



MENA WORKSHOPS

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OUR MISSION

The APSA MENA Workshops program is an initiative, made possible through a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York, to enhance scholarly networks and support political science research among early-career scholars in the Middle East and North Africa.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Greetings! Welcome to the Fall 2017 issue of the APSA MENA Newsletter – a project emanating from the [APSA MENA](#) annual workshops.

This issue focuses on the different ways MENA scholars attempt to bridge disciplinary debates with region-focused analysis. Scholars have traditionally observed a significant disconnect between Political Science research with its sub-fields and Middle Eastern studies; what has been termed the “Area Studies Controversy”. A review of recent scholarship shows that scholars of the region are increasingly able to incorporate their regional focus into disciplinary debates, and are moving away from this traditional schism. Our research symposium includes six pieces that offer new perspectives on research in the MENA region while attempting to bridge disciplinary debates with rich empirical analyses as well as cross-regional comparisons.

Morten Valbjorn and Waleed Hazbun explore how the Middle East might be incorporated into debates about what has been termed “Global IR” and “post-Western” IR. Furthermore, they discuss how scholars’ identities have shaped the production of knowledge on and in the region. Zeinab Abul-Magd adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining History and Political Economy to examine the economic enterprise of the army and its role in consolidating the authoritarian regime in Egypt. Ibrahim Elbadawi and Hoda Selim use a political economy approach to show how the “resource curse” phenomenon is due to weak political institutions in the region. Guy Burton contributes to conflict management in International Relations by analyzing the role of rising powers in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shima Hatab engages with the debates on authoritarian resilience and prospects of democratization through a cross-regional comparison between Latin America and the Arab world. Based on their Arab Transformation Project, Pamela Abbott and Andrea Teti offer insights on the difficulty of interpreting and generalizing from quantitative research in the region.

This issue also includes a list of news and announcements. One of the APSA MENA Newsletter’s most important goals is to engender a sense of community among MENA scholars around the world. If you have anything that you would like to share with others, please contact us, and we will be happy to include it in the next issue. Also, please visit our [webpage](#), where you can see previous issues and subscribe to our newsletter.

Sincerely,
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A NOTE FROM APSA

Hello and best wishes! It was a pleasure seeing so many alumni over the past several months: during the Tunis conference in July, at the APSA meeting in September, and in DC for the MESA conference in November.

This summer's conference in Tunis was a great opportunity to advance critical scholarship from the region and grow the APSA MENA network (see "[MENA Political Science Research and Publication Conference](#)" for a full description of the program). It also offered a chance to work more closely with [POMEPS](#), and we look forward to building on this partnership over the coming year. APSA's MENA program will continue in 2018 with a two-part workshops series, research grants for project alumni, collaborations with departments of political science throughout the MENA region, and events at APSA's 2018 Annual Meeting.

Many thanks to newsletter co-editors May Darwich and Abdul-Wahab Kayyali for their efforts on this issue. As always, I encourage readers to contribute to future newsletters through announcements, research submissions, and your feedback on how we can continue to improve this publication. Best to all in the coming months and stay well!

Andrew Stinson
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RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM:

BEYOND THE SCHISM: POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND THE MENA REGION

SCHOLARLY IDENTITIES AND THE MAKING OF MIDDLE EAST IR: INSIGHTS FROM THE GLOBAL/POST-WESTERN IR DEBATE

By Morten Valbjørn (Aarhus University) **and Waleed Hazbun** (American University of Beirut)

As part of their ongoing explorations into the development of IR scholarship about the Middle East, on November 3, 2017 Morten Valbjørn (Aarhus University) and Waleed Hazbun (American University of Beirut) organized a workshop at Aarhus University in Denmark entitled “Do scholarly identities ‘in here’ shape how we understand the role of identity politics in Middle East international relations ‘out there’?” This workshop brought together nine scholars based at European, American and Middle Eastern universities to explore, in part, how the Middle East might be better incorporated into ongoing debates about what have been termed “Global IR” and the “post-Western” IR. The starting point for this project builds from Cox’s (1986) observation that IR “theory is always for someone and for some purpose. There is...no such thing as theory in itself divorced from a standpoint in time and space”. Valbjørn and Hazbun were curious to ask how identity politics “in here”, that is identities within and between communities of scholars, have shaped the development of IR scholarship about the Middle East as well as IR scholarship produced by scholars based in the region.

During the past two decades, there has been a growing debate within the broader field of IR Theory concerning the development of IR scholarship beyond North America and Europe (Tickner 2003, Mandaville 2003, Acharaya and Buzan 2007, Tickner & Wæver 2009, Acharaya 2014). Such projects seeking to develop a “Global IR” or foster non/post-Western approaches to IR take as a point of departure Stanley Hoffmann’s (1977) observation forty years ago about how IR appears to be an “American Social Science” and Ole Wæver’s (1998) suggestion that the “IR might be quite different in different places”. In particular, since the turn of the new millennium these observations have given rise to a multi-dimensional debate in IR about 1) whether IR has been made “by and for the West” (Barkawi and Laffey 2006) and what

this means for our way of studying and understanding international relations; i.e. how have some issues/forms of knowledge been considered more important/legitimate than others; 2) whether and how it is possible to identify substantially different ways of studying international relations elsewhere; i.e. is the “international” imagined in identical ways everywhere and is “security” perceived differently in different places?; and 3) which kind of strategies are more likely to make International Relations Theory genuinely international, not only regarding what is studied but also when it comes to how and by whom; i.e., how can the “non-West” to a larger extent become a “producer of knowledge” rather than being only an “object of knowledge” and how can insights from different places be connected in a genuinely international debate? (Tickner 2003, Hellmann & Valbjørn 2017).

At first sight, considering the global prominence of Said’s (1978) critique about the “Western” production of knowledge about the “East”, one might expect the study of Middle East international relations to be one of the fields where concerns about identity politics within community of knowledge production (“in here”) would have received considerable attention. This is, however, far from the case. While the Middle East according to the TRIP survey on theory and practice of International Relations around the world may figure as one of the most studied regions “beyond the West”, and Middle East specialists during the years have produced a rich and increasingly sophisticated literature on identities “out there”, Middle East IR have only to a limited extent reflected on whether and how political, cultural, and professional identities might shape the scholarship and influence how identities “out there” are approached, theorized discussed and evaluated. To the extent that scholarly identities “in here” have been debated among Middle East scholars, it has mainly been related to the (in reality very US-centric) Area Studies Controversy between generalists and regional specialists on how to study “regions” (e.g. Tessler et al. 1999; Valbjørn 2004, Teti 2007). However, the role of “geo-cultural epistemologies” (Tickner & Wæver 2009) and “the cultural-institutional context” (Jørgensen & Knudsen 2006) have only received very limited attention. As a

reflection of this, questions about how Middle East international relations has been studied within the region itself or whether for instance American and European Middle East scholars differ in how they approach the region have only rarely been addressed (among the exceptions, see Korany 1986, Abu Jaber 1991, Dessouki & Korany 1991, Korany, 1999; Bilgin 2004, 2012, 2017, Korany and Makdisi, 2009; Yassine-Hamdani & Pearson 2014, Hasan and Momani, 2012; Mansour 2017; see also Hazbun, 2013, 2017, Valbjørn 2017). The Middle East has in a similar way been almost absent in the broader post-Western IR debates, which instead have been occupied by discussions concerning Chinese, Indian, European and Latin American IR.

Against this background, the aim of the workshop was to remedy this gap through an exploration of “the role of scholarly identities in the study of identity politics in Middle East international relations”. This exploration was not only intended to provide answers to questions about whether, how, and why scholarly identities “in here” — in terms of our geographical, disciplinary and cultural-institutional context and background — matters in how scholars approach, theorize, discuss and evaluate Middle East international relations in general and regional identity politics more specifically. It, furthermore, sought to promote a greater awareness of whether and how these possible differences can enrich our understanding of (Middle East) international relations “out there” and the workings of IR and Middle East studies “in here”.

The first part of the workshop sought to cultivate insights for the project from scholars with experience working outside the Middle East. Drawing on his experience exploring the work of IR scholars in Latin America, India, and China, Peter Marcus Kristensen (Copenhagen University) warned that many existing projects of Global IR were viewed by scholars of those regions as efforts to identify difference that did not resonate with the views of local scholars and failed to embrace their “creative agency”. Meanwhile, Knud Erik Jørgensen (Aarhus University) argued that “the post-Western discussion does not point in any distinct or specific direction, except that there might be no direction home”. He suggested that instead of “continuing in the orthodox track of critique of orientalism” a stronger engagement between Middle East scholars and the post-Western IR debate could “globalize awareness of representations, not only in the West but globally”, lead to “a critical

reconstruction of IR traditions in the Middle East” and “encourage theorizing among IR scholars in the Middle East” and help “crystallizing knowledge in theoretical form about the Middle East.” Having worked on the question of African IR while based at University of Cape Town, Karen Smith (Leiden University) also warned about the limits of being confined to one area studies focus but highlighted the great potential of systemic theorizing in IR by drawing on regions outside Europe and North America. Citing the Jean & John Comaroff’s (2011) *Theory from the South*, Smith suggested the Global North was becoming progressively more like the Global South. “Most of the world”, she noted “has a much closer resemblance to the multi-actor, variable power context of places like the Middle East or Africa, where it is not always clear who holds the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, where borders are constructed and often meaningless, where sovereignty is challenged, where interests overlap and intersect, where identities are messy and ever-changing”.

The second part of the workshop drew on scholars who have worked on and/or in the Middle East and included two papers that generated methodological insights followed by two that offer programmatic suggestions for the future development of Middle East IR. Pinar Bilgin’s (Bilkent University) discussion of Said’s (1993) notion of “contrapuntal reading” helped the workshop formulate its own approach by suggesting it simultaneously address the limits of both IR and Middle East studies, which it can view through a lens of double exile. May Darwich’s (University of Durham) narrated her own journey from Cairo University, to SciencesPo Bordeaux, to Edinburgh University, to the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) to Durham University and her parallel evolution from a student of realism to a scholar working within sociological and ideational approaches. Her account inspired the workshop to see the broader value of such self-reflexive accounts in its effort to map the influence of institutional factors and how scholars choose to engage with them shape patterns of knowledge production in the field. Imad Mansour (Qatar University) offered a powerful critique of ontological categories and the forms of knowledge found in most of the existing IR scholarship about the Middle East. As an alternative, Mansour suggests we ask, “what are the dialogues that people (scholars and non-scholars) are engaged in within the region?” He then outlined some of the main themes that such an approach would

likely develop, spanning from how “the international” is understood to the construction of states and norms. Finally, Hazbun offered a mapping of the geopolitics of knowledge production in (Global) IR from the point of view of the Middle East that addressed its past evolution and possible futures. Taking some inspiration from what Robert Vitalis (2015) termed the “Howard School of International Relations”, that represented the most important center of opposition to the project of “white” American IR as they highlighted the role of racism in sustaining imperialism, Hazbun noted his ongoing work as part of a transnational collective of IR and critical security studies scholars supported by the Beirut-based Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS). Their goal is to foster critical approaches to the study of security and insecurity by scholars from and based in the Arab world. In an approach that workshop attendee Steve Niva (The Evergreen State College/Roskilde University) characterized as modeled like an insurgency, Hazbun suggested that IR in the Middle East should be developed along the lines of a constellation of diverse nodes of IR knowledge production across the Global South that “are autonomous, yet connected to other nodes of global IR organized along more horizontal, democratic networks”.

One of the achievements of the workshop, at least in the view of its co-organizers, was that it highlighted how self-reflective observations by the workshop participants about the role of scholarly identities, geo-cultural location, and institutional context shaping their own recent and ongoing development could assist in offering a limited, preliminary mapping of how such forces have been shaping the development of the Middle East IR. Clearly, no one believes that these factors determine the path and limitations of scholarship, but they often exert influence in subtle, unselfconscious, and highly contingent ways. In drawing together workshop contributions for publication and in their future efforts, Valbjørn and Hazbun hope to connect the region to debates about post-Western IR and Global IR and assist in the development of pathways for the future development of IR scholarship by and for IR scholars from and based in the region.

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THE MILITARY, BUSINESS, AND THE STATE IN EGYPT

By Zeinab Abul-Magd

The question of the Egyptian military institution's economic enterprises and superior control over the state apparatus has come to the forefront of research in the past six years, after the 2011 Uprisings. When the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) took over power after mass protests and overthrew Mubarak, much literature across various disciplines was published to assess the size of the military business empire and evaluate the extent to which it influenced the army's repressive reaction to the protesters and its subsequent heavy intervention in politics. Through an interdisciplinary perspective, I investigate the historical roots of the Egyptian military's rise to economic and political dominance before 2011, and the expansion and consolidation of its full control after the Uprisings. Applying a political economy approach to archival records, my recent book, *Militarizing the Nation: The Army, Business, and Revolt in Egypt*, argues that military business evidently went hand in hand with the institution's domination over the state's bureaucracy under Mubarak, especially as he liberalized the economy throughout the 1990s-2000s. Generals and ex-generals were main contributors to, or rather makers of, Mubarak's neoliberal economy and his authoritarian regime, and seizing power in the past few years was only a continuity of their entrenched command within the state.

The military's economic and political hegemony has a long history in the country's post-colonial past. It began in the 1950s-60s under Egypt's first military regime of Nasser. But the more recent history of this process goes back to Mubarak's neoliberal policies that he embraced after the Gulf War in 1991. When Mubarak transitioned into the market economy, he allowed the officers to convert large segments of the gigantic defense industry to target the civilian consumer market and also create new business ventures. Neoliberal economic reforms entailed Mubarak cut public spending, including in the military budget. Arguably in order to "coup-proof" his regime, i.e., protect it from potential officer mutiny, Mubarak granted the military extensive business privileges that enabled it to create a business empire. For the same reason, Mubarak appointed an ever-increasing number of retired generals in top government positions responsible for the

liberalization of the economy.

On the one hand, I argue that a class of “neoliberal officers” was born in the Egyptian civilian market during the 1990s and expanded vastly through the 2000s. Those officers did not necessarily believe in the dictates of the free market; in fact, they functioned against them and often distorted this market through enjoying supra privileges above private and public enterprises. Military entrepreneurs enjoyed superior access to state land, had exceptional tax breaks, violated labor rights, and functioned above public accountability. They managed factories of cement, steel, Jeep cars, fertilizers, home appliances, processed food, etc. They grabbed immense pieces of land to construct toll highways and cultivate vast commercial farms.

The existence of such a class of military entrepreneurs is not exceptional to Egypt. It is a global phenomenon born in many other countries transforming to the market after the end of the Cold War and the triumph of the U.S. economic model. According to Jörn Brömmelhörster and Wolf-Christian Paes, military business, or “Milbus” emerged when the IMF and the World Bank pushed governments transforming to neoliberalism to adopt more conservative fiscal policies. Structural adjustment and reform measures required substantial cuts in public spending. Many of these regimes allowed their armies to create business enterprises that compensated for their budgetary losses, mostly in order to avoid potential military coups. In the Arab states in particular, Philippe Droz-Vincent explains that when armies in authoritarian regimes, such as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, started to invest in the civilian sector, they maneuvered the market for their benefit and grew into “parasitic” and monopolistic tycoons.

On the other hand, I argue that officers enjoyed an invisible hegemonic status within Mubarak’s bureaucratic apparatus. While Mubarak maintained a civilian face for the state in Cairo by forming cabinets of civilian technocrats, retired generals were the invisible de facto rulers of the country and public administrators of its liberalized economy. They were the actual rulers of most of provincial Egypt through occupying seats of local governors, heads of towns, heads of neighborhoods, etc. They also managed every sea, river, and land port, and dominated public transportation as a whole from buses and ferryboats to airlines. They took charge of government authorities that provided basic public services to the

citizens, from water and sewerage and affordable housing to garbage collection and urban beautification. More important, ex-officers were hired heads of numerous government authorities responsible for the main economic reform schemes. They managed public authorities allocating state land to public projects or private business, along with the authorities of investment, import and export, tourism, and more.

When the 2011 Uprisings broke out, the public attempt at demilitarizing the economy and the state bureaucracy quickly failed. While in power between February 2011 and June 2012, SCAF faced a sweeping wave of labor strikes and sit-ins targeting military business managers and public administrators. SCAF oppressively contained the situation by deploying the military police to disperse sit-ins or crush protesters, and issued an anti-strike law that sent many protesting laborers and government employees to military trials and jail. In the following year, SCAF allied itself with the rising, wealthy Islamists, and collected more advantages in business and politics. The Muslim Brother’s elected president, Mohamed Morsy, to whom SCAF delivered power in the summer of 2012, maintained the privileged status of the army in the bureaucracy, by hiring more ex-officers as ministers, governors, and as other top administrators. Moreover, the Brotherhood granted the military a semi-autonomous status in the constitution that they issued in December 2012. This constitution kept the military budget — even pertaining to revenue from civilian businesses — above state oversight and public scrutiny.

Needless to say, since a new military president, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, was elected in 2014, the size of military business has tremendously expanded and the number of ex-generals appointed in top bureaucratic positions has proliferated. This is taking place within a domestic context of fundamental market reforms required by the conditions of a large IMF loan of \$12 billion.

Before and after the 2011 Uprisings, scholars across various disciplines investigated the subject of military business and political control. When Mubarak partially liberalized the economy in the 1980s, political scientist Robert Springborg scrutinized how the charismatic minister of defense then, Abdel-Halim Abu Ghazala, ventured into civilian business while enjoying exceptional political authority. Abu Ghazala’s army then enjoyed access to

U.S. arms and attempted to foster ties with American business. In the 1990s, sociologist Mona Abaza investigated the rise of the army's shopping malls in newly constructed bourgeois suburbs in Cairo. They were American-style malls built on land that the military appropriated during the wars with Israel and used for projects targeting a sweeping consumer culture. After SCAF took over power, Shana Marshall used her comparative politics perspective to reveal the Egyptian army's ties with regional and international capital, and its business enterprises in areas such as petrochemicals and maritime sectors. From a unique comparative literature approach, Dalia Said Mustafa shed light on how the officers' economic outreach and corruption eclipsed their public image as former war heroes in Egyptian cinema. My work has benefited from all these diverse approaches in looking at the history and recent realities of the Egyptian military.

More research across disciplines is still needed in order to investigate other pressing issues about the currently ruling officers. For instance, research on labor rights within military enterprises; compulsory conscripted soldiers fighting the current war on Jihadists; military control over the city and urban life; art and military public propaganda; and more is necessary and with diverse approaches in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the Egyptian military institution.

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POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: THE MISSING PIECE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PUZZLE OF OIL-RICH ARAB COUNTRIES¹

By **Ibrahim Elbadawi** (Economic Research Forum) and **Hoda Selim** (Economic Research Forum)*

This article argues that the Arab World is cursed by political institutions rather than by oil wealth. These institutions have predated oil discoveries and adversely influenced economic outcomes. As low oil prices risk becoming a new normal, Arab countries need to adopt, first and foremost, a high degree of democracy and a strong system of political checks and balances to escape the curse.

The Arab World holds close to half of global oil reserves and a quarter of natural gas reserves. It

controls close to a third of oil production and 14 percent of natural gas production. Yet, even though these large resources are considered to be a blessing, they have not contributed to sustainable development as in Norway, a country with more limited oil resources, or even Japan, a country without any natural resources. In fact, Arab economies remain heavily dependent on oil in terms of export earnings (above 60 percent of total exports), GDP (around 50

Table 1: Estimated Long-run Effect of Resource Rents on Economic Growth Allowing for Common Correlated Effects

	High checks and balances	Low checks and balances
High Democracy	4.369*** (2.29)	-5.125 (5.13)
Low Democracy	-0.46 (0.29)	-1.657 (0.88)

Source: Elbadawi and Soto (2016)

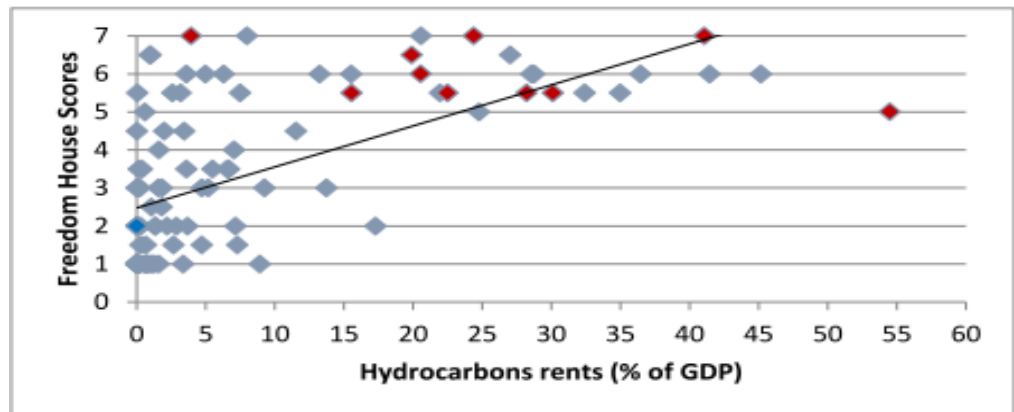
percent except in Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates) and fiscal revenues. This oil wealth has been associated with growth volatility, either a shrinking or stagnant manufacturing sector, especially when exchange rates were persistently or significantly overvalued (Selim and Zaki, 2016).

This disappointing performance has initially been attributed to a “resource curse”, which refers to the paradox that countries with natural resource wealth tend to grow less rapidly than those without such resources. Economic symptoms of the curse included Dutch disease, macroeconomic volatility and debt overhang, among other ills (Sachs and Warner, 1994). Yet, this article argues that the Arab world is cursed by weak political institutions rather than by oil, or alternatively that the curse is real but conditional upon the presence of bad political governance (Elbadawi and Soto, 2016).

DISPELLING THE OIL CURSE MYTH

Weak political institutions have predated resource discoveries and over time have shaped economic incentives that affect how oil rents are collected, allocated and used, and, therefore, influenced economic outcomes (Galal and Selim, 2013). Over time, the interaction between oil and politics became intertwined, preventing Arab countries from embarking on a sustainable development path. Moreover, empirical evidence shows that the oil curse does exist but is conditional upon bad political governance. Yet, a striking policy message from Elbadawi and Soto (2016) is that democracy is a necessary but insufficient condition to escape the curse: only resource-rich countries with both a high degree of democracy and political checks and balances are likely to escape it (table 1). Figure 1 shows that oil-rich Arab countries lag behind in measures of political openness. In 2014, out of the 205 countries covered by Freedom House, no Arab oil-rich economy was considered to be “free”. Only one country is considered to be partly free, that is Kuwait. Moreover, most countries, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), have not undertaken any meaningful political reforms since the 1970s.

Figure 1: Freedom House Scores and Hydrocarbon Rents, 2014



Note: This indicator ranges from 1(the most free) to 7 (the least free).

Source: Freedom House and WDI databases

With weak institutions, oil wealth (accounting for at least two-thirds of fiscal revenues) turned Arab governments into rentier states and provided them with the means to buy off political consent with economic privileges. Most GCC governments are not only able to apply low tax rates but also to efficiently redistribute oil revenues through labor markets to national citizens in the form of well-remunerated public-sector jobs and other generous social welfare

schemes with the aim of fostering authoritarian rule. More concretely, when regional political unrest mounted in 2011, oil revenues allowed GCC governments to generously appease citizens. Kuwait and Bahrain responded by giving out cash, Bahrain and Oman provided public sector jobs, and Saudi Arabia and Oman raised workers' wages and benefits. According to Hertog (2012), Saudi Arabia approved an increase in expenditure by US\$130 billion to finance the creation of 120,000 new public-sector jobs, building 500,000 houses, setting a minimum wage of US\$800 in the public sector, providing a one-time bonus to incumbent civil servants, and creating an unemployment assistance scheme.

ESCAPING THE CURSE

Large oil resources, like those present in the Arab world, are a blessing. They have contributed to better standards of living and have most certainly widened states' set of policy choices. Notwithstanding this improvement, the economic performance of Arab oil-rich countries has been disappointing. This article suggests that escaping the curse requires that Arab countries adopt measures to improve political inclusiveness and political checks and balances. As a second best, adhering to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) — which provides a global standard for transparency in the oil industry — and the National Resource Charter (NRC) — which offers more comprehensive principles for governments and societies on how to best harness the opportunities for development generated by extractive commodity windfalls — can serve as anchors for enhancing transparency and accountability.

Second, the reform of fiscal institutions would improve resource management, increase savings and release resources for diversification. According to Collier (2016), the GCC needs to start saving 30 percent of their hydrocarbons revenues in 2013 and increase this ratio to 100 percent by 2083. Sovereign wealth funds (SWF) would be a useful vehicle to save these revenues in financial assets abroad and ride out revenue volatility.² Other Arab countries with less wealth and shorter resource horizons wealth (like Algeria, Sudan and Yemen) need to save 50 percent of their hydrocarbons revenues and raise this ratio to 100% by 2043. In addition to a SWF, these countries also need a Sovereign Development fund (SDF) to invest their wealth in domestic infrastructure, a

process called “investing in investing” (Collier, 2016). These countries would also greatly benefit from improving the efficiency of public investment projects to avoid “white elephant” unnecessary and wasteful projects.

Moreover, the adoption of a fiscal rule, through setting numerical limits on budgetary aggregates, would allow governments to determine the shares of oil revenues to be spent through the budget versus those that are saved for future generations. The experience of Chile in this regard can inspire Arab oil exporters as fiscal rules have helped smooth revenue volatility while mitigating discretionary spending (Schmidt-Hebbel, 2016).

To conclude, the best way to turn the curse into a blessing in the Arab World is to improve the prevailing political institutions, which form the deep roots of the curse and have contributed to poor economic outcomes. Current low oil prices present a window of opportunity for policymakers to undertake many reforms that would embark their economies on a sustainable development.

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* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the IMF, its Executive Board, or IMF management.

Notes

¹This article is based on the 2016 edited volume *Understanding and Avoiding the Oil Curse in Arab Resource-rich Economies*, edited by Ibrahim Elbadawi and Hoda Selim, New York and Cairo: Cambridge University Press and the Economic Research Forum. The volume was written and published prior to Ms. Selim joining the IMF in May 2017.

²A SWF is a state-owned investment fund that funded from resource exports proceeds which are often invested in overseas long-term instrument. A SDF has the mandate to finance

domestic investment opportunities, particularly in infrastructure.

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BRICS RISING POWERS AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

By Guy Burton

What is the role of rising powers and the Arab-Israeli conflict? What does their experience tell us about the impact of such powers, both on international relations generally and conflict management more specifically? In my forthcoming book, *Rising Powers and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1947* (Lexington

Books), I studied how the five BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) interacted with the conflict, and extended it beyond the conceptualization and organization of the group to include their individual involvement since the conflict became internalized at the UN in 1947.

To make sense of how the five countries responded to the conflict, I drew on themes from rising powers and conflict management. First, if states perceived the international system to be relatively open, they would exploit that space with more independent actions (Larson and Shevchenko 2014, Clunan 2014). In conflict management that could mean a more "active" approach to conflict management (i.e. engaged diplomacy, coercive peacekeeping and military intervention, economic sanctions, judicial enforcement); where the system was more closed they would adopt "passive" conflict management (i.e. "normal" diplomatic and economic relations, non-coercive peacekeeping) (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004, Bercovitch and Gartner 2009, Butler 2009, Jeong 2010).

I applied the notions of active and passive conflict management to the way that the rising powers dealt with the Arab-Israeli conflict either individually or collectively across the four time periods commonly associated with it: (1) between 1947-67 when the conflict was primarily between Israel and Arab states like Egypt, Syria and Jordan; (2) after the 1967 war when the conflict between Israel and the Arab states was slowly supplanted by the centrality of the Palestinians as the most prominent Arab actor (Klein 2010); (3) during the Oslo years between 1993 and 2000; (4) in the period after the Second Intifada broke out in 2000. The time periods also coincided with wider global shifts, from a relatively closed bipolar world during the Cold War and US unipolarity during the 1990s, followed by a more open multipolarity after 2000.

By surveying the powers' approach to the conflict over decades, I sought to provide historical context to the present, when the BRICS were initially identified as a group of key emerging markets to watch and their subsequent self-organization. Stretching the narrative enabled comparison of these powers to earlier periods, especially the emergence of challenges towards the hegemonic powers associated with the Third World, non-alignment and global South during the 1960s and 1970s.

However, despite a more multipolar environment after 2000, I observed more diversity in rising power behavior and management towards the conflict during the 1960s and 1970s. Brazil and India were active participants in peacekeeping between Israel and the Arab states before 1967 while the Soviets and China were both active in providing financial and military assistance to Israel's Arab and Palestinian rivals respectively. As South Africa's apartheid regime became a global pariah, it made common cause with Israel, through large arms purchases and development in nuclear technology.

By contrast, following the establishment of the Oslo process, the BRICS countries took a step back from direct engagement with the conflict. In its place, they focused more on the development of diplomatic and economic relations with both conflict parties; a process which has been labelled "normalization". This was especially pronounced in relation to Israel, which shifted from relative international isolation during the 1970s to formalized and deepening ties with these powers. This separation between the conflict and "normal" diplomacy continued even after Oslo failed, with a collapse into the violence of the Second Intifada and Israel's continuing occupation of the West Bank (and siege after 2005 of Gaza).

The Oslo process has retained legitimacy and support from the international community, including the BRICS, although it has only resulted in periodic negotiations and without an indication of a final resolution of the conflict. In addition, the process has done little to challenge the asymmetrical power exercised by Israel against the Palestinians. The continuing focus on Oslo has meant that state actors have been less attentive to other, alternative efforts to tackle the conflict. Arguably the most significant in the post-2000 period is the transnational Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement (Falk 2013). To date much of its efforts have been targeted in North America and Europe, which have provided most political and financial assistance for Oslo. Looking further afield, at the rising powers, the BDS has yet to make inroads into civil societies in authoritarian China and Russia, but has had more success in democracies like Brazil, India and South Africa – albeit on the margins of the political system, including leftist parties in Brazil and India and the activist wing of the ANC party in South Africa (Barghouti 2015).

The reasons for BRICS persistence with Oslo and reticence to acknowledge and pursue alternatives like the BDS may be attributed to a pragmatic and selective approach to international affairs and conflict management. Despite criticizing the failure of US mediation, they demonstrate no appetite to displace the more prominent US and European presence in the Oslo process. At the same time, they are aware of their shrunken influence in relation to the conflict, their involvement being limited to modest contributions to humanitarian or development assistance.

The broader implications of my survey challenge the assumption that rising powers will pursue more independent forms of action as the global system opens up. As the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict suggests, rising power behavior may be more conservative and less reformist. This therefore places the work at the more critical and emerging end of the literature spectrum relating to rising powers in international relations generally, and specifically in the case of the BRICS (see Bond and García 2015, Paul, Larson and Wohlforth 2014, Paul 2016). Of course, this observation is the result of one particular and long running case of international conflict and far from the home regions associated with the five states concerned. Therefore, more case studies of conflicts and other rising powers are needed to further test the findings and extend the analysis.

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DEMOCRATIZATION FROM A CROSS-REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: HOW CAN GAME THEORETIC MODELS OF LATIN AMERICAN TRANSITIONS INFORM THE ARAB REGION?

By Shima Hatab

The Arab Uprisings of 2010-2011 generated a great hope that a “fourth wave of democratization” has finally hit the shore of the Arab region. Within a few short years, however, these prospects gave way to brutal wars in Syria and Yemen, state failure in Libya, return of old-regime figures in Tunisia, and a new authoritarian crackdown in Egypt. The crushing of the Arab Uprisings revived scholarly debates about the structural and cultural preconditions for democracy that make authoritarianism so intractable and resilient in the region.

Despite the dismal landscape of the post-Uprisings developments, Latin America could offer ample examples to mull over how democratic transitions could be possible in unfavorable contexts. In the mid-1960s, a wave of military coups cascaded the region, putting an end to mass-democratic regimes and unleashing unprecedented levels of repressive

practices. The military had gained a foothold in the Southern Cone and Andean region after a prolonged polarized social conflict and a political stalemate among power contenders which made any democratic governance sort of an “impossible game”. Over the course of a dozen years, however — between 1978 and 1990 — military dictatorships and autocratic rulers disappeared from Latin American political landscape (in what became known as the “Third Wave”), old enemies coalesced to face previous authoritarian friends, and democracy had come to be acknowledged as the sole legitimate way of accessing public office. What accounts for this dramatic political transformation in such a short period of time? Clearly, Latin American societies did not instantly “become democratic” in their political cultures or suddenly develop the socio-economic prerequisites for democratic rule.

The installation of the military regimes was a product of a “trichotomous” game between the military establishment, right-wingers and business sectors, and leftist forces. The “strategic equilibrium” between the three players entailed a political impasse that benefited the military junta to gain grip on power. The assumptions of the “impossible game” of democratic equilibrium in Latin America through the 1960s and 1970s centered on:

1. The labor-based parties were the largest organized forces and they would not rule democratically. The Marxist-left was ambivalent about democratic practices and caused polarization in Latin American society.
2. No large right-wing opposition would be strong enough to win in elections unless there were some restrictions on the left.
3. The right wing and business groups accepted the military as the umpire of the electoral game (when threatened it would intervene to terminate the round of electoral game and maintain stability)

O'Donnell (1973: 180) summarized the Argentine stalemate between 1955-66 saying:

Once one round of the game has been played and knowledge of rules is perfect, it is evident that it is a futile game which no one can win. Consequently, a rational player

becomes “non-allegiant” (he rejects the game, or at least has no interest in its continuation) and “irresponsible” (since everyone will lose eventually, whatever short-term gains are possible should be pursued). Not only is the game futile, but its dynamic has increased polarization. With no players to seek its continuation, it can easily be terminated.

I draw parallels between the position of the rival actors in Latin America during the 1960s and the role of Islamists and secular opposition groups in the Middle East since 2011. Both regions faced serious contention over the political inclusion of ideologically-polarizing forces — the Marxist Left in Latin America and Islamists in the Middle East — that are staunchly opposed by other actors and distrusted for their ambivalence toward democratic norms. And both have inherited authoritarian parties and coercive institutions that were certain to remain principal players following any regime transition, compelling uncertain processes of political learning and institutional “repurposing”.

How can democracy be introduced in political contexts wherein a plethora of actors are willing to resort to force to crush their rivals and advance their own agenda? Efforts to answer this question entailed a fundamental reflection on players’ strategies, payoffs, and incentive structures. Latin America’s experience provides ample evidence of democracy’s capacity to transform political behavior. It shows how democratic institutions had been a “congealed rational choice” to alter the strategic environment and the incentive system of conflict resolution between the key power competitors. The adherence of rival actors to democratic modes of conflict resolution rested upon strategic calculations and a form of rule-bound consent between winners and losers as follows:

- Electoral processes and representation of all major players in collective decision-making are ex ante uncertain.
- Actors who “lose” in any cycle of democratic contestation are allowed to compete over power in subsequent cycles, without the “winners” breaking the game to ensure their perpetuation in power.
- Both democratic victories and defeats are provisional in nature, lending an “intertemporal character to political conflicts” (Przeworski 1991)

and offering a potential solution to political conflict in iterative electoral game cycles.

Political actors may thus be transformed over time as they adjust their organizational capacity, ideological orientation, and strategic behavior to a new incentive system that is shaped by contingent and institutionalized modes of democratic contestation. Such mechanisms of change, however, are far from automatic or pre-determined. Democratic transitions do get aborted, or reversed. The Latin American experience merely suggests that these challenges are not inherently insoluble. Certainly, they cannot be surmounted so long as pivotal players believe they are capable of vanquishing their opponents and imposing their preferred rules. Democratic institutions of conflict resolution emerge when power resources are sufficiently dispersed so as to prevent any player from unilaterally crushing its opponents. This may require either a “strategic equilibrium”, or a necessary political stalemate between contending forces.

In El Salvador in the early 1990s, the state and militant groups were both well-armed and incapable of inflicting a decisive military defeat on the other. ARENA (Nationalist Republican Alliance) — an ‘authoritarian successor party’ (Loxton 2016) founded by a former head of military intelligence — started negotiations with the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) guerrilla movement to end the civil war that claimed 70,000 lives. A stalemate is less obvious where the state’s security apparatuses have predominantly coercive power — i.e., much of the MENA region today. Needless to say, both the FMLN and ARENA had suspected the democratic credentials of the other when peace accords first incorporated the guerrilla movement into the democratic process in the early 1990s. In 2009, ARENA peacefully handed over power to the FMLN after former Marxist rebel Mauricio Funes of the FMLN party won the elections, marking the first time in two decades that a leftist president has been voted into office. Thus, patterns of shared political learning, confidence building, and democratic habituation can be achieved in the process of conflict management through institutionalized means.

In Argentina, the stalemate led to a long-term double crisis, a crisis of legitimacy because of the degree of exclusion and the crisis of efficacy because of the incapability of the military regime to sustain its support base. In 1983 the old fierce competitors

changed their calculus and allied to form the multiparty opposition alliance, *Multipartidaria*, and seized the initiative and imposed its improvised program on the retreating military incumbent elites.

The Chilean case demonstrated, however, the capacity of societal actors to carve out autonomous spaces and mobilize their own power resources in ways that undermine the ability of autocrats to govern effectively, and thus changing the political calculus and strategies for a wide range of actors. The elite pacts that produce mechanisms of contingent consent as a “strategic equilibrium” in the democratization models are very unlikely to occur in the absence of such mobilization from below. The right-wing and left-wing parties helped reconstruct Chilean democracy in 1989-90 following 17 years of the Pinochet dictatorship and the extreme ideological polarization of Salvador Allende’s democratic socialist experiment. The center-left coalition constructed between old rivals: the Socialists (who supported Allende) and the Christian Democrats (who opposed Allende’s economic policies and applauded the military takeover).

As such, the Arab Uprisings may have fallen short of meeting its democratic aspirations — but it surely pushed the authoritarian boundaries and took the region closer to the democratic frontier. The Troika promise of Ennahda and the two secular partners — the *Congrès pour le République* (CPR) and *Ettakatol* — in Tunisia — between 2011 and 2013 — and the peaceful alternation of power away from the Islamist-led ruling coalition in 2014 could serve as another beginning “node” of future “sequential games” in the region.

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CHALLENGES OF DOING PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESEARCH IN THE MENA

By Pamela Abbott and Andrea Teti (University of Aberdeen, UK)

Since the beginning of the century, public opinion poll data has become increasingly available for researching political, social and economic attitudes and values in the MENA. This provides another avenue for new and innovative research, including exploring models of political systems and their transformations (e.g. democratization, authoritarian resilience, etc.) a contentious issue in Middle Eastern studies (e.g. Inglehart 2017; Tessler and Robbins 2014; Teti et al 2017). However, carrying out public opinion surveys and using this data presents challenges — as we have found undertaking the Arab Transformations Project (thereafter AT) — both in carrying out surveys and in interpreting data: our project had to deal with precisely such difficulties in conducting surveys in seven MENA countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya and Tunisia) and in compiling and using a longitudinal database allowing scholars to examine changes in political and social attitudes following the 2010-2011 Arab Uprisings.¹ This article discusses these two categories of challenges.

GATHERING DATA

Carrying out surveys in authoritarian contexts or in internal conflict areas can be difficult if not impossible not only because of the difficulty of obtaining permission from local authorities, but also because of the risks to field researchers. In Iraq, the AT survey was restricted to surveying governorates away from the border with Syria because of the invasion by the so-called Islamic State taking place in 2014 at the time the survey was being carried out. In Libya, the ongoing conflict disrupted data collection, which made it impossible for data collectors to hand in to the office 200 completed questionnaires. In Egypt, data collectors were at times prevented by police from going into certain areas. Similarly, ArabBarometer did not carry out surveys in Iraq or

Libya in 2016, Gallup World Poll (GWP) has only once carried out a survey in Libya in 2012, and the AfroBarometer (AfB) has never conducted surveys here.

There are also issues of data quality. It is important that surveys be carried out comparably in each country, and that data collectors be trained adequately and supervised in the field. While data quality in surveys in developing countries is generally fit for purpose (Inglehart and Welzel, 2010) it is important that quality assurance is rigorously carried out both in the field and once data collection is complete. Principal investigators are usually located at a distance and rely on local teams to carry out surveys and this can be problematic. In our case, we encountered problems that are common to other public opinion surveys carried out in the region, such as translating questionnaires into Arabic and ensuring that the survey managers in each country have a common understanding of how the survey ought to be conducted (see Abbott et al 2017 for details). Training of survey supervisors and data collectors was done in each country and in hindsight collaboration to ensure comparable training could have been improved the conduct of the survey and the quality of the data collected. The supervision of data collectors by some of the field supervisors was not always ideal, and in all but one of the countries resulted in some or all of the resulting data being discarded because of duplication/near duplication of cases.

During the data quality assurance process, we identified two main types of problems. Firstly, duplication/near duplication of cases,² which may indicate falsification of data at some stage in the process, and a relatively high proportion of missing values (i.e. “don’t know” or “refuse to answer” responses) (see Abbott et al 2017 for details). To identify possible duplication/near duplication, we used an innovative programme for STATA, Percent Match (Kuriakose and Robbins 2016), we found evidence suggesting varying degrees of duplicates/near duplicates in all countries surveyed, except Jordan. We rejected the data set for Algeria for this reason, and removed duplicate/near duplicate cases from other countries in order to preserve the integrity of data and analysis. In Tunisia, we used Percent Match innovatively to detect excessive variation – rather than excessive similarity, which it was originally designed to identify – which can suggest randomly competed questionnaires.

Removing these cases left the sample size adequate to generalise at country level. More broadly, it is possible to use Percent Match to monitor field tests and ongoing data collection. Alongside existing training and monitoring techniques, these techniques increase data quality and reduce the possibility of questionnaire falsification.

Response rates to surveys are generally high in the region: in AT, these varied from just under 90 per cent to 96 percent. There is, however, a problem of missing values, most frequently a result of respondents answering with “don’t know”. The non-response rate varies by country and is higher on questions about political attitudes and preferences. High non-response rates may be due to poor interviewer training – in surveys data collectors are trained to encourage respondents to select one of the options and instructed not to read out “don’t know”. Alternatively, they may be due to uncertainty – some respondents genuinely “don’t know” and it is possible that the proportion of these is lower where data collectors have been trained to encourage respondents to give a positive answer. These variations across cases make the comparison between countries problematic. Cases with missing values are generally excluded from data analysis or these missing values are replaced by the sample mean. Statistical analysis beyond the reporting of frequencies requires this. The reporting of the proportion of the respondents that hold a particular value can be misleading if the “don’ts” are excluded.

In AT, for example, 93.1 percent of Egyptians agree that democracy is the best system of government despite its faults, but this falls to 61.5 percent if don’t knows are included. Furthermore, non-respondents are unlikely to be normally distributed across the sample (Berinsky and Tucker. 2006) with findings potentially being misleading (Teti et al 2017). Analysis of the cases with relatively high proportion of “don’t knows” in the AT data found that older people – especially older women – were disproportionately represented meaning that their attitudes are likely to be underrepresented in the write up of the findings of the research. Furthermore, where “don’t know” is the ‘positive’ answer of a noticeable number of respondents, such important information is lost. In AT, the non-response rates were notably higher in Tunisia and especially Egypt, and more so on “political” questions.³ Both countries were going through turbulent political changes during the time of the survey, and it is conceivable that some

Table 1: Availability of Time Series Survey Data for Selected MENA Countries after Removal of Duplicates / Near Duplicates⁵

	Algeria	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Libya	Morocco	Tunisia
WVS 4 th Wave (1999/04)	X	√	√	√	X	√	X
AB1 (2006/08).	X	X	X	√	X	√	X
WVS 5 th Wave Waves (2005/08),	X	X	X	√	X	√	X
AB11 (2010/11)	X	√	X	√	X	X	√
WVS 6 (2010/14)	X	√	√	√	√	√	√
AfB (2013)	√	√	X	X	X	√	√
ABIII (2013)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
ATS (2014)	X	√	√	√	√	√	√
AfB (2015)	√	√	X	X	X	√	√
ABIV (2016)	√	√	X	√	X	√	√

respondents just didn't know what they thought about democracy and what type of regime was suitable for their country.

In assembling a data set to investigate how values and attitudes changed before and after the Uprisings, we found large gaps in data availability (Table 1),⁴ which makes the study of change over time difficult. Not all the countries that we surveyed were included in every pre-2011 survey wave. Numbers were reduced further after data had been cleaned with Percent Match, resulting in some countries' data sets being removed. In the wake of the Uprisings, all countries we surveyed were included in the AB, but AfroBarometer only covers North Africa. Moreover, in World Values Survey and AB not all batteries of questions are asked in each wave, and even where the same topics are present, questions and their wording often vary. While values may change relatively slowly, dramatic and sudden change as happened in 2010-11 may have a more marked impact. Cost and feasibility of doing the survey in a country also affect inclusion in the sample. Conducting surveys requires substantial funding, which is increasingly difficult to obtain. Instead, researchers have used pooled data sets to look at change over time. While MENA countries may form a distinctive cluster compared to other world regions (e.g. Inglehart and Welzel 2010), our work in AT shows there are also noticeable differences between countries (e.g. Teti et al 2017) making region-based pooling problematic.

INTERPRETING DATA

A second set of issues affects data interpretation. Two major difficulties should be noted: one in research design, another in practice. First, how questions are understood – especially ones involving values and attitudes – needs further research, e.g. the extent to which researchers and respondents share understandings of what “gender equality” means

or what respondents mean when they say “Islam” and “democracy” are compatible (Carnaghan 2008, 2011). While current debates over issues, such as the demand for democracy or for gender equality, rely on either direct or indirect questions, our research shows that it is crucial to draw on both (e.g. Teti et al 2017). Direct questions are those that, for example, ask respondents about their attitude to democracy, what of a menu of options they think are essential characteristics of democracy or if they think Islam and democracy are compatible. Indirect questions are those that, for example, ask respondents if they think that various types of political systems are suitable for their country without mentioning regime types,⁶ how important they think it is that shari'a is used as a guide for law making or about the principles that should determine the behaviour of women (the questionnaire can be found in Abbott et al 2016). In addition, complementary qualitative research in which respondents can give detailed answers and explain what they think and why (e.g. focus groups, semi-structured interviews) will also be crucial in exploring the complex sets of meanings sometimes obfuscated by being subsumed under a single banner, e.g. ‘Islam’.

Secondly, it is crucial that interpretation of data be carried out by research teams with strength and depth in both quantitative methods and country knowledge. Beyond identifying developments in individual countries which might affect survey results, such expertise contributes to interpreting results. For example, the emphasis respondents place on material conditions as essential characteristics of democracy

– e.g. fighting unemployment and corruption – could be understood as “misunderstanding” the centrality of procedural aspects of democracy. However, in light of decades of “façade democracy” it could also be the result of disillusionment with procedural dimensions which have improved neither citizens’ political or socio-economic inclusion, or simply a recognition that in order to be politically effective the guarantee of civil-political rights must be accompanied by a commensurate guarantee of socio-economic rights.

In sum, while acknowledging the limits and difficulties in carrying out public opinion survey research in the region, resulting data can play an important role in adding a layer of sophistication in the investigation of complex social, economic, and political realities in the region and beyond.

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Notes

¹The Arab Transformations Project is an international research project that operated within the European Commission’s FP7 framework. The project looks comparatively at attitudes and behaviours in the context of the social, political and economic transformations taking place across Middle East and North Africa following the 2010/11 Uprisings. The project uses a mixed methods approach including critical discourse analysis, a public opinion survey in seven Arab countries, secondary analysis of existing data sets and macro data and qualitative analysis. The countries covered are Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq.

² Duplication/near duplication of cases, that is the responses to two questionnaires being identical/near identical has an

infinitesimally small chance of occurring (Kuriakose and Robbins 2016) and is most usually the result of the copying of the responses on one questionnaire to another with a small number of changes being made in an attempt to avoid detection. Until very recently it was only possible to detect duplicates but it is now possible to detect near duplicates as well.

³ Examples of questions with noticeably higher non-response rates included all those that used ‘democracy’ in the question, for example, how democratic do you think your country is on a 11-point scale or how much democracy is suitable for your country on an 11-point scale. The questions that asked people to predict what the economic, political and security situation of both the country and their own household in five-year time also had high non-response rates while few respondents had any difficulty saying what the situation had been like five years previous to the survey or at the time of the survey.

⁴ The Gallup World Poll is also carried out across the MENA but is of limited use for political science research and expensive to access.

⁵ A longitudinal data base (Excel, SPSS & STATA versions) with the country level data for selected questions together with macro variables mainly from the World Development Indicators and indexes of democracy, corruption and so on together with a guide (Lomazzi, et al 2017) is available to download here https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313837257_ArabTrans_Longitudinal_Database_SPSS_Version_Revised?_iepl%5BviewId%5D=rvo53fwQadwcvja2y102Bo7F&_iepl%5BprofilePublicationItemVariant%5D=default&_iepl%5Bcontexts%5D%5Bo%5D=prfpi&_iepl%5BtargetEntityId%5D=PB%3A313837257&_iepl%5BinteractionType%5D=publicationTitle and https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313837358_A_Guide_to_the_Use_of_the_Arab_Transformations_Longitudinal_Database.

⁶In AT, the options were: “a parliamentary system in which nationalist, left wing, right wing, and Islamist parties all compete; a system in which only Islamist parties compete; a system with a strong ruler in which elections and competition among political parties are not important; or a system governed by Islamic law in which there are no political parties or elections”.

Web sites

Afro Barometer: <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>.

Arab Barometer: <http://www.arabbarometer.org/>.

Arab Transformations Project: <http://www.arabtrans.eu/>.

World Values Survey: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

MENA POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION CONFERENCE

APSA's MENA Programming continued in 2017 with a special conference bringing together alumni from across all four years of MENA Workshops. The MENA Political Science Research and Publication Conference was held in Tunis from July 25-27, 2017. Organized in partnership with the Center for Maghreb Studies in Tunis ([CEMAT](#)) and the Project on Middle East Political Science ([POMEPS](#)), the conference offered an opportunity to share and receive critical feedback on research manuscripts, network with colleagues from across the MENA region, and contribute to a range of forthcoming publications.

Attending authors included 32 PhD students and early-career scholars from across the MENA region, Europe, and North America, including 17 MENA Workshops alumni. Over 80% of attending authors were citizens of MENA region countries. In addition, 20 leading faculty in the field of MENA Political Science attended the conference as discussants. The three-day program included working group sessions, plenary sessions, roundtables, and skill sharing discussions. Each morning, attendees broke out into assigned working groups on a variety of themes, including: "Mobilization and Decision Making", "Discourse and Diffusion among Social Movements", "Authoritarian Control and Legitimation", "Elite Resilience and State Networks", and "Identity and Integration". The simultaneous working group sessions allowed for intense and dedicated discussion of each paper, which were shared with attendees in advance of the conference. Afternoon sessions included spirited discussion on professional development topics such as Ethics in Fieldwork, Political Science in times of Contentious Politics, and Scholarly Public Engagement. Additionally, attendees enjoyed a panel of local guest speakers who offered frank assessment of the current challenges in Tunisia's political transition. A group dinner in the picturesque neighborhood of Sidi Bou Said offered a pleasant closing to the program.



Following the conference, attendees were encouraged to revise their research manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed international journals. For more information, see <http://web.apsanet.org/mena/mena-political-science-research-and-publication-conference/>.

ALUMNI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

The next round of Alumni Grants will take place in 2018. Made possible by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the program supports alumni activities such as presenting at an academic conference, organizing a mini-workshop, conducting fieldwork, or advancing research towards publication. Since 2014, APSA has awarded over \$115,000 in small grants through the MENA Workshop Professional Development Grants program. Recent recipients include:

- Yasmina Abouzzohour (2016) — \$6,000 Collaborative Research Grant
- Johannes Gunesch (2016) and Yasmeeen Mekawy (2016) — \$6,000 Collaborative Workshop Grant

Congratulations to these alumni! Additional information can be found online at <http://web.apsanet.org/mena/alumni-grants/>.

ALUMNI NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

Over the past year, many of our alumni (both fellows and co-leaders) were invited to present their research and participate in conferences across the United States, including 24 alumni at APSA's Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA and 15 alumni at the Middle East Studies Association's Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. For more information, see the [Alumni Network](#) section of our website.

If you would like to submit an announcement to be included in future Alumni News, send your updates directly to menanewsletter@apsanet.org. Please join us in congratulating the following alumni for their continued professional accomplishments!

Congratulations to **Dr. Ahmed Morsy** for the award of his PhD from the University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom, after defending his thesis in the summer of 2017. His thesis is entitled: "Bandwagon for Profit: Egyptian Policy toward Iran".

2013 ALUMNI - CAIRO AND TUNIS

- Karen Young (Arab Gulf States Institute) published her research "How Egypt wound up in the center of a Gulf Cooperation Council dispute on Qatar" in the October 2017 issue of *POMEPS Briefings #31* on The Qatar Crisis, and on the Washington Post's [Monkey Cage](#) blog on August 23.

2014 ALUMNI - AMMAN AND BEIRUT

- Imad Alsoos (Free University of Berlin) co-authored the piece "Why a new Palestinian intifada could be non-violent: because that's what Hamas wants" on the *Washington Post*'s [Monkey Cage](#) blog on August 29.
- Shimaa Magued (Cairo University) published her article "Turkey's economic rapprochement towards Syria and the territorial conflict over Hatay" in *Mediterranean Politics* (online July 20, 2017)
- Helen Milner (Princeton University) co-authored the piece "Trump just blocked a Chinese takeover of a sensitive U.S. company. Here's what's going on" on the *Washington Post*'s [Monkey Cage](#) blog on September 15.

2015 ALUMNI - DOHA AND KUWAIT

- Mohamed-Ali Adraoui (Georgetown University-School of Foreign Service) published his article "The case of Jabhat Al-Nusra in the Syrian conflict 2011-2016: Towards a strategy of nationalization?" in *Mediterranean Politics* (online October 24, 2017); he also published the article "Borders and sovereignty in Islamist and jihadist thought: past and present" in *International Affairs* 93, no. 4; and has a chapter on "The United States and Political Islam: Dealing with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers in the Arab Revolutions" forthcoming in *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: From American Missionaries to the Islamic State*; eds. Geoffrey F. Gresh and Tugrul Keskin (Routledge, 2018).
- Hadi Alijla (Institute for Middle East Studies, Canada) co-authored the article "Different Paths to Democracy in the MENA Region: A Configurational Comparative Analysis" in the *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs* Vol. 5, Issue 2; he also published the article "Between inequality and sectarianism: who destroys generalised trust? The case of Lebanon" in *International Social Science Journal* (online October 5, 2017).
- Huda AlSahi (Sicola Normale Superiore di Pisa) won the 2017 Graduate Paper Prize from the Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (AGAPS) for her research "Examining ad-hoc abeyance structures on Twitter: The case of the campaign to end the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia".
- Courtney Freer (London School of Economics) published her research "From Co-optation to Crackdown: Gulf

States' reactions to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood during the Arab Spring" in the October 2017 issue of *POMEPS Briefings* #31 on The Qatar Crisis.

- Justin Gengler (Qatar University) published the piece "The dangers of unscientific surveys in the Arab world" on the *Washington Post's* [Monkey Cage](#) blog on October 27.
- Kristen Kao (University of Gothenburg) co-authored the piece "Are Islamists making a comeback in the Middle East? Here's why they succeed — and fail" on the *Washington Post's* [Monkey Cage](#) blog on September 25.
- Adrian Shin (University of Colorado-Boulder) won the 2017 Best Dissertation Award from APSA's Migration and Citizenship Organized Section for his research "Primary Resources, Secondary Labor: Natural Resources and Immigration Policy around the World".
- Mark Tessler (University of Michigan) co-authored the piece "Palestinians don't trust institutions. What that means for peace 50 years after the Arab-Israeli War" on the *Washington Post's* [Monkey Cage](#) blog on June 8.

2016 ALUMNI - BEIRUT AND AMMAN

- Yasmina Abouzzohour (University of Oxford) published her research "[The Persistent Rural Failure of Morocco's Justice and Development Party](#)" in the September 2017 issue of *POMEPS Studies* #27 on Local Politics and Islamist Movements.
- Dana El Kurd (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies) published the piece "Here's what made Palestinian protests in East Jerusalem last month so successful" on the *Washington Post's* [Monkey Cage](#) blog on August 17.
- Shima Hatab (Cairo University) published her article "Abortive regime transition in Egypt: pro-democracy alliance and demand-making framework" in *Democratization* (online November 27, 2017).