically, Yemen is on the peripheries of the Arab world and it is the only country in the Arabian Peninsula that decided to embrace a quasi-republican system. This is particularity worth emphasising when comparing Yemen to all its neighbouring states, whose political systems are based on Islamic tradition. Additionally, the feeling of not belonging—neither politically nor economically—to the rest of the Gulf monarchies, sultanates, and emirates is deepened by the fact that Yemen was and still remains the poorest brother among them. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an organisation with enormous potential and deservedly growing ambitions, has been truly financially and economically helpful to Yemen throughout the years. But it also, of course not intentionally, underlined the fact that Yemen is a modest and needy neighbour.

These factors explain that the Yemen uprising was somewhere on the periphery of the developments in North Africa. The fact that the outbreak of social rage in Yemen occurred almost simultaneous with the developments in Egypt and yet was marginalised by mass media only underlines the peripheral character of Yemen. The Yemenis for numerous, mainly economic and social reasons were the only ones on the peninsula to join the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011.

The System and Necessity of Change

Yemen, the legendary Arabia Felix, the embodiment of Ibn Khaldun's al-'Arab al-'Ariba[49] and the cradle of Arab culture and civilisation has for decades been a country in search of its own path to stabilisation, development, and security. For many centuries, under the rule of successive dynasties, it remained a territory deliberately kept outside the development and modernisation trails. Upon independence, through the abolishment of the Hamid ad-Din dynasty-imamate in 1962, Yemen began to build a modern state. From the very beginning, this venture was based upon the quest for attaining a balance between the widely understood power and influence of state and tribe. This balance has never been reached. The comparison of two utterly different visions of Yemen statehood, thus development paths, represented by presidents Ibrahim al-Hamdi (assassinated in 1977) and Ali Abdullah Saleh (overthrown in November 2011), highlight this fact. Al-Hamdi had a vision of Yemenis being equal, which meant that tribal loyalty and tribal affiliations were to be radically reduced. Al-Hamdi's policy considered tribalism a major burden that prevented the country from development. Saleh's policy was the opposite. Tribalism flourished throughout his presidency. The fundament of Saleh's internal policy was to keep tribal leaders and clan elders strong in the country's political life. The system of gaining tribal loyalty on the one hand and fostering tribal rivalry and division on the other was Saleh's trademark.[50]

Although geographically and even socially distant from the Tunisian and Egyptian cases, Yemen shared with those countries a crucial common feature: the model of ruling and governing. For more than 30 years, Yemen had remained a quasi-private, family-run regime with the irrefutable will and eagerness to install a next of kin as successor. The country was for three decades absolutely "privatised" by President Saleh, his tribe and its affiliates (Sinhan, part of the Hashid confederation of tribes) and guarded by the country's Republican Guard (about 55,000 soldiers) and army special forces (about 10,000 soldiers). The pan-Arab slogan chanted on the streets from Tunis to Sana'a "the people want to abolish the system" fits very well the

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[49] "The Arab Arabs" in Arabic.

[50] Daniel Varisco, "Dancing on the Heads of Snakes in Yemen," *Society*, July 2011, Vol. 48, No. 4.

Yemeni case. The gap between the wide circles of power and influence, and society had grown to the point of no return.

The causes of the Yemen uprising were mostly social and economic in origin. Security problems related to the growing presence and threat of al-Qaida militants also played a contributing role. What President Saleh neglected during his rule was the process of social development and urbanisation. Yemen's biggest cities, Sana'a, Aden, Taizz and al-Hudayda, and even the desert town of Say'oun, were where the most active protests took place. Those who took to the streets were in the vast majority young, educated people whose aspirations were to just abolish President Saleh's rule, without any particular vision or strategy beyond this symbolic achievement. Yemenis revolted against the symbol of the state, epitomised by one person, just as it was in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Additionally it appears that President Saleh's biggest mistake was his certitude and conviction that he was the only one able to control the tribal affiliations and loyalties. After having relied on the tribes to cement his grasp on power for 30 years, it was a tribal coalition that ultimately unseated him with foreign support.

It is worth noting that the role of the army apparatus, which to a degree might be seen as the spinal cord of the system, differed immensely in the Yemen uprising from other cases in the Arab world, for example, in the army's role in Egypt or Syria. Factually there was indeed a breakup in the army, but in reality this disruption went far beyond and was much more serious than a division within just the army. It proved that tribal allegiances in Yemen are far more important than the feeling of belonging and loyalty to the society or the army. Thus, an officer, although a Yemen citizen, is primarily devoted to his tribe. Paradoxically, it seems today that tribalism might have saved Yemen form a humanitarian disaster on a larger scale. The decisions by General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, one of the most influential generals in the army, Sheikh Sadiq al-Ahmar, chief of the Hashid tribe confederation, and prominent figures of the strong Bakil tribe confederation, to endorse the protesters sent a clear message that President Saleh's days in office were numbered. What discredited Saleh further was his readiness to militarily oppose the protesters and to continue to maintain power through tribal alliances as demonstrated by his plea to create a National General Congress of Sheikhs, which was largely refused by the tribal leaders.

The Degree of Political Change

Saleh's strategy throughout the uprising was based on his refusal of all initiatives, whether domestic or external, that might have led to a political transition. This brought the country to the brink of civil war. Yet, the protesters refused to accept Saleh's promises to step down in 2013 and his assurances to not hand power to his son in the form of an inheritance. Yemenis also did not buy into his strategy of blaming the uprising on "foreign enemies" and accusations that Israel, the United States or the GCC were plotting against Yemen's internal security and integrity.

The immediate changes as a result of the Yemen uprising are few, but they appear to be of significance. First, there is no real possibility to return to the concept of a system of "democratic" inheritance in which Ahmed Saleh (Ali Abdullah Saleh's son) would accede to the presidency. Second, there appears to be a real opportunity to open a period of political transition. Finally, the mass protests showed that Yemenis are able to form a social and political force able to significantly put pressure on the system. These changes cannot be interpreted as the dawn of democracy, understood in the Western manner. The toppling of the president is not synonymous with the definite fall of the system and the internal situation appears to be very complex. There is still a relatively strong presence of Saleh supporters on the Yemeni political scene. Even among the Hashid (Ali Abdullah Saleh's tribal affiliation) confederation there are clans or families that still support the overthrown president. Also unknown is the actual position and strength of the security apparatus.

The long-time vice-president, Abdul ar-Rabb Mansour al-Hadi, a prominent military officer and politician who remained in the shadow of President Saleh between 1994 and 2011, has now taken the lead. While he has been accepted by the West and Saudi Arabia, he also guarantees that there will be only slow progress on tackling the pressing internal and regional challenges.

External Mediation in the Yemen Uprising

Taking into consideration the fact of Yemen's geographic proximity and cultural affinity, it is only natural that the GCC intervened in the uprising, proposing political mediation, although it had to be very cautious because at one stage of the uprising the Yemenis began to chant that the revolution would not be hijacked by the Gulf States. It was also quite evident from the very first days of the social unrest that a major role awaited Saudi Arabia. Yemen and the Kingdom share numerous cultural and tribal patterns. Although it is perhaps worth emphasising that bilateral relations have been tense at times, due to a border dispute settled in 2000 and other political aspects of regional importance. Riyadh for several reasons was and still is observing closely the developments in Yemen. Major security incidents in northern Yemen (in the Sa'ada or al-Jawf provinces) began to reverberate across the borders of Yemen and reach Saudi Arabia. As a result, the Saudi armed forces decided at the end of 2009 to militarily intervene in the al-Houthi rebellion. This goes to show that Yemen's stability and security remains a major concern for Riyadh. Saudi Arabia remains a country that not only understands well the tribal affiliations in Yemen, but also is capable of influencing political developments.

The third major actor politically important in Yemen is, apart from Saudi Arabia and the GCC, the United States. President Saleh was a very important actor in the American war on terror. Since the terrorist attack on the USS Cole in the harbour of Aden (October 2000), Yemen had decided to try to play the role of an ally of Washington in the anti-terrorist venture. For the U.S., Saleh's rule meant relative stability and predictable politics in a fragile region. The American policy in Yemen was based on a carrot-and-stick approach. It appears that what Washington feared most is that Saleh's downfall would create a power vacuum that could push the country towards a disastrous civil war and turn Yemen into a rallying ground for al-Qaida. At the same time, it is difficult to portray Yemen as a partner of the U.S. in the war on terror, as Washington was conscious that Saleh accepted, maybe without any other choice and in order to keep the internal balance, al-Qaida camps on Yemeni soil, and the fact that the security apparatus sheltered Islamic radicals. Security remains at the moment the crucial point of any mediation and talks about the future of Yemen's political developments.

At the moment, only Saudi Arabia and the United States are able to put pressure on the authorities in Sana'a and to try to play a major role in the process of transition and reconciliation.

Key Challenges and Threats

Security is a major concern in Yemen, as is the phenomenon of political violence.[51] Two other issues appear to be major threats at the moment. The first is the al-Houthi rebellion (in the Sa'ada region), which has been destabilising the country with minor interruptions for nine years. The al-Houthi rebellion has been going through various stages, from relative calmness to severe battles between the rebels and the army to negotiations. This rebellion also has a very complex political and religious side, which makes the case even more difficult to solve.

The nebulous structures of what is called AQAP (Al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula) managed to find in a chaotic situation in Yemen fertile soil to renew their presence and activity. Al-Qaida in Yemen is not a new phenomenon; rather its reappearance must be considered a "return home". Looking back, we can state that the period between late 2003 and middle 2007 was indeed relatively free of terror attacks in Yemen. This was mainly due to al-Qaida's massive involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. AQAP proved to be capable of attacking various locations in Yemen. Today, the desert regions of Ma'rib, Abyan, and Shabwa remain territories that are still relative safe-havens for terrorists.

Yemen might be challenged also by the rebirth, or rather reappearance of the concept of southern secession. This issue has been in play since May 1990, when the two countries

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[51] Clive Jones, "The Tribes that Bind: Yemen and the Paradox of Political Violence," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, December 2011, Vol. 34, No. 12.

decided to reunite. The animosity, based mainly on the southerners' belief they are economically, socially, and even culturally neglected or abused, is still alive, although not to the point of extreme hostility. The question whether unity will be attractive to the South Yemen Movement and to the southerners, in general, remains open and largely depends on the political transitional developments.

Conclusions

Although there are still many uncertainties about the causes and consequences of the Yemeni uprising, the result has provided a new opportunity to build a modern state based upon institutions and laws that aspire to be superior to tribal allegiances. This cannot mean neglecting tribalism, as it is impossible to deny or to contradict the roots of this particular culture in Yemen. The process of building a new state means the necessity of promoting values of a civil state and ideas of citizenship. It also means changing the role of the army and the security apparatus in order to reduce their political influence. Nevertheless before facing these fundamental political and cultural changes, there is a necessity to answer the basic economic needs of society. Problems of unemployment, illiteracy and the failure of public finances are major factors that if not addressed could spark a new social revolt. The transition in Yemen will be very complex and long-term in nature. Yemen will surely need financial support and technical assistance from international actors and donors from various spheres. Nevertheless, Yemen, with its specificity and complexity, will also need to find its own solutions that are understood and accepted by society.

Yemen: Timeline

Date	Event
1962–1962	Revolution, Southern Yemenis revolt against rule by Imams in the north, abolishment of Hamid ad-Din dynasty
1967	Formation of Southern Yemen, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY)
1977	President Ibrahim al-Hamdi assassinated
1978	Ali Abdullah Saleh named as president of YAR (Yemen Arab League)
1990	Unified Republic of Yemen proclaimed, with Saleh as president
2000	Yemen-Saudi border disputes officially settled after 65 years of contention
2000	Terrorist attacks on USS Cole in Gulf of Aden
2008, November	Police fire warning shots at Common Forum opposition rally in Sana'a; demonstrators demand electoral reform and fresh polls
2009	Saudi intervention in al-Houthi rebellion
2011, January	Protesters in Sana'a rally against President Saleh; Yemen's largest anti-government protest in a decade
2011, November	President Saleh overthrown
2012, February	Presidential elections, Vice President Abdul ar-Rabb Mansour al-Hadi is the only candidate and takes office
2012, May	Al-Qaida bombing kills and wounds hundreds in military parade in Yemen's deadliest terrorist attack in years

Conclusions

by Timo Behr and Patrycja Sasnal

This report has sought to review the various models of change the Arab world has experienced throughout the last two tumultuous years. Its ambition has been to move beyond the, by now, well-reviewed root causes of the uprisings in order to understand the impact of agency and contingent choices during the transition.[52] Scholars of political transitions have frequently noted the importance of these choices for the future shape of regimes. What may at times appear to be only temporary compromises often turn into persistent barriers to change, and might set the terms of interaction between social and political actors for decades to come.

For the countries reviewed, this report differentiated between roughly five different transitional models. Each of these derives from the particular preconditions of each of the countries in question, as well as the interaction between the main political agents throughout the transition process. While this means that each case is *sui generis* in nature, certain similarities can be found and future transitions are likely to fall into one of these broad categories.

What can be learned from these different models of political transitions in the Middle East and North Africa? Are certain paths more common than others? What kind of regimes are different transitional models likely to give rise to? What lessons do they provide for the democracy laggards in the Arab world? And what are the consequences for the international community from these observations? Several lessons can be drawn from the analysis of this report.

Impact of Transition Models

The academic literature on democratisation processes commonly distinguishes between four simple models of political transition.[53] These models are based on whether a transition is the outcome of large-scale violence or political compromise and whether incumbent elites are still in ascendance or whether mass actors have gained the upper hand. The combination of these factors leads to four ideal types: reform, revolution, imposition and pact. Each of these roughly corresponds to some of the models of change that we have reviewed.

Actors/Strategy	Compromise	Force
Elite Ascendant	PACT (Egypt)	IMPOSITION (Yemen)
Mass Ascendant	REFORM (Tunisia)	REVOLUTION (Syria?)

In cases where traditional elites remain in ascendance, they are likely to significantly shape the transition processes. This will take place either through compromise, where elites engage in an explicit bargain (pact) or where they impose a new political order through violence (imposition), be it purely domestic or with international support. So far, most transitions in the region have taken either of these forms. In cases where popular masses manage to dislodge and replace traditional elites, the transition can take the form of either more gradual and negotiated reforms, or a more bloody revolution. While reforms are more likely to lead to unrestricted contestation and participation, the more violent character of revolutions tends to lead to more stable but less open forms of governance. So far, these cases have been rarer in the region.

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[52] On the root causes of the revolution, see Behr (2012) and Sasnal (2012).

[53] Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1986; Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratisation in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*, 1990, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 1–21.

As these models represent ideal types, allocating the various case studies is not an easy exercise, especially in the midst of a transition when developments remain unclear and contradictory evidence can be found concerning the roles of the elite and mass actors. Thus, the importance of the elites in pushing for the initial change and subsequently determining the path of the transition might not always be as evident. In at least partly tribal societies such as Yemen and Libya, for example, one can argue about the importance of the elites vs. mass distinction. Similarly, in the long run the use of force may beget compromises and vice-versa.

Nevertheless, keeping the problems of categorisation in mind, these four models provide a sensible way of characterising the various transitional processes in the Arab world. What is easy to note is that when it comes to the cases under discussion, instances of pacted transitions and imposition clearly dominate, which can be explained by the continuing role that traditional elites play in regional politics. Categorising the transitions in such a way is important because of what it suggests about the outcomes of the transition processes.

The academic literature has found that despite considerable variations each of these transition models is likely to give rise to a particular type of political order:[54]

- **PACT**: Pacted transitions most often produce corporatists and consociational democracies. In these cases, competition is usually regulated with respect to the original compromise struck between the actors. Egypt, with its agreement between the military and Muslim Brotherhood, seems a good example of that.
- **IMPOSITION**: Imposed transitions, either from the inside or outside, are likely to give rise to conservative democracies in which multi-party competition might remain incomplete or even take the form of electoral authoritarian rule. Yemen's imposed transition risks taking this path.
- **REFORM**: Transitions through reform have empirically been found to have the best chance to lead to a competitive multiparty democracy, but are also particularly vulnerable to authoritarian reversals in case the reform process deadlocks. Tunisia, although not a subject of this study, is alone on that path.
- **REVOLUTION**: Revolutionary transitions usually have a good chance to lead to one-party "democracies". Right now it is difficult to see which case could fall under this category. Arguably, Syria might come closest if it were not for the sectarian nature of the uprising. This means that for the time being, Libya and Syria seem to represent a hybrid imposed-revolutionary model.

Of course, the predictive power of these different transitional models should be taken with more than just a pinch of salt. Much of the existing academic literature draws on previous experiences in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, which might not be applicable in the Arab world. Moreover, there is, of course, no way of prescribing certain transitional experiences to the indefinite future. Pacted transition, such as the one happening in Egypt, might be reopened under mass pressure or in time give rise to multi-party democracies. Similarly, genuine reform processes might be captured by new elites or falter altogether.

Nevertheless, despite all these caveats there are some important general lessons that can be drawn from the academic literature. Perhaps the most important of these is that post-revolutionary regimes in the region will be diverse and will only rarely resemble Western multiparty democracies. Instead they are likely to mirror the complex transitional bargains that have been struck in recent months. This means that electoral politics will remain messy in the foreseeable future and that democratic reversals will be a persistent risk. Unfortunately, it also means that domestic elites and re-awakened primordial identities, such as tribes, clans, and religion, which have been empowered during the transition process, will remain frozen in the future political process in the region.

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[54] Karl (1990), pp. 1–21.

Lessons for the Laggards

The implications of these different models for reform laggards, such as Algeria and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are limited. There are no silver bullets or short-cuts to political transition. Moreover, while countries might share some of the same underlying social, political, and economic troubles that have fuelled popular discontent across the region, agency often matters more during transition processes. This means that one country's experiences are not directly transferable to another, as much depends on the interaction of various political agents and the unpredictable and uncontrollable power of the masses.

Nevertheless, the tendency amongst Arab monarchies has been to try and follow the Moroccan example, by engaging in moderate or phony reforms without making significant concessions. In the case of Saudi Arabia or Bahrain, these are hardly examples of pacted transitions, but rather attempts to redefine the authoritarian ruling bargain. When it comes to Jordan and, perhaps, Algeria, the prospects for more significant changes appears slightly better, even though it is difficult to believe that even here the reforms are entirely genuine.

What is interesting to note is that there are currently no countries that have been able or willing to copy the Tunisian transitional model. Indeed, Tunisia appears to be a lone exception in the region in that its transition was not the result of negotiations between various elites and interest groups, but rather was driven by a genuine mass movement. While Egypt's revolution displayed similar characteristics in its initial phase, since then the incumbent elites have regained control. Moreover, in the face of mounting problems, the Egyptian and even the Tunisian experiences are gradually losing their appeal, while Syria is fast becoming an example of the dangers of transition. Whether Libya's successful elections represent a turning-point in the protracted transition of that country remains to be seen. This has significantly reduced the contagion effect that has been so crucial in driving regional events.

With popular pressure somewhat receding and the international community firmly focused on events in Syria, other reform laggards are currently getting a free ride. Still it is questionable whether even the most powerful countries, such as Saudi Arabia, will be able to escape the regional vortex for long. The combination of the demographic imperative, the demonstration effect, and the breakdown of the "wall of fear" are bound to make a political transition of sorts inevitable.

One final lesson that emerges for the laggards is that the longer they seek to stave off the inevitable and the more brutal their crack-down, the more likely they will contribute to a revival of sectarian and tribal divisions that will negatively impact the character of any future political systems. Unfortunately, most autocratic leaders have little incentive to assist in a smooth transition of power. Some, like Syria's al-Assad, might even see it in their advantage to purposefully fuel sectarianism. This implies that pacted and phony transitions are likely to remain the norm in the region, combined with the occasional cases of outside imposition.

Lessons for the West

The lessons for the West are similarly daunting. While the international community caries a large burden of responsibility to assist ongoing transition processes and encourage reform laggards to increase their efforts, any outside interference remains a double-edged sword. Almost inevitably, foreign military interventions beget imposed transition processes and skew the domestic power balance among various groups. After Iraq's painful (and incomplete) transitional experience, the jury is still out on whether Libya will emerge as a positive example. While foreign military intervention might be morally justifiable to prevent regimes from brutalising their populations, they rarely serve the cause of democracy, even if undertaken with the best of intentions in mind.

The international community itself has to change together with the Arab world. In security-dominated foreign policies, the Arab Awakening still constitutes a threat. It remains a

fundamental challenge for the American and European governments, which have substantial geopolitical interests in the region, not to securitise their relations with the Middle East. This means that for now, Western security policies are based on a reverse priority list with Iran on top and democratic transitions further down. In effect, they remain under the strong influence of two security-driven states in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia and Israel. While specific recommendations for EU Member States in this regard would not be realistic, it is vital that the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy acts with those considerations in mind and works towards a more balanced approach.

In the first year of the Arab Awakening there was an ongoing race among donors to give aid to the transforming Arab countries. While the region indeed is inciting more competition, international and specifically European efforts may weaken as media coverage settles down with the slower, less spectacular pace of changes. While the states that are traditionally associated with the southern dimension of the ENP will most likely keep up the speed of initiatives, the northern European states should make additional efforts to sustain their engagement in the Arab world.

Despite common statements, the EU still struggles to find a common language in response to the Arab Awakening. National policies once again dominate member country's positions. The EEAS has all the more important task of mitigating these differences. One such division emerged with regard to the Islamist parties' domination as a result of free elections in Tunisia and Egypt. Some European countries are deeply suspicious of the Islamist political agenda and would not provide Islamist governments with aid, while some acknowledge the naturalness of this development. The EEAS, taking the latter stance, has therefore devoted resources to placate the former's anxiety.

For too long, the U.S. and EU governments have mistaken stagnation for stability. It remains a challenge for the transatlantic community to turn the debate away from democracy promotion and its potential pitfalls in the region. Here some valuable lessons might be learned from the so-called emerging democracies. India, for instance, a democracy that sometimes draws more attention from the Arab world than, for example, the Polish experience, does not want to promote democracy. Instead, it argues that democracy is a characteristic that is built from within and at the individual pace of each country. In place of intrusive notions of political change, India has encouraged a debate about the comprehensive notion of poverty—understood as the freedom deficit, women's strength deficit and knowledge deficit—and ways of tackling these deficits with outside assistance. At the same time, a successful experience with transformation can and should be shared provided it is focused on well-defined domains and is kept as politics-free as possible.[55]

Reframing the current debate in such terms by, for example, re-emphasising and refocusing attention on the Arab Human Development Report, as discussed in the introduction of our report, might be a fruitful way of giving a more positive direction to the debate. While some of the current transitional processes might falter or reverse, it is on those issues that Arab democracy will be built in the future. This suggests that the transatlantic community will have to accept that some of the current transition processes will not result in perfect multi-party democracies. Instead, it should start addressing the visceral and deep-rooted problems that have led to the initial uprisings. Ultimately, that will be the best way for political reforms to take root and democracy to flourish in the future.

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[55] Patrycja Sasnal, "The Middle East in Transition: Clues from Poland," *EuroMeSCo Paper 13*, April 2012.

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Timelines prepared by Philip Cody based on the BBC, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*.

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