

THE MIDDLE EAST RELOADED
REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES, POWER
DYNAMICS AND REGIONAL
RIVALRIES SINCE THE ARAB SPRING

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Chapter 1

Revolutionary Changes, Power Dynamics, and Regional Rivalries since the Arab Spring: An Introduction

Philipp O. Amour*

The second decade of the 20th century began positively from the perspectives of Arabs. A revolutionary catalyst in Tunisia initiated what has been referred to since as the Arab Spring. This revolutionary funk crossed borders with the help of internet social networks, social media applications and TV broadcasters such as Al-Jazeera, with regional and international implications. With the breakdown of long settled political leaderships, specific states entered the track of democratization; a new structure in the Middle East seemed on the rise. Transitions to democracy suggested that the phenomenon was not limited to Europe or North America. However, just few years after this defining incident, the contemporary Middle East is characterized by a high level of regional polarization and fragmentation. Anarchy is tenacious. Most cases of potential revolutions failed, and authoritarianism remains persistent with an even harder nature. Power dynamics and regional rivalries are one supreme accompanying phenomenon and side effect of the futile Arab Spring movement.

To the beginning. Large-scale and long-lasting demonstrations succeeded in putting an end to dictators and quasi-dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and

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Yemen. Deposed presidents and members of their cliques were arrested (Egypt), accused of state crimes and corruption (e.g., Tunisia) or caught and murdered (Libya, Yemen). In this revolutionary context, new political parties were established or reformed, and elections were held, resulting in a shift in political leadership and constitutional changes. These revolutionary proceedings put the four mentioned states on the path of transition to liberalization and democracy. A novel political elite ran the transition period, the second stage of a potential revolution as analyzed in chapter 8 of this volume.

The majority political parties (e.g., al-Nahda in Tunisia, Freedom and Justice in Egypt) marked a shift in the general character and orientation of the novel political elite during this transition period. Whereas semi-secular (and socialist) political elite ruled over these states in the pre-2011 period, the Arab Spring brought up novel political parties to the state's leadership level with the Islamic inheritance closed to the Muslim Brotherhood. Such streams did not launch the Arab Spring movement; however, they took the lead afterwards and won elections at different degrees in the mentioned states. The inclusion of such actors at the state level seemed to enjoy the tolerance (support) of regional and international powers.

A further remarkable change can be registered during the Arab Spring movement. Arab citizens were less intimidated by domestic security services and started to express their frustration against their political leadership in the form of public pronouncements and non-violent demonstrations. This different situation of public sphere and public participation, in addition to the possibility of a domino effect in further states, put pressure on Arab states such as the monarchies in the Gulf region and on Jordan and Morocco.

To avoid a crackdown of their leadership as occurred in Tunisia and Egypt, the monarchies of Jordan and Morocco had to rethink their governance and initiate political and economic reforms that intended to boost political liberties and promote the national economy. High-income states in the Gulf region increased their financial support of the public sector and unemployment sector. Both mechanisms served to pacify public mood and as such combat a potential Arab Spring at home.

Undoubtedly, political changes in the ways described above in major Arab states promised to have an impact on the regional system and on international relations had the course of Arab Spring movement continued in the same direction.

During the biennium 2010-2012, there was a widespread optimism regarding the course of the Arab Spring movement. Contemporaries held to the domino theory; the initial success of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt gave the impression that the so-called Arab Spring movement shared patterns similar to political transactions across the so-called Arab World. It was hoped and expected that the revolutionary gravity would turn the Arab World into a flowering democracy. In the context of this enthusiasm, carriers of the uprisings described their revolutionary actions as revolutions and made parallels to great revolutions such as the French revolution. The uprisings were romanticized.

In retrospect, however, the Arab spring revolutionary outcomes were meek in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The Arab Spring uprisings in the specific states did not unfold into a wider regional phenomenon; they did not have the overwhelming effect that was expected across the broader Arab World. Apart from the four abovementioned cases in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, no other Arab states completed the first stage of would-be revolution: a shift in the leadership elite as a result of transparent elections and reforms in the constitution. This number is modest considering the 22 members of the League of Arab States.¹ Thus, over three-quarters of the Arab states had no alternation in state leadership and hardly a shift in national institutions or the constitution.

In qualitative measures, the would-be revolutions in Egypt, Libya and Yemen witnessed a remarkable slowdown in the transition period and failed to materialize coherent progress. Moreover, the three cases involved conservative counterrevolutions run by the old guard, which was supported by regional powers. The revolutionary prospects of the Arab Spring movement in Egypt have proven fatal since the military coup. Similarly, civil wars in Libya and Yemen have

¹ "League of Arab States," accessed February 21, 2018, \ <http://www.lasportal.org/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

worsened the civic situations in comparison with times previous to the Arab Spring uprisings. Tunisia is the only successful story in terms of revolutionary outcomes due to its continuity on the track of the transition period with little backsliding.

The conclusion of the modest scope of the Arab Spring movement remains valid across the rest of the Arab World. Uprisings in Bahrain and Syria, further Arab Spring cases with middle/large-scale revolutionary energy, were blocked by external powers. In Bahrain, the uprising was harshly inhibited by the external intervention of the GCC forces. In Syria, the military insurrectionists were about to besiege the regime when external powers, i.e., Iran, Hezbollah and at a later stage Russia intervened for the sake of the regime. The bloody confrontations between different groups allied to regional powers is still ongoing in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, to the misfortune of the polities.

Note bene, the Arab Spring movement, as a whole, witnessed a vivid thawing of revolutionary energy and transactions with time, which to a certain degree explains the lack of revolutionary outcomes in other Arab states. In Jordan and Morocco, political reforms that were initially approved were not implemented, given the thawing and end of the Arab Spring movement. The monarch kept his hold on power.²

Thus, the Arab Spring movement was not a region-wide phenomenon, as assumed by its carriers; it was not potent to induce major revolutionary changes in political and socio-economic affairs across the so-called Arab World.

Explanations for transformative outcomes of the Arab Spring movement

The Arab Spring uprisings occurred in different ways and duration and varied in outcome. Similar factors triggered these uprisings: an interplay of increasing populations, which had long lived under political repression and economic misery. Lack of perspectives for the educated youth with regard to

² Katerina Dalacoura, "The 2011 Uprisings in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications," *International Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January 2012): 63-79, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01057.x>.

employment opportunities and life in dignity played an important role. These factors charged public displeasure with the ruling authority and raised public frustration with their own status quo.³

However, no unifying causal factors explain why long-scale demonstrations occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen and not elsewhere with similar or even far worse underlying factors. Regional patterns of bad governance, high levels of unemployment, and increasing populations demonstrate that some states should have been more prone to uprisings than the specific cases discussed above.⁴ One aspect could deliver some clarity, but it is not conclusive. The interplay of the abovementioned underlying factors moved public opposition, and the elite's distancing in specific states from partial unstable social equilibrium to more widespread unstable social equilibrium (disequilibrium) resulted in mounting and accumulating large-scale uprisings. Reaching this level of disequilibrium in these states is indispensably interrelated with the role of professionals and security forces as explained in chapter 4 by Ayfer Erdogan or in chapter 8 by Philipp O. Amour.

The question remains as to why potential revolutions in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen failed/sagged after they entered the first stage of a would-be revolution. In all three states, transformative results were dependent on the inter-mix of factors: (1) the weight of authoritarian legacy on everyday life in the transformative period; (2) the skills and capability of the newly elected ruling authority to operate the unfolding system to revolutionary ends including generating structural shifts in domestic politics and economy and ensuring social justice and good governance within a short time; and (3) the attitudes and actions of the old guard (from the military, political or economic sector) during the transition period toward the newly elected elite.

Egypt, Libya, and Yemen have notably witnessed a shift in governmental

³ See e.g., "World Bank: Economic Indicators Failed to Predict Arab Uprisings," Text/HTML, World Bank, October 21, 2015, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/21/economic-indicators-failed-to-predict-arab-uprisings>.

⁴ See e.g., "Arab Uprising: Country by Country," *BBC News*, December 16, 2013, sec. World, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-12482680>.

institutions, of the government and president; yet, a successful transformation is not a given due to the formidable contests and downsides facing the post-authoritarian leadership. Members of the old guard in these cases remained an integral part even after the elections in major domains such as politics, military, economy and media. Bearing in mind the legacy of decades-long authoritarian regimes, the unexperienced political elite in these cases could not deliver major changes in economy and security according to the expectations of their polity. In addition, there was disagreement among the newly-elected elite regarding the end result of the transformative period. These factors played into the hand of old guard, which polarized the society and took help from regional (pre-uprising) allies against domestic rivals. The interplay of these factors created a fatal combination during the transition period. The result of this dynamic was a military coup in Egypt and on-going civil war in Libya and Yemen. These cases prove, as elsewhere, the complexity of the transition process. Remarkably, two further aspects explain the modest outcomes of the Arab Spring movement: the geopolitical implications and regional complications of the Arab uprisings.

Power Dynamics and Regional Rivalries in the Middle East

Contemporaries register that beyond their domestic implications in political, economic, and societal affairs, the Arab uprisings have triggered several developments (perceived, anticipated, or real) in regional politics. They have essentially affected the regional system in the broad Middle East. Regional uprisings changed the political leadership in specific states, characterized with ideological orientations different from those of the previous ruling elite. The Arab Spring has promoted novel political parties and politicians with revolutionary zeitgeist as head of state. This development threatened to alter the long-seated inter-state alliances; it threatened to shift the distribution of power in the Middle East.

The novel revolutionary elite was not embedded in the conventional strategic architecture in the Middle East; as a result, it was less dependent on the

traditional regional great powers, taking into account the domestic and transnational public support the new elite gained. The emergent leaderships did not necessarily fall along the traditional alignment in the regional order. This systemic eruption opened the window for novel strategic partnerships and sub-partnerships with altered foreign policy toward transnational issues. Strategic concerns regarding the displacement of the regional supremacy caused concerned regional great states to view the Arab Spring movement from their own security prisms. Uncertainty regarding the unfolding regional system increased the antagonism between regional great states aiming to consolidate their power and to bid for even more power during this systemic eruption.

This gave rise to a proactive (diplomatic and military) intrusion in the developments of specific revolutionary processes to uphold the status quo of the deep-seated regional order or to modify it to the advantage of what I call the neoconservative-moderate camp or to the advantage of the neoconservative-resistance camp.⁵ Both camps support diametrically conflicting strategic ends and associates. Due to these strategic calculations, for example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) took Bahrain and Syria, respectively, under their security umbrellas.

Arab Spring uprisings involved regional great powers, among others, KSA, Iran, and Turkey, that attempted to master regional turbulences effecting their domestic and foreign policy. Regional uprisings amplified inter-state antagonism and rivalry between the KSA and Iran. The Arab Spring uprisings took by surprise the neoconservative-moderate camp lead by Saudi Arabia when they resulted in an intuitional shift in Tunisia and Egypt and a potential shift in other allied states such as Bahrain. The loss of Egypt, a major power component and a stabilizer of the

⁵ Philipp O. Amour, " Hamas-PLO/Fatah Reconciliation and Rapprochement within the Unfolding Regional Order in the Middle East since 2010: Neorealist and Neoclassical Realist Perspectives," *Journal of Social Sciences of Mus Alparslan University* 6, no. 5 (April 13, 2018): 623, <https://doi.org/10.18506/anemon.384773>; Philipp O. Amour, "Israel, the Arab Spring, and the Unfolding Regional Order in the Middle East: A Strategic Assessment," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 293-309, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2016.1185696>.

regional system against Iran, must have increased tension in Riyadh over the future of regional weight in the Middle East. Moreover, it was most likely shocking for the Saudi leadership to find that the Obama administration did not support Mubarak to remain in power. Would the American administration abandon the house of Saud if a local uprising took place in KSA? Similar questions most likely became palpable.

In this sense, the Arab Spring meant implications for KSA. The ruling elite in Riyadh perceived themselves to be on their own against internal risks and regional threats. These strategic calculations led Riyadh to take steps to avoid the loss of its domestic power and the collapse of its regional orbit. Its security policy agenda became proactive, far reaching and assertive inward and outward.⁶ Examples are profound for this novel policy course: Riyadh supported the intervention of GCC forces in Bahrain to crack down on opposition, financially supported Jordan to bypass a possible domestic spring, and supported the military coup d'état in Egypt. Moreover, the neoconservative-moderate camp took steps to balance its loss of allies by, for instance, supporting revolutionary groups in Syria against the Iran-lead alliance or by intervening through the military in the Yemeni Civil war against the allegedly Iran-supported Houthi movement. Such examples demonstrate how KSA attempted to consolidate its strategic alliance in the Middle East and likely to reverse the course of the unfolding revolutionary shifts.

Whether Iran was initially a strategic winner of regional uprisings in 2011, it came under pressure after the start of the uprising in Syria, a key ally and a major component of the neoconservative-resistance camp. The loss of Hamas (a historically strategic ally) to the unfolding elected “reformist” camp and the possibility of the loss of Hezbollah should the Syrian regime collapse must have increased tension and antagonism in Tehran. Due to these strategic calculations, Iran invested enormous resources in Syria to hinder such scenarios.

From today's perspective, it is safe to conclude that regional inter-state

⁶ Amour, “ Hamas-PLO/Fatah Reconciliation and Rapprochement within the Unfolding Regional Order in the Middle East since 2010:”

rivalry regarding the distribution of power in the Middle East, in addition to sectarian and interreligious tensions, have contributed to the failure of the Arab Spring movement. Different chapters in this volume, written by Rosa Vane and Mark Fuechec, for instance, demonstrate the regional rivalry and its implications on domestic and foreign policy.

The rise of a third strategic alliance in the Middle East encompassing Turkey, Qatar and the novel leaderships in Egypt and Tunisia (i.e., elected “reformist” camp) must have increased the regional polarization and rivalry between the regional great powers.⁷ Remarkably, the novel elected parties in Tunisia and Egypt, among others, regarded Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) as a role model instead of KSA or Iran.⁸ The foreign policy of Turkey's ruling party (AKP) has been conform to transnational regional affairs in comparison to the ruling elite of other regional powers such as KSA or Iran.

Turkey, too, was affected by the intuitional shifts in the Middle East. Turkey's foreign policy of 'zero problems' proved incompatible with the complicated geostrategic realities unfolding. The novel situation reasoned Turkey's response in the form of a new foreign policy doctrine. While Turkey has initially opposed an external intervention in revolutionary happenings, it was among the first to support revolutionary energy in Arab states. Syria proved challenging for Turkey in terms of resources (due to the arrival of large numbers of Syrian refugees) and security (due to inbound terrorist operations by al-Qaida and the formation of YPK not far from Turkish borders). In the context of its support of elected revolutionary elite in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, Turkey's regional rivals increased following the Arab Spring movement. This explains the diplomatic standoff with the current administration in Cairo or the competition vis-a-vis the United Arab Emirates in Libya or vis-a-vis KSA in the context of the Qatar-Gulf crisis. The

⁷ Amour, “Israel, the Arab Spring, and the Unfolding Regional Order.”

⁸ Elham Fakhro and Emile Hokayem, “Waking the Arabs,” *Survival* 53, no. 2 (April 2011): 24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2011.571007>.

chapters in this volume written by Paul Kubicek, Moritz Pieper, and Sefacan Yilmazel shed light on Turkey's position as a role model in the Middle East as well as on the complex realities that have challenged Turkey's domestic and foreign policy.

Israel's right-wing government perceived the Arab Spring negatively for a couple of reasons. Tel Aviv was concerned that neighboring instability would spread over its borders; even more belligerent leaderships would replace arch rivals or cold peace partners. Jordan, for instance, had enjoyed diplomatic relations with Israel since 1993 on high levels. However, when the Arab Spring started, Jordan was cautious to accept the new ambassador. A further characteristic of the old regional system is the fact that Israel was able to foster economic activities with specific Arab states upon favorable conditions. The Arab Spring made changes in that sense, as well, and Egypt cancelled its gas deal with Israel. The future seemed insecure for Israel during the first years of the Arab Spring. In the meantime, however, the course of the regional developments has changed to the advantage of Israel in many domains since 2013.⁹

Regional politics has been fluid and complex since 2011. Regional state and non-state actors are conducting high politics on different tracks; they are allies in one strategic issue and rivals in another one in regional strategic dynamics. Politics is deceptive, and anarchy is cavernous. I assume that such a state of politics will dominate regional politics for the long future to come.

Summary of the contributions

This edited volume presents chapters on revolutionary changes, power dynamics, and regional rivalries in the Middle East since the Arab Spring movement.¹⁰ The

⁹ Amour, "Israel, the Arab Spring, and the Unfolding Regional Order."

¹⁰ Some chapters in this volume were previously published in: Philipp O. Amour, ed., *The Arab Spring: Comparative Perspectives and Regional Implications*, vol. 12, no. 3, Special Issue, *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* (Yalova: Yalova University Press, 2013) that were significantly updated.

collection begins with Sean Foley's chapter (Change At Its Best: Arts, the Arab Spring, and the New Middle East) that delivers authentic insights into the Arab Spring movement and regional politics in the 21st century while using art (i.e., work of poets, standup comedians, and popular Arab singers) as a source of analysis. The chapter by Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya (Arab Spring Determinants in North Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Libya, Egypt and Tunisia) draws a comparative analysis of Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. It comes to the conclusion that similar underlying factors caused the evolution of the uprisings in these states; however, Ogbonnaya argues that such factors interplayed differently, which explains the development of the uprisings in the mentioned states.

The following chapter by Ayfer Erdogan (What Do the Post-Communist Transitions Imply for the Post-Arab Spring MENA?) draws attention to transition processes in the post-communist states to shed light on transition outcomes in the Arab Spring movement. During the last quarter of the 20th century, a third wave of democratization affected states throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. This global trend made democracy as a political system and as a way of life appear to many observers universal and unescapable. Authoritarian persistence in the Middle East, especially in the so-called Arab World, was one of the few exceptions fundamentally untouched by this global trend. In the Arab states, the status of political liberalism lags behinds the rest of the world. The resistance to democratization is, by all means, remarkable.

The Arab Spring movement appeared to open an opportunity (bottom-up) for Arab states to undergo a political transition toward democracy. Shifts in state leadership in some states and political and economic reforms in others promised to break resistance to democracy. Observers expected that the unfolding political systems would progress positively towards political liberties and democracy, thus putting the wider Arab World on the track of an extended third wave or a fourth wave of democratization. In her chapter, Ayfer Erdogan highlights factors that proved destructive for democratization in Arab Spring cases: (1) the lack of elite consensus toward democratization; (2) the lack of well-organized liberal

opposition; (3) and geographic proximity fortunate to transition and consolidation of democracy. Royals of the old regime were part of the post-authoritarian period in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. They hindered a smooth transition to democracy run by inexperienced novel political parties. The Muslim Brothers/Morsi's major mistake was the membership of the Constitution Committee and the inauguration of the novel constitution, both of which contributed to the change of public support and the balance of royals of the old regime vis-à-vis royals of the novel administration to the disadvantage of the latter, resulting in a coup d'état. The role of the army becomes an important aspect in the wake of revolutionary changes. The answer to how the military acts/reacts before and after the onset of a prospective revolution delivers insights to the course of revolutionary outcomes and the success potential of the transition period. Herein, Ayfer Erdogan draws a contrast between the Tunisian and Egyptian cases, in which initially the military refrained from supporting the ruling authority in 2010-2011, and other Arab Spring cases in Libya, Yemen and Bahrain, in which the military remained loyal to the regime.

Ayfer Erdogan comes to the conclusion that the geographic location of the post-communist transitions was more fortunate for the European countries experiencing transition than for the countries experiencing the Arab Spring. While the post-communist states had as motivation inclusion in NATO or the EU as a dynamic for welfare and prosperity, Arab states had no such ruling model to follow in their neighborhood. Regional organizations such as the League of Arab States do not have financial, integrative, or administrative capabilities similar to those offered by the EU.

The chapter written by Elizabeth Bishop (“Domination of the Corrupt Clique:” Coups and Communications Revolutions in the U.S. and Arab Middle East) explores Egypt's would-be revolution in 2011 in comparison with Iraq's July 1958 coup d'état in relation to Michel Foucault's concept of “biopolitics”. The military coup in Egypt organized by the free officers opened an opportunity in the Middle East for a systemic change across the region with all its implications and side effects. The formation of the confederation between Iraq and Jordan (1958)

and its short duration was one relation affected by such change. Other monarchies were not immune to regional eruptions. Similar to today's internet networks and social media applications, radios played a central role in opinion building and mobilization in both Iraq and Egypt during the 20th century. As the author demonstrates, in the aftermath of the *coup d'états* then in Egypt and Iraq and currently during the Arab Spring movement, specific narratives were put to the forefront of public attention in contrast with other narratives neglected or ignored by the ruling class and their loyal media agencies.

The chapter by Paul Kubicek (Debating the Merits of the “Turkish Model” for Democratization in the Middle East) delivers students of social sciences a masterpiece of analysis, in which it becomes apparent that terminology has its own associations; depending on the use of such associations, researchers may believe they are discussing the *same* phenomena (i.e., Turkish model) but disagree about its applicability to the Arab World. Such a variance may result from a disagreement or ignorance about the phenomena itself, in our case, the definition and development of the Turkish model as such over historical periods since its inception in 1923.

Since its inception in 1923, external actors have widely recognized the Republic of Turkey as a distinct model in the Middle East due to its scope and course of nation-building policy different from those of most states in the region. During its first developmental decades, the Turkish model incorporated a top-down nation building policy similar to Western patterns of democratization of separation of charge (religion) and politics, secularism, modernization and Westernization. Turkey is recognized for its positive record towards political liberalization, economic dynamics, and good governance. Supporters of this Turkish model regarded it as a ruling model for the decolonized countries in the Middle East. Rulers such as those in Iran's monarchy followed a top-down nation building process similar to the Turkish one.

Not all contemporaries endorsed Turkey's political and social revolution as a model for their own states due to their personal preferences and pathologies.

Skeptics of this top-down model underlined the rule of the military in the political process and the detachment of the nation-building principles mentioned above from the authentic socio-cultural contexts in Turkey. The Turkish model of the 20th century did not meet the expectation of liberals and reformers due to Turkey's turbulent transition into democratization (multiple military coups). Conservatives/principlists regarded the abovementioned core principles of the Turkish top-down nation building process as foreign to the social contexts and political contexts in the Arab World; they doubted their replicability in the Arab World above all due to the suppression of the Islamic character and identity of the majority of its polity.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the Turkish model has taken different formative actors. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), with an alleged Islamic heritage, has been the major player towards political transition since 2002. The AKP committed itself to major attributes of the Turkish model such as secularism, modernization and economic dynamics, while acknowledging/integrating the novel attributes of conformity between Islam and modernity/democracy, historical legacy (Ottoman Empire), geographic location and good relations and economic involvement in the neighborhood. For observers of the abovementioned groups, the Turkish model came to constitute an Islamic (homemade) democracy with a high level of western conformity.

Regional and international state and non-state actors regarded Turkey during the Arab Spring movement as a valuable model for novel elected governments. This view was endorsed not only by Arab officials but also by American and European officials. It was hoped that Turkey would play a constructive role in the democratization process in the Middle East, whose countries could draw some important lessons from the Turkish case in general and from the AKP in particular. Contemporaries suggested that Turkey's positive record of economic development might serve other states in the region, as well.

This appeal of the role model of Turkey was evident in the popularity of the AKP and its co-founder Recep Tayyip Erdoğan across the Arab states. Such a

catalyst role was translated into the formation/re-formation of novel political parties with similar names in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, among others. Turkey's appeal across the Arab World as a cultural catalyst and its novel foreign policy relations of zero-problems towards its neighborhood transformed Turkey from its role on the periphery of the region according to the first Turkish model into a core actor in the Middle East.

More recently, views of Turkey as a model have faded for a couple of reasons. Perhaps the most important one is that the political culture of Turkey is different from the political cultures in the Arab states. As a result of decades-long outlawing and dominating political parties with Islamic heritage, almost no intra-party evolution took place in the Arab World among and between Islamic parties regarding the relation of Islam to democracy or to modernity. Contrary to the AKP case, Islamic parties in the Arab World lack political experience and a reform-minded agenda. This is apparent, for instance, in the case of secularism that meets the acceptance of the AKP party but the refusal of the Muslim Brotherhood/in Egypt. Second, the failure of the Arab Spring movement and the turbulent unfolding transition period put state and non-state actors in the Middle East under extreme survival pressure. Within this process, democratization seem to suffer across the broad Middle East, not only in semi- or non-democracies such as the Arab states but also in recognized democracies such as Israel and Turkey.

Like the previous chapter, Moritz Pieper (*From Zero Problems with Neighbors to Zero Neighbors without Problems: Turkish-Iranian Relations before and after the Syrian Crisis*) demonstrates Turkey's growing strategic weight in regional affairs. The chapter explores Turkey-Iran relations in particular in the wake of regional dynamics since the breakout of the Arab Spring movement. The imperatives of geography, leading to both diametrically opposed interests and mutual security concerns, impacted the ties of both regional great powers. With Turkey's policy of zero problems with neighbors, Turkey upheld good relations with its neighbors and Eurasian partners, and Turkey and Iran developed strong ties in the form of economic and diplomatic cooperation. The increasing political

complexities of regional dynamics since 2011 challenged Turkey's zero-problem foreign policy approach.

Turkey-Iran relations waned, however, over Syria. Ankara criticized Iran's strategic expansion in Yemen and Iraq, too. Whereas Iran backed up the Syrian regime to withstand its collapse, Turkey supported revolutionary groups against the Syrian regime and demanded a transition to democracy. Thus, in many aspects, the two stood on opposing sides in an unfolding regional order. Turkey's mediatory capabilities between Iran and Western states in the context of nuclear negotiations witnessed backsliding due to these opposing stands. At a later stage, however, mutual security concerns and strategic interests in the wake of regional dynamics brought the two regional great states closer together. The two actors cultivated a mutual concern against the fragmentation of the Middle East along sectarian lines to avoid their own territorial costs. In addition, the standoff in American-Turkey relations played Turkey closer to Iran and Russia.

In his chapter (The Arab Spring movement: The failed revolution. Preliminary theoretical and empirical deliberation), Philipp O. Amour presents at the beginning of his analysis what a revolution is and what it is not according to the general theory of revolutions. Then, Philipp O. Amour applies the theoretical frame to the Arab Spring uprisings and demonstrates why the so-called Arab revolutions are not revolutions and in the best sense (with the exception of the on-going revolution in Tunisia) are failed revolutions. Philipp O. Amour argues the importance of distinguishing between a revolution and other forms of social unrest as well as between ongoing/would-be/prospective revolution and (successful) revolution.

Rosa Vane (Employing militarization as a means of maintaining the 'ruling bargain': The case of the United Arab Emirates) demonstrates how UAE's role in international relations continues to grow. From becoming a world financial center to gaining military prowess and benefiting from its geolocation neighboring Iran and Saudi Arabia, UAE's weight on the regional stage cannot be ignored. However, regional shifts in the distribution of power in the wider Middle East and the

resultant threats on the Gulf region appear to be not the sole validation for UAE's proactive and assertive foreign policy in the Middle East. Rosa Vane argues that such a militarized foreign policy takes the form of outward projection of military capability and involvement in regional military operations. This process of militarization has been accompanied with a growing domestic weapons industry and a shift in state-society relations toward securitized tendencies.

Rosa Vane explores UAE's militarizing in the form of its growth in armament spending, foreign policy shift, domestic militarization practices (e.g., domestic weapons industries, military series and military programs), and building-up national cyber-space defenses. An intermix of factors explains the growth of militarization in UAE since the last decade or so, including a personal preference of Sheikh Khalifa to prioritize defense capability since his shift to power in 2004; a perceived high level of regional threats by other assertive regional powers (e.g., Iran), non-state actors (e.g., ISIS); or ideological risks (transnational movements challenging the status quo of the current state-society relation). Militarization and surveillance penetrate the state-society relationship and make the society inferior to the state. In the case of UAE, Rosa Vane argues, the ruling elite appears to use militarization policy domestically as a way to mitigate domestic challenges to the rule of the Khalifa family and to safeguard the political strength and continuity of the ruling regime. The subordination of society to a higher militarized means in the UAE' case, as elsewhere, involves political, economic, and cultural domains.

Sefacan Yilmazel's chapter (The Impact of the Syrian Civil War on Turkey's Relations), explores Turkey's foreign policy in the wake of the Syrian civil war towards alliance management with the European Union (EU, the United States (USA), and the Russian Federation; it examines the extent to which Turkey's Syrian strategy has been successful. As neighboring states, Turkey and Syria share long land borders with much potential for cooperation and conflicts.

A challenge for Turkey was how to balance its role as a mediator in the region with its policy of zero problems and its role as a role model for revolutionary

groups.¹¹ While Turkey's policy of zero problems was to improve and promote its ties with its neighbors over the period 2002-2010, the revolutionary change in the Middle East provoked the rethinking of policy concerning whether Turkey would attempt to backup long-seated authoritarian regimes in Syria and elsewhere or whether it would support revolutionary groups in a changing Middle East. Known for its inclusion of transnational issues in domestic and foreign policy, Ankara decided to support revolutionary groups. Moreover, power dynamics in the Middle East challenged Turkey to take part in the shaping of the new regional system along with/against other (regional) great powers.

As a regional great power, Ankara had little option but to engage in the conflict unfolding in neighboring Syria and attracting the attention of other great powers. Turkey became part of a group of states including the USA supporting moderate rebel groups against the Syrian regime. However, the Syrian regime was supported by its historic alliances including Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia. Thus, Turkey became involved in the Syrian civil war at the interplay of regional polarization and international political patterns (between the USA and the Russian Federation) of the cold war.

While Turkey's policy in Syria was initially in harmony with the NATO and neoconservative-moderate camp, Ankara began to alter its alliance management in the wake of its discontent towards the USA over the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and their backbone the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) as well as over its position regarding the failed coup attempt. Non-state actors became involved in the Civil War; the USA supported SDF; and their backbone YPG seized the opportunity and gained control over territories neighboring Turkey. Turkey's decision makers regarded this development as a strategic redline that required, among others, a military operation in Afrin. Russia and Iran, on the contrary, showed solidarity to Ankara after the failed coup (contrary to Western states) and showed understanding for Turkey's skepticism over the YPG/PYD issue.

¹¹ For the Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy see: Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik derinlik: Türkiye'nin uluslararası konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2012).

Diminishing the power of the SDF/YPG at its front door became a core preference of Turkey's foreign policy; this moved Ankara to coordinate its security policy in the region with Russia and Iran. Relations have proven fluid and at risk, however; alliances have proven to differ from one equation to another.

Mark Fuechec's chapter (Challenges to Economic and Political Liberalization under the Deauville Partnership with Arab States: Gulf competition in transition states) focuses on strategies used by the Deauville partnership with Arab states to support specific development issues of economic growth and inclusion into the global economy, and above all promotion of public and cooperative governance. Such plans attempt to target the politico-economic deficits in these states, including high unemployment, low female labor force participation, low levels of private sector development, weak public and corporate governance, large and inefficient public sectors, and limited competition and pervasive corruption. Remarkably, these aspects coincide with underlying factors of the Arab Spring uprisings mentioned in this volume. Mark Fuechec comes to the conclusion that these Arab states share similar challenges regarding the implementation of reform plans necessary to tackle the economic and political problems targeted by the Deauville Partnership. These include poor rule of law, poor governance and economic structure, and reluctance towards G-8 meddling, privatization and liberalization. This negative view of globalization is interrelated with the lack of effective infrastructure to facilitate inclusion into the global economy. Remarkable is his notion that low-income states proved more interested in addressing such difficulties than high-income states.

Mark Fuechec also examines how the different interests among donor states from the Gulf Region have affected the development of the prospective Deauville partnership's objectives. Arab Gulf donors used financial aid as a tool to gain regional weight in the Arab Spring movement and direct its course in a specific direction not often conform to the Deauville Partnership's objectives. This is apparent, for instance, in the cases in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen or in the aftermath of the Qatar-Saudi Arabia/UAE crisis.

As Editor of this volume, I would like to extend my thanks to all the original contributors for the hard work and scholarship they invested in their chapters.

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