The Arab League 2011

Chair:
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Vice Chairs:
Patricia Sibal
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Dear Delegates,

Hello and welcome to SSUNS 2017! Montreal is a beautiful city, and I hope you enjoy your time here. My name is Julia. I am from Southern Connecticut and am in my fourth and last year here at McGill, studying Honours Political Science with minors in Russian and International Development. I have been involved in Model UN since high school, and this year I am serving as USG Committees for our sister conference, McMUN. Sadly, this will be my last SSUNS, but I am so excited to share this experience with you.

Your Vice Chairs are Patricia Sibal, Patrick O'Donnell, and Andrew Figueiredo. Patricia hails from Toronto and is in her third year of Political Science and International Development. This will be her second year staffing SSUNS. Patrick is going into his third year of a Joint Honours degree in Political Science and Philosophy, with a minor in Sociology. He has a long background of MUN both at McGill and in high school, calls both Alberta and the Netherlands home. Andrew is a third year Honours International Development student with a minor in history. He is from Wichita, Kansas, and has staffed both SSUNS and McMUN, as well as competing as a member of McGill's Delegations Team. Together, we are delighted to welcome you to the Arab League of 2011!

This is a year that may or may not be fresh in your memory, but I distinctly remember being in high school and watching as masses took to the streets in protest in so many countries. Now, at McGill, I have spent a considerable amount of time studying the Middle East, and no course goes by without a look at the Arab Spring. This was a pivotal turning point in the region, moving it away from decades of authoritarian stability into a sometimes hopeful, sometimes uncertain future.

We have been working on this background guide and committee as a dais since March, and are so excited to present it to you. Your Vice Chairs in particular have done an amazing job delving into the details of each topic, and I invite you to start your research by reading this background guide. Please do then to go beyond it and delve into the fascinating and still highly relevant recent history of the Middle East and North Africa.

Your dais is passionate about Middle Eastern politics and history, and we look forward to seeing you take on a role in the Arab League. Even if you are not coming into this committee interested in the Middle East, we hope you will leave with a new appreciation!

Best,
Julia Yingling
Chair, Arab League: 2011
SSUNS 2017

Introduction

The League of Arab States, more commonly known as the Arab League, is a loose confederation of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) states that share a common cultural identity as 'Arab' nations.[1] This primarily rests on having Arabic as an official language, or having a large majority of the population be Arabic-speaking.[2] The League was founded in March of 1945 in Cairo by six Middle Eastern states, and has now expanded its membership to including twenty-two Arab nations, including Palestine.[3] Its membership covers states that are extremely diverse on many fronts, including population size, economic strength, and history, and includes states that take part in a variety of other regional organizations, including the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union.

The Arab League is a regional international organization, and like many others, was founded to increase coordination between various members on matters of common interest. The mission of the Arab League is more specifically to seek "close cooperation" on matters of economics, communication, culture, nationality, social welfare, and health.[4] Another primary concern of the Arab League is to increase regional security, through providing a method for dispute and conflict resolution between member states, renunciation of violence as means of conflict resolution, and by collaborating on military affairs.[5]

Like many other regional organizations, the Arab League's founding was prompted by international crises facing states with a set of shared concerns. The aftermath of WWI, WWII, and various waves of decolonization led to unclear borders and major concerns among Middle Eastern nations regarding state borders and territorial divisions.[6] This coincided with the emergence of pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism in many states, as well as a shared opposition among most Middle Eastern governments to the emergence of a Jewish state in Palestine.[7] It was in this context that Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan (now Jordan), Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria came together to form the Arab League, and it would have important implications for the structure and focus of the organization.

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[1] Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "The Arab League," Council on Foreign Relations, October 21, 2014, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/arab-league.

[2] "Profile: Arab League," BBC News, February 5, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-15747941http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-15747941.

[3] Masters and Sergie, "The Arab Leauge."

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] "Profile: Arab League," BBC News.

[7] Masters and Sergie, "The Arab Leauge."

<u>Structure of the Arab League</u>

The Arab League is made up of a permanent General Secretariat in charge of administrative and operational concerns, the Council of the Arab League, and two sub-councils: the Joint Defense Council and the Economic and Social Council.[8]

The Council is the highest body in the Arab League and is formed of direct representatives of member states, usually foreign ministers or permanent delegates, but occasionally the heads of Arab states.[9] Every state has one vote, irrespective of size, and the Council convenes in regular biannual sessions or under extraordinary circumstances at the request of at least two member states.[10] The Council has the ultimate decision power for the Arab League. It decides what actions the League will take, what its objectives are, and how it will cooperate with other international bodies, as well as deciding upon the budget and agenda for sub-institutions.[11] These sub-institutions are the Joint Defense Council and the Economic and Social Council. They deal with particulars of the subjects they have been tasked with.

Like most other international organizations, the Arab League does not have any standing military force, though various attempts have been made to set up joint command centers and rapid action taskforces.[12] However, the League can become a forum through which states agree on collective military action. The 1948 war against Israel, for instance, was the first major collective action coming out of the Arab League.[13]

Decisions in the Arab League are made through a unanimity or consensus model, and focus on negotiations among member states and relatively weak methods of institutional coercion.[14] Decisions made by the League are only binding to the states that vote for them, and there is no mechanism to compel a member's compliance to a resolution.[15]

Notes on the Timeline

Before 2010, the MENA was primarily home to highly stable authoritarian regimes, including revolutionary republics with dictators (such as in Egypt) and monarchies (such as in the Gulf States).[16]

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[8] Wanli Chen and Jun Zhao, "The Arab League's Decision-making System and Arab Integration," Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies 3, no. 2 (2009): 60.
[9] "Profile: Arab League," BBC News.
[10] Masters and Sergie, "The Arab Leauge."
[11] League of Arab States, Charter of the Arab League, March 22 1945, available at http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ab18.html.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Masters and Sergie, "The Arab Leauge."
[14] Chen and Zhao, "Decision-making System," 62.
[15] Masters and Sergie, "The Arab Leauge."
[16] "Profile: Arab League," BBC News.

December 2010: Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolates in Tunisia, sparking anti-regime protests that spread across the country.[17]

January 2011: The long-time dictator of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, flees the country, and a transitional government is formed.[18] In Egypt, protests begin, including the monumental Tahrir Square occupation.[19] Important anti-regime demonstrations are also seen in Yemen, and more minor protests begin in Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, and various other MENA states.[20]

February 2011: In early February, Hosni Mubarak is pushed out of Egypt after being dictator for almost 30 years, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces takes over the transition.[21] In Bahrain, protestors occupy the Pearl Roundabout and organize a 'Day of Rage.'[22] In Libya, protests inspired by Tunisia and Egypt erupt against the eccentric Muammar Qaddafi, and by the end of February anti-government forces have taken control of Benghazi and Misrata.[23] Meanwhile in Yemen, another dictator, Mohamed Salah, announces he will not seek another term.[24]

Current Situation

We find ourselves in mid-March of 2011.

Tunisia and Egypt, the states where the Arab Spring kicked off, both face important challenges in moving forward from their recent authoritarian past. The ouster of Ben Ali in Tunisia led to a transitional government facing various important challenges on all fronts.[25] In Egypt, the military has taken over the transitional process, and has been faced with continued protests and accusations of being too close to the previous Mubarak regime.[26]

The wealthy Gulf States have not been immune to protest. The poorest state of the region, Yemen, has continued large-scale protests and riots against Saleh, but the richer have not been spared.[27] Bahrain has declared a state of emergency and moved into

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[17] David Cutler, "TIMELINE – Arab Spring: A year that shook the Arab world," Reuters, January 14, 2012, http://in.reuters.com/article/tunisia-revolution-anniversary-idINDEE80C0IT20120113.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Garry Blight et al., "Arab Spring: an interactive timeline of Middle East protests," The Guardian, January 5, 2012, https://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Telegraph
[22] Blight et al., "Arab Spring."
[23] Cutler, "TIMELINE."
[24] "Arab Spring: timeline of the African and Middle East rebellions," The Telegraph, October 21, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8839143/Arab-Spring-timeline-of-the-African-and-Middle-East-rebellions.html.
[25] Cutler, "TIMELINE."
[26] Blight et al., "Arab Spring."
[27] Ibid.

martial law due to ongoing protests, and the GCC has responded by sending in troops to support the Al Khalifa monarchy in order to mitigate any contagion effects.[28]

Meanwhile, in Syria, the violent arrest and mistreatment of protesting youth in Deraa spurs major demonstrations by their community, culminating in the destruction of the Ba'ath party headquarters.[29] The government has responded with increasing violence. Most concerningly, in Libya, protesters faced harsh government crackdowns – similar to those in Syria – that quickly escalated into what is now an active civil war.[30]

None of these countries are alone in the Arab Spring, as protests have also sprung up in countries as varied as Oman, Djibouti, Kuwait, Morocco, and Palestine.

Please take special note that as yet the NATO no-fly zone in Libya has not been implemented, and Yemen has not moved into a state of emergency.

Delegates are encouraged to maintain a holistic view of the conflict and issues at hand, and not be over-preoccupied with the timeline details. The most important thing to remember is that the Arab League has not as yet taken any steps towards collectively addressing various crises making up the Arab Spring, but that nearly every state is facing some kind of challenge to the establishment, a few states are moving towards extreme crisis. We encourage delegates to reach out to the dais in order to clarify any timeline-related questions, both before and during the conference.

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[28] Ibid.
[29] "Arab Spring," The Telegraph.
[30] Cutler, "TIMELINE."

Topic 1: Causes of the Arab Spring

Introduction

The Arab Spring came about thanks to various factors – governmental, demographic, economic, and technological. Each of these factors bred or amplified the dissent that toppled various regimes throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Not each nation received the impacts of these causes equally. Even between geographically contiguous nations like Libya and Tunisia, there were vast differences in how the Arab Spring unfolded due to the way different factors interacted. You will have to contend with these factors and their impacts as you advance through the topics of this committee.

Governmental Factors

Figure 1 Source: Huffington Post

Unsatisfying governance is one of the major factors identified as a cause of the Arab Spring. As rebellions often centered directly around regime change, in many cases the government as a whole was considered the enemy. The 2011 Arab Spring uprisings stemmed directly from government brutality and repression. Most of the nations impacted by the Arab Spring, and more generally in the MENA region, are considered autocracies, lacking political and social freedoms.[31] These types of governments, while varied in how much freedom they afford to citizens, are generally willing to enforce laws through brutality and violence. Extrajudicial violence like torture, kidnappings, and execution is often used to quell protests, which in turn fuels increased opposition to government and activist mobilization. In Tunisia, for example, 2008 protests were violently quelled, but many of the same activists and patterns of activism materialized in the beginnings of the Arab Spring.[32] A similar pattern played out in Egypt in 2008, when police killed textile workers in Mahalla al-Kubra. Many of the same organizers of protests following the killing took part in later upheavals.[33]

In some nations, one or two pivotal events served as the match that lit a powder keg of dissatisfaction with repressive government. In Tunisia, for example, shopkeeper Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire after being brutalized by police, kicking off the

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[31] Kamal Eldin Osman Salih. "The Roots and Causes of the 2011 Arab Uprisings." Arab Studies Quarterly 35, no. 2 (2013): 184-206. Accessed April 13, 2017. doi:10.13169/arabstudquar.35.2.0184: 188
[32] Eric Goldstein. "Before the Arab Spring, the Unseen Thaw." Human Rights Watch. August 16, 2016. Accessed May 19, 2017. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2012/country-chapters/global-middle-east/north-africa.
[33] Goldstein, 2012

massive rallies
of the Arab Spring; Fathi Tirbal's arrest in Libya had a similar effect, as did the killing of protestors in Bahrain's Pearl Roundabout. [34] These events galvanized and amplified dissatisfaction with regimes into widespread anger and a craving for justice.

Government repression extends to minimal freedom of the press. Journalists seeking to reveal conditions in many Arab nations often face unfair trials and imprisonment, which again angers activists.[35] This repression empowered activists and fueled the importance of social media in the protests by forcing communication underground. Instead of opening up and liberalizing gradually to reform, governments continued to clamp down and repress opposition, worsening the problem.

Demographic Factors

Another major contributing factor to the rise of the Arab Spring was the demographics of multiple impacted nations. Specifically, the emergence of a phenomenon known as a 'youth bulge' represents a consistent pattern. A youth bulge occurs when the largest segment of a nation's population is between the ages of 15 and 29.[36] This results from a previous spike in birth rates and then a slowing down in birth rates, leaving one young demographic group as the plurality of the population. In Egypt, this phenomenon began to peak in 2011, while in Tunisia, it peaked just before 2011, and has yet to peak in a number of other states, including Yemen.[37] The problem with youth bulges is that they place an inordinate amount of strain on society. Young people demand good-paying jobs and access to education, which are not always easy to provide.

Over the years, as professionals left MENA countries to work in the EU, they sent home remittances that helped fuel their home governments and their home economies. However, during the recession, demand for foreign labor in the EU shriveled up, leaving many aspiring young Middle Eastern emigrants without many options.[38] Additionally, because the tourism market was traditionally full of young workers, when tourism declined due to the recession, a serious lack of jobs emerged in impacted nations.[39] When the market is saturated with workers and employment opportunities are lacking, the consequential distress naturally breeds dissidence and anger. This helped exacerbate some of the issues discussed in relation to political authoritarianism as a factor. Delegates should ensure that their policies take into account the demands and demographics of youth in the Arab Nations. Finding solutions to the problems raised in this committee will require serious consideration of demographic trends largely out of the committee's control.

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[34] Salih, 2013: 202
[35] Salih, 2013: 188
[36] Bajoria, 2011.
[37] Bajoria, 2011.
[38] Onn Winckler. "The "Arab Spring": Socioeconomic Aspects." Middle East Policy Council. Accessed June 25, 2017. http://www.mepc.org/arab-spring-socioeconomic-aspects.
[39] Ibid.

Economic Stagnation

Economic recession is another factor in relation to the cause of the Arab Spring and is closely related to the youth bulge's strain on institutions. The effects of the 2008-2009 economic collapse lasted into 2011 and impacted nations all across the world. Part of its most detrimental impact on stability in the MENA region impacted by the Arab Spring was in breeding dissatisfaction with the status quo. Specifically, satisfaction with the current living conditions plunged during the recession in Arab Spring nations.[40] This occurred in part because of the government's damaging lack of institutional resources. For many years, Arab States relied on the 'authoritarian bargain,' a system in which the government doled out job guarantees, free education, and free healthcare in exchange for political backing.[41] This was possible when governments had high revenues and could invest in domestic programs. When the recession hit and tax and resource revenues dried up, governments found themselves unable to provide their side of this political bargain. Thus, people felt a very real recession in quality of life that could not keep up with their expectations. Political scientist James Davies proposed a theory called the "J-Curve", which holds that more so than material possession, reversal of expected continuing improving quality of life is responsible for political upheaval.[42] This theory can help explain the Arab Spring because for years, governments were able to uphold a high standard of living through the authoritarian bargain. However, when the economy went under, the failings of governments were exposed as their legitimacy corroded due to unmet expectations.

Additionally, the economic crunch led to massive unemployment that fed into mobilization in the Arab Spring. Because of a slowdown in the global economy, there was a lowered demand for goods and services, and thus a lowered demand from firms for employees. This led to large-scale layoffs. When a high degree of young men are unemployed, as was the case in the MENA region, particularly in states suffering from a youth bulge, conflict becomes more likely.[43] As unemployment increased in the region and global financial institutions imposed structural adjustment programs on these nations, subsidies were cut, including those for food, causing rising food prices.[44] With more and more people out of work and basic goods becoming unaffordable, revolution became a more attractive option. Desperation sank in when people realized they had no way to pay

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[40] Inequality, Uprisings, and Conflict in the Arab World. Report. WORLD BANK MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION, World Bank. October 2015. Accessed April 13, 2017. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/303441467992017147/pdf/99989-REVISED-Box393220B-OUO-9-MEM-Fall-2015-FINAL-Oct-13-2015.pdf: 26

[41] Inequality, Uprisings, 2015: 30

[42] Tor Jacobson. "The J-curve – James C. Davies' Theory of Revolutions." POPULAR SOCIAL SCIENCE. May 02, 2013. Accessed May 24, 2017. http://www.popularsocialscience.com/2013/04/17/james-c-davies-j-curve-theory-of-revolutions/.

[43] Inequality, Uprisings, 2015: 34.

[44] Salih, 2013: 187.

for necessities, leading to delegitimization of extant regimes. Additionally, increasing unemployment just served to highlight extant economic inequality, worsening dissatisfaction. Any solution thought up in committee must address these structural economic issues.

Communication Technology and the role of the New Media

Social media and the proliferation of new information technologies allowed the Arab Spring to flare up and spread across national borders. This new paradigm challenges extant assumptions about revolution and stability in the MENA region. Social media, as seen by the role of Twitter in Egypt, provided a platform for the expression of opposition messages.[45] Harder to filter out than state-owned media, outlets like Twitter were widely adopted by the same youth that already felt great dissatisfaction with status quo regimes. Moreover, social media use helped revolutions spread beyond national borders.[46] Connections were forged online through platforms like Facebook that allowed for the spread of ideas. Additionally, social media was a handy organizational tool for planning events and creating demonstrations out of

Figure 2 Source: BBC News

collective anger. Social media did not necessarily directly cause the rebellions of the Arab Spring, but it facilitated the growth and spread of protest movements.

Moreover, social media impacted the Arab Spring by spreading news rapidly to the West. Social media essentially turned the revolutions from physical ones into virtual ones, in which people from various spaces and walks of life join together for a cause.[47]

The Arab Spring became a sort of global revolution. Spain's Indignados and the United States' Occupy Wall Street Movement later adopted similar models of protest organization.[48] The role of social media as a factor in the Arab Spring revolts of 2012 was a momentous one. Aside from the role of protest spreading to the West, evidence also exists that the Arab Spring revolts grew in power due to their ideological spread to the West. While direct footage on Twitter and Snapchat allowed some Western viewers to receive raw news content from the revolts, most media spillover was indirect and

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[45] Catherine O'Donnell. "New study quantifies use of social media in Arab Spring." UW Today. September 12, 2011. Accessed May 24, 2017. http://www.washington.edu/news/2011/09/12/new-study-quantifies-use-of-social-media-in-arab-spring/.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Paolo Gerbaudo. Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism. Pluto Press, 2012. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183pdzs: 159

[48] Ibid, 4.

propagated through news outlets.[49] This led to the swaying of opinions abroad concerning Arab Spring revolts. Even if people lacked all of the information, the accessibility of coverage thanks to new media sources actually created new norms in the international community's approach to regime violence. In Bahrain, for example, international human rights investigations were opened into government brutality that regimes denied.[50] The development of the Arab Spring and its widespread sharing via communications technology created a sort of boomerang effect that came back to impact the course of the rebellions and place international pressure on regimes in favor of democracy. This process was only possible because social media served as a key tool that allowed for global dissemination of protest updates.

Conclusion

Various factors caused the growth of the Arab Spring to its peak in 2011. Some of these factors served as direct causes, while others simply exacerbated extant problems. Addressing these factors to bring peace to the MENA region will require evaluation of each factor in a pragmatic lens. Proposals should seek to address each factor to the capacity that the Arab League can. Realistically, factors like demographics, for example, are not easy to solve. Therefore, it will take collaboration and creativity to solve the problems that confront the region at large.

Questions for Consideration

- How can governments cooperate to fuel economic growth even as the global economy suffers?
- What balance between freedom and security must exist in regard to social media?
- Can demography be mitigated as a factor in revolutionary sentiment, or does it have to be adjusted to?
- Will rapid political liberalization bring about a series of new threats?

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[49] Sean Aday, Blogs and Bullets II: New Media and Conflict after the Arab Spring." Peaceworks, July 10, 2012. July 10, 2012. Accessed June 25, 2017. https://www.usip.org/publications/2012/07/blogs-and-bullets-ii-new-media-and-conflict-after-arab-spring: 9
[50] Aday, 2012: 20

Topic 2: The Role of Islam

Introduction

Though no single cause can reasonably be pinpointed as *the* driving factor behind the revolutions of the Arab spring—nor of the period of widespread social unrest which directly preceded it—the increasingly active presence of mobilized religion has played, and will continue to play, a critical role in shaping the region's political landscape both directly and indirectly.

Islam as Directly Political

Nowhere else is religion having as direct an impact as in Yemen, where religious and spiritual leaders have joined in public demonstrations and taken up the mantle of mobilizing anti-regime protesters in opposition to the long-standing regime of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.[51] President Saleh, who assumed leadership of Yemen as a rising star in the country's armed forces during the late 1970's, was originally elevated to power with high popular support amidst an essentially unopposed electoral landscape. In the decades since his first elections, however, he has been able to maintain a secure grip over the presidency due in large part to a system of patronage appointments for family and close friends who have profited immensely from their offices. [52]

Opposition to the Saleh regime has been particularly vigorous in the aftermath of the successful anti-government movements in Egypt and Tunisia over the past few months, with religious leaders increasingly willing to wield their public influence openly. In some cases, this influence has originated at the political extremes, as is true currently of anti-government leaders like Abdul Majid al-Zindani in Yemen. Al-Zindani, a former mentor of Osama bin Laden, has become one of the most outspoken and prominent figures of the movement against the Saleh regime despite espousing a violently extremist ideology, with videos and press releases drawing heavily upon weaponry and violent imagery as motivating symbols.[53]

As the protests swelled from less than twenty thousand at the early stages to several hundred thousand by the end of February, the now-famous concept of the "Day of Rage" was born as the product of calls by overt religious leaders for an escalated anti-government response. Western governments and intelligence services are warning that the regime change and administrative destabilization sweeping the region could lead to power vacuums, potentially creating an opening for extremist leaders to break away from the political fringes. The chance that an extremist faction could seize power in the

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[51] Laura Kasinof, *The New York Times*, March 1, 2011.
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/world/middleeast/02yemen.html.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

absence of a coordinated government presence is significant; delegates should keep this possibility in mind when considering the advantages of regime change.

More importantly, however, religious leadership among anti-government movements should not be interpreted nor represented as wholly radical, and the possibility exists that as political leaders fall they will be replaced by moderate and/or democratic religious figures. Despite the prominence of figures like al-Zindani some of the most influential figures thus far of the Arab Spring have been democratic or 'moderate' religious leaders like Yemen's Tawakul Karman. For further background on Karman, who has since won a Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts in support of the democratic process, see the articles by Macdonald and Fouche, or by Finn, at the end of this document.

Islam as Indirectly Political: Religion as a Force for Social Cohesion

The influence of Islam—and, broadly speaking, of organized religion in general—in the anti-government revolutions that have so far occurred is by no means limited to direct intervention. Observers believe that a key component of the success of the Arab Spring to date has been the culture of mass religious observance, particularly among devout Muslims, whose regular meetings for prayer and religious activities constitute an ideal opportunity for political influencers.

In Egypt, the so-called 'Friday of Anger' represents a new form of the now-common 'days of rage' that have characterized regional anti-government protests, with crowds forming almost immediately following widely-attended Friday prayers as Egyptians filtered out of mosques and into the streets.[54]

While curfews and a heightened security presence has served to stall protests in some cities, the need for leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and elsewhere to maintain the appearance of religious legitimacy has made it difficult or impossible to crack down on all public gatherings in a region where regular mass religious gatherings are essential to public life due, at least in part, to the popularity of Islam as the dominant religious affiliation.

Below are two relevant case studies for delegates to consider. Both the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Ennahda Party in Tunisia have proven themselves to be wildly influential social and religious actors in their respective political arenas. Delegates must carefully consider likely outcomes, intended and otherwise, of both intervention and restraint.

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[54] Rob Crilly and Barney Henderson, "Egypt's 'day of rage:' Friday August 16 as it happened," *The Telegraph*, August 16, 2013.

The following case studies are intended to provide initial insight into the current impact of two organizations likely to seize power in the event of a national vacuum.

Points of Confrontation

With Iran and Saudi Arabia seeking advantage, and the Middle East in turmoil, longstanding local rivalries between Sunnis and Shiites have taken on regional dimensions. Here are four potential trouble spots.

Syria: No Holds Barred

THE PRIVILEGED FEW Syria's Alawites are a minority sect that grew out of Shiism. Alawite generals, politicians and businessmen have run the country with an iron fist since the 1970s. Most members of this ruling minority have so far defended the government of Bashar al-Assad, left, and Alawite primacy. Iran has staunchly supported the Assad government since the beginning of the unrest, while Saudi Arabia was the first Arab country to openly condemn Syria's brutal tactics against the opposition.

Lebanon: The Hezbollah Factor

A MURDER The involvement of the Shiite group in the 2005 assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, left, a Sunni ally of Saudi Arabia, opened a rift between Lebanon's Shiites and its Sunnis, who object to Hezbollah's violent tactics, its ties with Syria and Iran and its refusal to disarm. It also infuriated the Saudis. In June, a United Nations tribunal issued arrest warrants for four Hezbollah members in the murder. Earlier this month, it issued its full indictment against the four.

A POWER GRAB Shiites number more than Sunnis and Christians but elect a small fraction of Parliament; Shiites want to change that. In January, Hezbollah ousted the Sunni prime minister and replaced him with another Sunni preferable to Hezbollah, further worsening tensions.
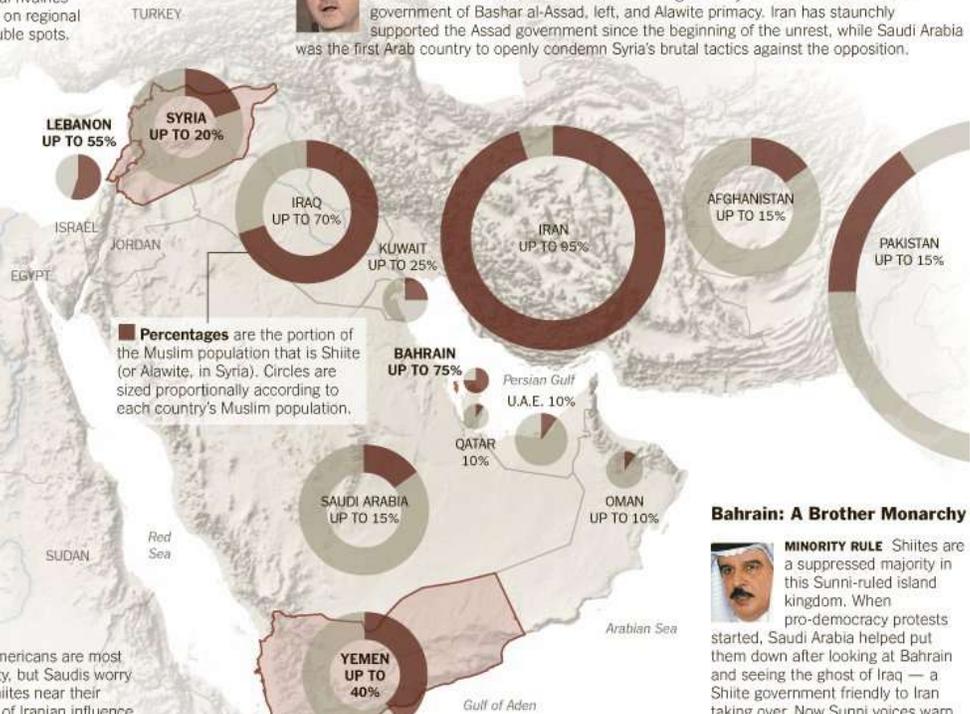
Yemen: The Threat Next Door

TWO UPRISINGS In Yemen, Americans are most concerned with Qaeda activity, but Saudis worry about a rebellion by Zaydi Shiites near their border. As with Bahrain, fear of Iranian influence is one reason the Saudis don't want Yemen's pro-democracy protesters to succeed. Yemen's president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, left, has been in Saudi Arabia since June, when he left Yemen for medical treatment.

Percentages are the portion of the Muslim population that is Shiite (or Alawite, in Syria). Circles are sized proportionally according to each country's Muslim population.

LEBANON UP TO 55%
SYRIA UP TO 20%
IRAQ UP TO 70%
KUWAIT UP TO 25%
IRAN UP TO 95%
AFGHANISTAN UP TO 15%
PAKISTAN UP TO 15%
BAHRAIN UP TO 75%
U.A.E. 10%
QATAR 10%
SAUDI ARABIA UP TO 15%
OMAN UP TO 10%
YEMEN UP TO 40%

Bahrain: A Brother Monarchy

MINORITY RULE Shiites are a suppressed majority in this Sunni-ruled island kingdom. When pro-democracy protests started, Saudi Arabia helped put them down after looking at Bahrain and seeing the ghost of Iraq — a Shiite government friendly to Iran taking over. Now Sunni voices warn the king, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, above, against compromise, while the largest Shiite opposition party is losing ground to radical Shiite youths.

Figure 3 Source: New York Times

Case Study: the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

For decades, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood was almost exclusively apolitical in both its stated intentions and general conduct, instead focused on the individual and the community as related to the tenets of Islam and religious life. Hamdi Hassan, a former leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, wrote that "the regimes won't let [the Muslim Brotherhood] take power [. . .] the solution is the 'Brotherhood approach' [. . .] [the Muslim Brotherhood] focus[es] on the individual, then the family, then society."[55]

The Muslim Brotherhood has repeatedly deferred to secular or other moderate opposition groups in their bids for leadership of the anti-government movement. The big-umbrella approach seems to be paying off, with membership skyrocketing and the group's influence both as a standalone organization and as a faction within other opposition and governmental groups rising significantly. Though its numbers and influence are often overstated or inflated by groups for whom it is a threat, it is

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[55] Shadi Hamid and Steven Brooke, "The Muslim Brotherhood's Role in the Egyptian Revolution," *Combatting Terrorism Center*, February 1, 2011.

nevertheless a
powerful political and social force in the region at this moment—in Egypt it is estimated
to have been the largest opposition group (and certainly the most widely influential) in
the weeks leading up to President Mubarak's ultimate removal from power in February.[56]

Case Study: Ennahda in Tunisia

One of the most powerful political groups in Tunisia at the moment is the
Ennahda Party, which has risen rapidly in the aftermath of the revolution and is currently
believed to be the most popular political party in the country by a wide margin.[57] Even in
comparison to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the Ennahda Movement stands out as a pro-
democratic opposition religious group favouring peace, and is a stark contrast to some of
the more violent and radical depictions of Islam seen more frequently in Western media.

It has been compared to religious democratic sentiment in Germany and Italy, and
to the separation of church and state seen in Turkey at this time, and enjoys broad
popularity even among secular supporters despite being opposed to military intervention
by Western forces. We cannot know how the situation will play out for Ennahda or the
Muslim Brotherhood going forward, but they present clear evidence of the pro-
democratic influence of Islamist groups in the revolutions.

Conclusion

The situation you are being asked to consider is complicated, fluid, and most
importantly volatile, and the consequences – negative and positive -- of the decisions you
make in this committee have the potential to be felt for generations to come. Religious
and social organizations are playing an increasingly significant role in the region, and
while they can serve as a protective force for the rights the people have with respect to
their own government, the wrong group in a position of power could prove disastrous.
The following are some of the questions that you and your fellow delegates will have to
address.

Questions for Consideration

- Can and should the League involve itself in a civil conflict, particularly when
religion is involved?
- To what extent should the League respect member nations' rights to set and/or
enforce official religious preferences?

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Tunisia: Political parties, unknown to 61% of Tunisians," *Ansa Med*, March 9, 2011.

- Under what criteria should a religious or social organization be properly outlawed or labeled a terror group? Should each state have the power to outlaw such groups and prevent them from taking part in political activity?

Topic 3: Intervention

Introduction

As the Arab Spring revolutions proliferate across the region, the reactions of national governments have ranged from tentative reform to brutal repression. The member states must now how, or if, to react collectively to regional events. The escalating human rights violations in response to protests have drawn particular concern from both Arab League member states and the rest of the international community. The League must debate the potential of intervention in other member states' affairs. The question of intervention carries many important considerations. Some of the most pressing questions to consider include: Is intervention necessary? Is intervention permissible? What is the extent and scope of an intervention? All these questions must be answered decisively by member states as they come together to bring an end to the violence and re-establish stability in the region.

Human Rights Violations

The Arab Spring protests have largely focused on democratic reforms in traditionally authoritarian countries. Some protests have already resulted in the toppling of former regimes, such as in Tunisia and Egypt, and have resulted in transitional regimes being put in

Figure 4 Source: Reuters (Bahrain's Pearl Roundabout)

place. However, several Arab leaders have chosen to reject calls for protest and cling to their power through the use of repression. Three governments are currently engaging in repression, with escalating violence: Libya, Bahrain, and Syria.

The Libyan uprisings have been met with harsh force from the government. In February, the Libyan army reportedly opened fire on unarmed protestors, adding to a death toll that so far exceeds 300.[58] The government has also blocked the broadcasts from Arab broadcaster Al-Jazeera, the station that covered the Arab Spring protests in neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt to the rest of the region and the world.[59] Last month, leader Muammar Gaddafi made a speech suggesting that he was willing to continue the use of brutal force in order to stay in power. In his speech, he said "I am not going to

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[58] Adentunji, Jo, Peter Beaumont and Martin Chulov, "Libya protests: More than 100 killed as army fires on unarmed demonstrators", The Guardian, 20 February 2011.
[59] Ibid

leave this land… I will die as a martyr at the end… I shall remain defiant."[60] Gaddafi called for government loyalists to take to the streets to fight protestors, whom he called "greasy rats."[61] He recalled the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, stating that "the integrity of China was more important than [the people] in Tiananmen Square," suggesting that he was willing to commit the same acts against domestic protests.[62] The speech has alarmed international leaders and human rights activists, as Gaddafi seems to be declaring that there is no prospect of political reform, and displaying a willingness to use violence until the protestors are crushed.

In Bahrain, popular protests have continued to spread after beginning in February on the "Day of Rage." After protests began around the Pearl Roundabout in the nation's capital, Manama, Bahraini police forces have reportedly opened fire on peaceful demonstrators and detained hundreds.[63] The most recent development has been the arrival of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) troops in the country to bolster the Bahraini security forces against protesters who have largely remained peaceful. Saudi Arabia has sent in their elite national guard, the UAE has sent police forces, and Kuwait has sent their navy, a total of around 5000 troops.[64] The GCC has justified their presence in Bahrain through their policy that "an attack upon any one of them will be regarded as an attack upon all six," warranting their military assistance to end unrest in any GCC member state.[65] From the perspective of the GCC members, the fall of the Bahraini monarchy could ignite protests domestically and destabilize their own political systems. Criticism has arisen against this justification, especially by media, as the GCC's military cooperation policy was designed to protect members against external threats, and thus domestic protests would not apply.[66] The King of Bahrain has issued a state of emergency, which "authorised the commander of Bahrain's defence forces to take all necessary measures to protect the safety of the country and its citizens."[67] The current

Figure 5 Source: Newsgram (photo of Bashar Al-Assad)

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[60] Black, Ian, "Gaddafi urges violent showdown and tells Libya, 'I'll die a martyr'", The Guardian, 22 February 2011.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Amnesty International, "Bahrain protest deaths point to excessive police force", Amnesty International, 15 February 2011.

[64] Holmes, Amy Austin, "The military intervention that the world forgot". Al Jazeera America, 29 March 2014.

[65] Anthony, John Duke, "The Intervention in Bahrain Through the Lenses of Its Supporters", National Council on US-Arab Relations, 30 June 2011. Pg. 2

[66] Holmes, "The military intervention that the world forgot".

[67] Al Jazeera, "Bahrain Imposes State of Emergency", Al Jazeera, 15 March 2011.

level of force used by the Bahraini security forces have been criticized as disproportional and excessive in comparison to the peaceful protests.

In March, protests erupted in Syria after 15 children were detained and tortured for painting anti-government graffiti slogans in the Daraa region.[68] The government has used brutal force to quell protest, and "security forces have repeatedly and systematically opened fire on overwhelmingly peaceful demonstrators," resulting in around 400 deaths in the Daraa governorate and almost 900 across the country.[69] In combination with outright use of force, security forces are also detaining hundreds at a time and denying or blocking access to healthcare facilities for the wounded.[70] Witnesses and locals report various methods of torture being used on detainees, who are arrested and held without trial. Rather than quieting protestors, however, the government's harsh use of force has created further unrest and calls for reform. While protests have remained peaceful, concern is growing that protests may eventually turn violent in response to the forceful measures being applied by the security forces.

As violence escalates and governments begin to destabilise, League members must decide whether or not they must act, and how they will do so. If the League fails to come to a conclusion, the consequences could include further destabilisation of the region, mass deaths and abuses, and international condemnation.

Figure 6 Source: AP (Intervention in Kosovo)

International Conventions and Principles

The principle of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) has guided international actions in the past, and could serve useful to League members in determining action. R2P is a convention that justifies military intervention by external actors on the basis that all states have a moral "responsibility to protect" civilians from "avoidable catastrophe."[71] Generally, the responsibility to protect citizens falls primarily on sovereign states and governments, but "when [the state] is unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states."[72]

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[68] Human Rights Watch, "Syria: Crimes Against Humanity in Daraa", Human Rights Watch, 1 June 2011.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), "The Responsibility to Protect", The United Nations, December 2011, pg. XI
[72] Ibid.

R2P was formally conceptualized in 2001, after highly-criticized foreign policy failures in the 1990s, an era of ethnically-based civil wars that resulted in mass deaths. The 1994 Rwandan Genocide was widely seen as a failure of the international community to fulfill its obligation to human protection, not acting quickly enough to prevent the hundreds of thousands of deaths.[73] The 1995 Srebrenica Massacre of the Bosnian Civil War was similarly perceived to be a failure on the part of the international community to protect civilians. In 1999, NATO launched bombs in Kosovo to put an end to the persecution of ethnic Albanians. The move was both praised for being necessary and criticised for being illegal and irresponsible as NATO did not receive Security Council permission to use force before intervening.[74] International pressure for a stronger standard yielded the 2000 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) to create the report that officially introduced R2P to the global community. Although R2P is widely accepted and its language is used in reports and recommendations, R2P is not a formal law or convention, and acts only as a soft norm in guiding action. Ultimately, the authority to order the use of force lies with the UN Security Council.

Although the principle of R2P acknowledges and respects state sovereignty, it also states that in the face of "serious harm" to a population, the "principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect."[75] R2P is shaped by four precautionary principles that limit its use to the direst of circumstances, lest states invoke R2P on an arbitrary basis. First, external actors must have the right intention in intervening; that is, "to halt or avert human suffering."[76] Second, military intervention must be the last resort, meaning that the international community must have exhausted all non-military options such as sanctions or condemnations before turning to military means. Third, intervention must use proportional means, which is defined as the "minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective."[77] Finally, the intervention must have reasonable prospects for success in halting the suffering, so that states do not pursue action that will likely not result in the intended resolution.[78] As human rights violations increase, the Arab League may find that they have the responsibility to protect citizens in League nations, and may use R2P as a justification for intervention. However, R2P still leaves League Members with uncertainty. Although the guiding principles are in place, the answers are not so simple. Has the situation reached the point of human suffering where intervention is necessary and justified? Has the League exhausted all other non-military options, or are there others that remain to be explored? These are considerations League members must take into account if they are to invoke R2P as a basis for intervention.

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[73] Homans, Charles, "Responsibility to Protect: A Short History", Foreign Policy, 11 October 2011.
[74] Ibid.
[75] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), "The Responsibility to Protect", The United Nations, December 2011, pg. XI
[76] Ibid, pg. XII.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

On the other hand, state sovereignty is deeply entrenched in Arab League values. Article VIII of the Charter of the Arab League states that "each member-state shall respect the systems of government established in the other member-states and regard them as exclusive concerns of those states. Each shall pledge to abstain from any action calculated to change established systems of government."[79] Article VIII essentially prohibits member states from interfering in other member states' affairs, with specific provisions against pursuing or supporting regime change. The League's primary purpose is to foster cooperation between member states, and interference between members could compromise this and fracture League unity. However, the Charter makes no mention of League action in the face of mass human suffering. The unique and troubling circumstances in Libya, Bahrain and Syria may force the League to reconsider Article VIII and whether or not it can or should stand in this situation. Article XIX makes the provision that the Charter "may be amended with the consent of two thirds of the states belonging to the League."[80] League members must strike the right balance of responsibility to protect and responsibility to its members.

Thus, the Arab League must contend with two opposing norms. The Charter of the Arab League states that state sovereignty is paramount, and that League members must not intervene in the affairs of other members. However, the international convention of R2P states that violation of state sovereignty can be necessary and permissible in the face of mass human suffering. The member states must now decide which convention takes precedent and which to follow. If members decide intervention is necessary, they must decide how to intervene in a way that is appropriate, effective, and will result in success.

Possible Solutions

The Arab League is at the centre of the Arab Spring revolutions. Since the current crisis is occurring in the Middle East region, all Arab League member states are affected by events in neighbouring member states. In the past, the League has convened to make collective decisions about regional threats, particularly during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the 1975-1991 Lebanese Civil War, and the 1990 Iraq-Kuwait War.[81] These instances displayed the unity of the Arab nations, the power of regional cooperation, and the influence of the League on the region and the world. The time has come once again for the League to cooperate and act. For the peace, prosperity, and stability of the entire region, the Arab League must convene and decide the actions they will pursue in the face of the Arab Spring revolutions.

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[79] League of Arab States, *Charter of the Arab League*.
[80] Ibid
[81] Niyazi Gunay, "Arab League Summit Conferences, 1964-2000", The Washington Institute Policy #496 (2000).

There are numerous potential paths that League members may choose to take. The League may decide to do nothing, following the mode of action that would respect the sovereignty of each member state to the fullest, in accordance with Charter policies. However, inaction would have great consequences: the League may lose international standing, human lives will be lost, and inaction may cause greater instability within the member states currently facing protests. If the League decides to pursue action, they must deliberate what kind of action to take. Action can range from minimal, such as imposing sanctions on states that engage in repression, to extreme, such as sending troops in to bolster domestic forces. Additionally, League members must decide on whose behalf they are intervening – do they want to support the current governments in the name of stability, or support the people calling for change? Individual League members may have different alliances with and opinions on the current governments, and have their own agendas in supporting or opposing a revolution. It is possible that the faction that the League lends its support to may not win the domestic battle, in which case the League may be left with an uncooperative or hostile new government once the domestic battle has settled.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the task at hand for League members is to respond decisively to the current turmoil in the region, particularly to the increasingly tense situations in Libya, Bahrain, and Syria. League members must pursue action that is most conducive to peace, stability, and prosperity for the region and the entire League.

Two major factions are emerging amongst League members: one that supports the revolutionaries and the other that wants to maintain the status quo. The former category supports the people calling for change, and thus supports an end to the current regime. The latter category prefers the current government in place and would rather bolster those forces than the revolutionaries. Within these greater factions there is further division. The pro-revolutionary faction must deliberate the extent and scope of the support that they want to deliver, and to which domestic actors on the ground. Some states may prefer more moderate actions, whereas others may want to take a more hardline stance. The anti-revolutionary forces face the same difficult questions, and members will range on how much support they want to lend. Both sides must keep in mind the limits of international laws and League policies. Both sides must also be prepared for the rest of the international community to condemn or reject their stance.

Questions for Consideration

- Do states have an obligation or right to intervene in domestic conflicts in the name of humanitarian intervention?

- Is there a way to balance the sovereignty of states and the internationally recognized obligation to protect human lives? When does one supersede the other?
- What can be done by external actors to influence domestic governments? What is the appropriate level of force that can be used to deter regimes from committing abuses?
- Is it more beneficial to stabilise the current regime or to support a new revolutionary government? What might be the long-term consequences of either action?

Logistical and Operational Notes

Crisis Elements

As a specialized agency, this committee will include crisis elements. For delegates unfamiliar with crisis committees, these crisis elements will come in the form of periodic updates from the dais about any events or timeline progressions. Delegates will be expected to respond to unfolding events and incorporate updates into their resolutions.

The Arab League will be different from a traditional crisis committee in that individual delegates will not have different portfolio powers or the ability to address crisis elements independent from the committee. There will be no communication with the 'crisis room' outside crisis updates in committee.

In order to address crisis elements, delegates are encouraged to incorporate responses to specific crises and events in the resolutions they pass addressing the overall topic of debate. This committee will not incorporate directives, but multiple resolutions may be passed for each topic, and do not all have to be presented at the same time.

Specialized Rules of Procedure

Both binding and non-binding draft resolutions may be passed. Binding resolutions require a unanimous vote to pass, and are therefore representative of the League as a whole.

Intervention and calls for action from the international community can only be passed through binding resolutions and therefore a unanimous vote.

A binding resolution and unanimous vote, not counting the state concerned, is required for any change in membership of a state, such as moving from an observer to a voting member or suspension of a state's membership.[82]

Non-binding resolutions require a simple majority and only effect those who vote for it. Non-binding resolutions cannot be in disaccord with a binding resolution.

We encourage delegates to present and vote on all resolutions at once, but the committee as a whole can decide to move into introduction and voting on non-binding resolutions in particular at any point the chair entertains such a motion.

Observers are non-voting members. All other members have one vote of equal weight.

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[82] Charter of the Arab League

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