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Social Rebalancing in the Arab World?

On the Prospects for Social Change after the Post-Islamist Uprisings

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Abstract

This paper aims to elucidate the developments and events precipitating the recent uprisings all over the Arab world, and to explain the fundamentally different outcomes in the respective states. Building on that foundation, it will also be possible to evaluate the prospects of social change. Most of the academic community, media, and the political realm have failed to predict any form of regional contentious action of such a magnitude, and subsequently marginalized the socio-economic dimension of Arab discontent. This tendency reflects the outdated but nonetheless popular notion of a supposed "Arab exceptionalism" on the one hand, and the necessity of further research on the preconditions of revolutions on the other. The author will thus suggest a perception of the events in accordance to John Foran's theory of social revolutions in the Third World. Such an approach reconciles allegedly exclusive factors such as social structure, culture, and human agency. Against this background, the research will be informed by the qualitative interpretation of quantitative data, secondary literature, and interviews with local actors. In the first part, the author summarizes the developments entailing regional uprisings, and then contrasts the individual cases in a comparative perspective in the second part. The findings suggest a crucial role of dependent development related to neoliberal structural adjustments and a recent economic downturn vis-à-vis the global economic and financial crisis, in addition to authoritarian regimes, in the emergence of regional contentious action. Furthermore, revolutionary attempts and the prospects of social change seem to be highly dependent on political cultures of opposition, shaped by the resurgence of labor, post-Islamism, and the rise of youth and women's movements, and the world-systemic context, which is subject to an increasingly volatile world-system in face of global rebalancing.

Structure

1. Introduction

The current uprisings in the Arab world constitute some of the most important events of the last years. So far, four governments have been toppled in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, reforms and wide-spread protests happened in many other countries, and contentious action continues to threaten the reign of autocrats in the region. At the same time Spanish Indignados, Chilean Students, Wisconsin trade unions, workers in Greece and the Occupy movement are resisting the social injustices entailed by neoliberal globalization in other parts of the world. The fact that all these events happen at the same time may suggest that there are regional and global developments facilitating the expression of social discontent, and that we are experiencing the resurgence of sustained global protest. The existence of revolutionary cycles is a historically constant phenomenon, as convincingly argued by David Mayer (2010): The American Revolution in the second half of the 18th century strongly influenced the French Revolution, which in turn precipitated numerous rebellions in the Atlantic rim until 1830. The European revolutions of 1848/49 were transnational in character and the October Revolution of 1917 provided the model for numerous uprisings all over the world. Finally, the long 1960s and the early 1970s were characterized by several rebellions, political transitions and social mobilization not only in the periphery, but also in the core of the world-system, and the revolutions in the former communist realm after 1989 were highly interdependent as well.[1] Single events often represent the spark that may trigger regional or global consequences. In the Arab case, events such as the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi and the successful occupation of the Tahrir Square in Cairo served as symbols for a whole generation of disenfranchised Arabs.

However, just as with the revolutionary wave in Eastern Europe in 1989, the fact that most of the political analysts have been completely surprised by the velocity and magnitude of the events, once again reflects the fact that there is a long way left to go in understanding the elusive dynamics and logics of distinct forms of contentious action and the preconditions for successful revolutions. This paper will argue that the preconditions of the Arab uprisings are a complicated mélange of regional and global developments entailing regional contention on the one hand, and a particular course of events embedded in national socio-cultural particularities on the other. The structural preconditions of the uprisings are therefore similar, but the outcomes are substantially different. Against the background of this notion, a central question will be: Which global and regional developments precipitated the regional character of the Arab uprisings?

In order to answer these questions, the author will first reflect on the theoretical preconditions for successful social revolutions and contrast them with global and regional dynamics influencing the events. There is not enough space to provide case studies for all of the uprisings in the regions, even more so since the national particularities led to fundamentally different courses of events. The study therefore focuses on the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, in order to show the practical applicability of the afore elaborated theoretical paradigm, and the necessity to take national particularities into account. Some basic reflection on the individual cases will nonetheless complement the other case studies. Such an approach raises two other important questions: Why did the different states experience distinct outcomes, despite regional similarities? In close relation to this: What then are the preconditions for successful social revolutions in the Arab world? The paper's two-fold structure of transnational considerations and case studies reflects the dyadic relationship of transnational and national developments in shaping the respective outcomes.

Western public discourse often perceives the events as the successful struggle of middle-class democracy and online activists enabled by the possibilities of modern ICTs, while at the same time fearing an "Islamist hijacking" of the revolutions (Burris 2011). This narrative is a product of an essentially Orientalist perception of the Arab realities and marginalizes the crucial role of workers' movements and other disenfranchised contentious actors. The uprisings responded not only to political repression, but also to the social injustices of neoliberal globalization. The aim of this essay will be to transcend common notions of the uprisings by applying an inter-disciplinary, multi-causal approach to the uprisings, and thereby shed some light on recent and future chances for fundamental social change in the Arab world, a process that on such a grand scale might be termed "social rebalancing".

2. Method

First of all, the popular idiom "Arab Spring" as a Western invention is somewhat problematic. The world "spring" is historically linked to the "spring of nations", that is the European revolutions of 1848, and the "Prague Spring", a brief period of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia. The term "Arab Spring" was first used related to the expectation voiced in 2005, that the introduction of "democracy" to Iraq would entail a spill-over effect on the whole region (Alhassen 2012). Against this background, voicing the idea of an Arab Spring implies repro-

ducing the essentially Orientalist notion of a democratic catching-up process with Western modernity, which does not capture the reality of the uprisings. Local activists use different terms such as thawrat (revolutions), intifada (uprising), sahwa (awakening), or nahda (renaissance) (Khouri 2011). However, intifada is often associated with the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, nahda is the name of a popular Tunisian party, and the term "revolution" might be too strong a name for outcomes so far. I will therefore refer to the recent developments as "Arab uprisings", in order to use a rather neutral name, and simultaneously emphasize the preliminary nature of the events.

Charles Tilly (1993) famously distinguishes between revolutionary situations and revolutionary outcomes. Revolutionary situations are seen as states of "multiple sovereignties", i.e. the moments when several groups make mutually exclusive claims over the control of the state. Revolutionary outcomes occur with the transfer of state power to a new coalition, thereby ending the state multiple sovereignties. Theda Skocpol (1979, pp. 4-5; see also: Foran 2005, pp. 6-7) more accurately defines a social revolution as an event, in which a substantial part of the population is mobilized in order to change the political as well as the socio-economic structures. The inclusion of the factor "socio-economic structure" allows us to differentiate social from political revolutions. To sum it up, then, a social revolution is defined by a revolutionary situation, in which a significant part of the population challenges the status quo, and a revolutionary outcome, that transforms the political as well as the socio-economic structures. History has seen several successful cases in the Third World, such as Mexico from 1910 to 1920, China in 1949, Cuba in 1959, the revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua in 1979, in addition to the closely related anti-colonial revolutions in Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Vietnam (Foran 2005, pp. 33 ff.).

There are several fundamental obstacles when studying revolutions, such as the dichotomies between external and internal factors, political economy and culture, structure and human agency, and so forth. John Foran (2005) created a scheme for "Third World social revolutions", which tries to bridge the gap between these contradictions, include all necessary preconditions for social revolutions, and allow for particularism and agency at the same time. The reason for choosing Foran's scheme in this paper is that it succeeds to grasp the multi-causal nature of revolutions by the delicate act of reconciling such diverse disciplines as political economy, sociology, and culture, the very idea of which is the inter-disciplinary foundation of global studies. It thus allows for the research of systemic patterns and human agency at the same time, and also includes asymmetrical global power relations.

The theorem is that, as elaborated by Foran (2005, pp. 18 ff.), five axioms are crucial

for a successful social revolution: “dependent development”, “an exclusionary personalist or colonial state or an open polity”, “political cultures of opposition”, an “economic downturn”, and a “world-systemic opening”. Social structures in the Third World are the complex product of external pressures exercised by the core nations of the world-system and the pre-existing modes of production they encounter in the peripheral countries (Foran 2005, p. 18). This process over time creates new social structures defined by pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production. In some, not all, peripheral states, the new social environment allows for an accumulation process termed “dependent development” by Foran (2005, p. 19). The idea is that, although a certain degree of development might be possible, for instance in the form of an increase of economic output or foreign trade, this process is often contrasted by substantial changes in the social structure. For different groups and classes, these transformations are accompanied by adverse effects such as rising inequality, inflation, debt etc. Although social revolutions can be traced back to the grievances entailed by such a system, many peripheral states experience dependent development without social revolutions. Hence other preconditions seem to be necessary (Foran 2005, p. 19).

The continuous reproduction of such a social system during dependent development is normally linked to a repressive state, which maintains order despite a tremendous level of social injustice in the face of a radically changing social structure. Such a “repressive, exclusionary, and personalist state” (Foran 2005, p. 20) may be dynastic or an ad infinitum succession of autocrats. In any case, it exacerbates the suffering stemming from dependent development and therefore provides a target for social movements from below and alienated upper classes at the same time. Military rule, especially in combination with legitimizing elections, is less vulnerable to contentious action. It is associated with higher levels of elite support, while being more resistant to social discontent. The same is true for “polyarchies”, a term Foran borrows from William Robinson (Robinson 1996a; Foran 2005, p. 20), which describes elite-controlled polities channeling contention into formally democratic elections as minor forms of oppositional inclusion. At the same time, although rather rare, open democratic polities can also entail radical social change by allowing for the election of revolutionary parties, as recently illustrated by the Latin American *Pink Tide*[2].

Dependent development linked to one of the mentioned beneficial state forms constitutes the structural foundation for a social revolution to occur. However, since structures cannot transform by themselves, social or political change cannot be completely grasped by a structural lens (Foran 2005). In order to allow for human agency and include the role of culture, Foran introduced the concept of “political cultures of opposition” (Foran 1997). This

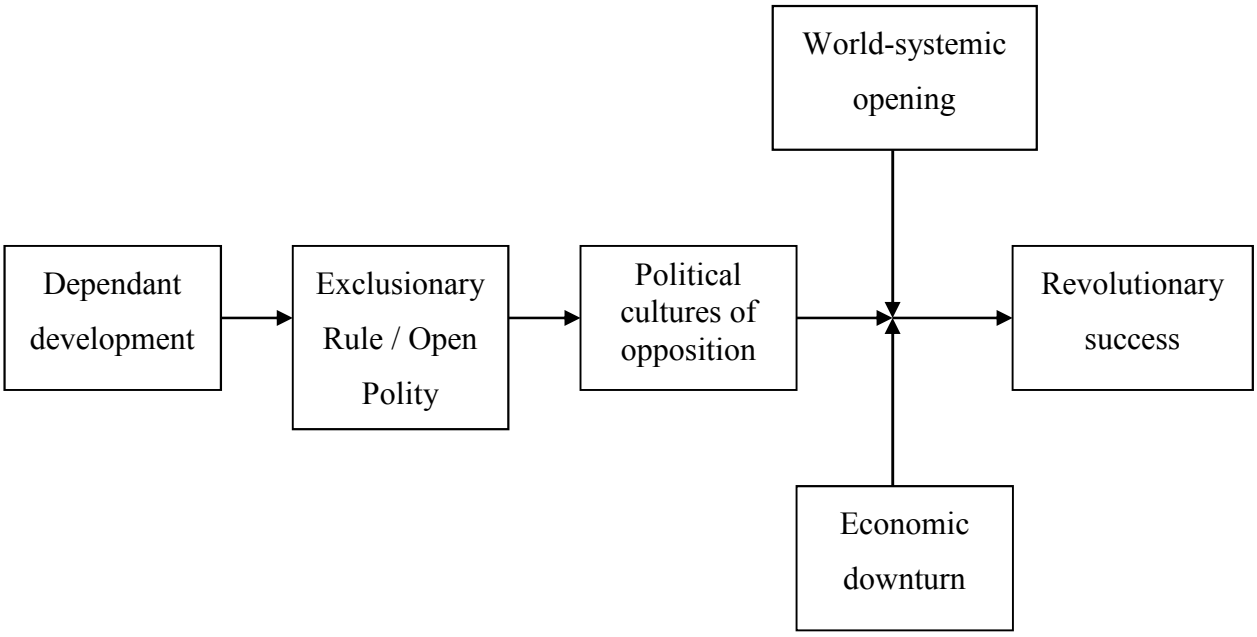
conception reflects recent trends in the study of revolution, and contrasts the structural focus predominant in the 1970s' generation of scholars (Foran 1993). It tries to include the interrelated role of agency, political culture, and revolutionary coalitions as interrelated factors. At the same time it transcends monolithic notions of class and state, while gender and ethnicity are also taken into account.

The argument is that a revolutionary coalition has to emerge: Broad segments of the societies need to be able to channel their frustration into collective political protest and resistance (Foran 2005, 21 ff.). Analytical frameworks, which facilitate a coherent critical discourse in order to articulate socio-economic, political or cultural discontent as well as social and political alternatives, facilitate such a process. Personal experiences, historical memory, and cultural particularities shape the discourse and thus determine the degree to which different contentious groups will collaborate. Both formally articulated ideologies such as, for instance, socialism or Islamism, and cultural idioms such as social justice or religious sentiments influence the actions of revolutionaries (Sewell 1985; Skocpol 1985). While ideologies are self-consciously produced, cultural idioms are long-standing sets of ideas drawn upon by actors to make sense of their reality. Revolutionary actors conglomerate them in order to mobilize broad segments of the population. In order for a multi status-group and multi-class coalition transcending class, ethnicity and gender to coalesce, the distinct contentious actors have to limit friction among them by agreeing on common goals: the removal of an autocrat, the lessening of foreign influence, a more equal distribution of income etc. The efficacy of these actions determines the chances of success of the revolutionary endeavor.

The prospects are further increased by favorable economic and international conjunctures. When economic grievances and repressive political structures entail the coalescence of powerful coalitions among contentious political actors, a sudden "economic downturn" is likely to precipitate a revolutionary situation (Foran 2005, p. 22). The crisis may emanate from a hostile global economic environment, systemic shortcomings of dependent development, or the contentious actors themselves. In any case, a crisis exacerbates existing suffering, raises the possibility of the middle class solidarizing with other groups and classes, and weakens the state. In addition, peripheral countries are normally asymmetrically linked to core states, and internal events are consequently influenced by more powerful foreign actors. Due to various reasons, such as war, depression or domestic struggles, core countries may not be able to exert their control and thereby raise the chances for revolutionary change by exacerbating the state crisis. Foran terms such a condition a "world-systemic opening" (Foran 2005, p. 22).

He concludes that a combination of all five factors is sine qua non for the success of a social revolution as the revolutionary outcome (Foran 2005, 23). In this paper, some focus lies on political cultures of opposition, and, to a lesser extent, also on the world-systemic asymmetrical power relations. The hypothesis is that, whereas dependent development structures and political oppression have been in place for some time, and economic downturns have occurred frequently, it was crucial for some developments in the political cultures to facilitate the collaboration of distinct contentious actors, while international processes of hegemonic decline and global rebalancing opened a limited world-systemic space for revolutionary maneuvers.

A model of successful peripheral revolutions (Foran 2005, p. 18):



The methodic aim is for an inter-disciplinary, multi-theoretical approach, which combines different theories elucidating certain aspects of the events, and then puts those pieces together in order to see the big picture. For instance, the reflections along the lines of world-systems theory will inform the structural forces limiting the space for contentious actors to pursue their agenda (Arrighi 1994), while social constructivist notions of social movement theory will at the same explain alleged "irrational" behavior by taking the power of ideas and everyday practices into account (Beinin & Veirel 2011a), and neo-Gramscianism elucidates the discursive aspects of hegemonic struggles (Cox 1987).

The argumentation will be mostly qualitative, since factors such as dependency, world-systemic forces, and political cultures of opposition are complex structures and concepts, and can therefore not be quantified, despite some important variables such as the rates of unemployment and inflation, the Gini coefficient, GDP per capita, Human Development Index and so forth. The need for qualitative interpretation at the same time reflects the role of human agency: The level of grievances necessary for uprisings to come about depends on the subjective interpretation of a given society (Foran 2005, p. 26). The method will thus be based on the qualitative evaluation of primary data and secondary literature, and be complemented by the interpretation of a set of interviews conducted with contentious actors from various backgrounds as part of a field research in Egypt and Tunisia, that is mainly in Cairo, Tunis, Gafsa, and Redeyef in June and July 2012.

Such a method faces some obvious challenges. The inter-disciplinary approach and the comparative design may lead to some factors only being analyzed superficially. However, I still chose to not focus on a single aspect, discipline or country for two reasons. First, revolutions are products of various distinct factors. Multi-causal explanations need to be accompanied by inter-disciplinary approaches. A sole focus on the role of political cultures of oppositions, for instance, conceals the fact that those cultures were precipitated by structural injustices and repressive political systems. It would also not be able to elucidate the necessity for an economic downturn and a world-systemic opening to eventually spark a revolutionary situation. Second, the comparative nature of this paper may reduce the space available for analysis of specific cases. However, it is exactly this comparative perspective that explains why rebellion broke out all over the Arab world on the one hand, and highlights the national differences on the other. The study of a single culture, as Foran points out (Foran 2005, 28), might be the work of a lifetime, but there is no avoiding the danger of superficiality when looking for common patterns among different countries.

Another obvious limit is the issue of language. The interviews were conducted in English, French, and in some cases also in Arabic with the help of translators, since the latter is a language I do not speak. Preselecting the interviewees according to linguistic considerations would have distorted the study in favor of the educated middle and upper classes, and I therefore tried to mitigate this shortcoming with an extensive commitment to clarify statements if they were not made in the native language, and with the help, supervision and constructive criticism of several translators and colleagues. Nonetheless, I am well aware of the limits of such an endeavor and therefore treated some of the results with the necessary caution.

3. The Arab uprisings: theoretical and regional reflections

"La force est aux jeunes, ce que la raison est aux vieux" (sagesse syrienne / Syrian saying)

The Arab uprisings are a regional phenomenon (arguably in the context of global transformations). Regime changes have occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, civil uprisings in Syria and Bahrain, major protests in Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Morocco, and Sudan, minor demonstrations in Mauritania, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi-Arabia, and Western Sahara, as well as by the Arab minority in Iranian Khuzestan, and there have also been clashes in the Israeli border areas. The following lines will reflect on some global and regional developments, and thereby attempt to explain why the events spread all over the Arab world, without going into detail and trying to embrace all the national particularities. The perspective will be based on the theorem elaborated above: The grievances associated with dependent development and state repression have to lead to the emergence of a coalition of different political cultures of opposition, and coincide with an economic downturn and a world-systemic opening, in order for a social revolution to succeed.

3.1 A short history of Arab dependency

The Arab region consists of the Maghreb, Mashreq, and the Arab peninsula, and is connected by a common language and history, as well as cultural and ethnic similarities. While the individual socio-economic, cultural and political realities may differ, the area is linked by some regional patterns. This chapter does not attempt to give an encompassing account of all the distinct national particularities. However, the aim is to distill some of the common dynamics influencing the respective national experience of dependent development and the associated clusters auf exclusionary rule, in order to explain the revolutionary wave that swept across the Arab world. Most of the region has been on a path of dependent development for decades. The social grievances were substantially exacerbated by recent neoliberal reform policies. At the same time, most countries are governed by different kinds of autocratic regimes. Asef Bayat terms this combination one of "social and economic development and

political underdevelopment" (Bayat 2008, p. 98).

Distinct forms of capitalism are products of complex processes of hybridization (Nederveen 2004, p. 277), which in the Arab case, in fact in most peripheral countries, merge pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production into new socio-economic realities. Differences are deeply embedded in the history, culture and geography of the respective country or region. Under the Ottomans, the whole Mashreq economies were integrated and pre-capitalist, while the Maghreb remained loosely related to the empire, but divided (Farsoun 1988, pp. 11 ff.). The advent of European colonialism fragmented the whole region politically, economically, and socially, and concurrently entailed fundamental changes in the socio-cultural structures. The individual states were integrated into the world-system, and ruled by an imported colonial bourgeoisie. The need for the Arab region to supply agricultural products to the core powers simultaneously led to the establishment of an indigenous bourgeoisie related to the agrarian sector (Aksikas 2009, p. 21).

The struggle between an expanding, but subordinated local bourgeoisie and the colonial ruling class was paralleled by the impoverishment of a vast part of the population by the colonial system, that is the pauperization of peasants, farmers, and laborers. Both developments led to a wave of independence struggles after the Second World War, which changed the regional political landscape and produced a series of politically independent, Balkanized nation-states. The local bourgeoisie inherited the structures of dominance established by the Europeans and failed to break with dependency (Aksikas 2009, p. 22). It was thus increasingly challenged by newly emerging Communist and Islamist parties, as well as by a subjugated, discontented petty bourgeoisie. The latter ousted the compradors from the political scene and used the banner of socialist nationalism and the resources of the state in order to legitimate their rule (Aksikas 2009, p. 24).

This period marks a transition from sheer underdevelopment to dependent development. The new economic policies are commonly referred to as "Arab socialism", although it would be more accurate to describe them as "state capitalism", as Mahmoud Hussein (1973, pp. 93 ff.) contemporarily commented, and Jaafar Aksikas (2009, p. 25) more recently commemorated. Many Arab states aligned themselves with Stalinist Russia, nationalized banks and major industries, and initiated land reforms. However, they failed to embrace democratic principles, eliminate structures of foreign dependency, and end the capitalist mode of production tied to dependent development. Huge state sectors with low levels of legitimacy emerged, a process described as "etatization of Arab societies and privatization of the state" by Samih Farsoun (1988, p. 24). The elites needed a high amount of

social welfare in order to bargain with parts of the society and thereby avoid civil unrest. So-Social cohesion was ensured by an "Arab social contract", until structural adjustment reforms successively undermined the states' redistributive policies. This social contract was, despite the mentioned diversity of Arab economies, common to nations in the region. A 2004 World Bank (p. 2) report summarizes several core features:

- "A preference for distribution and equity in economic and social policy
- A preference for states over markets in managing national economies
- The adoption of import-substitution industrialization and the protection of local markets from global competition
- A reliance on state planning in determining economic priorities
- An encompassing vision of the role of the state in the provision of welfare and social services
- A vision of the political arena as an expression of the organic unity of the nation, rather than as a site of political contest or the aggregation of conflicting preferences"

The World Bank goes on to acknowledge, somewhat strikingly, that the Arab social contracts led to unprecedented levels of wealth and economic growth (World Bank 2004, p. 2). MENA's economic growth rates were ranking among the highest in the world between 1965 and 1985, with an average growth of GDP per capita of 3.7% (Ali 2008, p. 6). The social contracts also entailed relatively low levels of poverty and income inequality. All countries rank medium or high on the 2005 human development index – a late product of social contracts, although increasingly endangered by neoliberal policies. These positive developments were a product of the economic reforms and social transfers, but facilitated by the discovery of natural resources in the region. Non-oil economies also profited from the oil-boom by exporting labor and the consequential remittances. The concomitant dependency on Soviet aid was finally replaced by the U.S. successively gaining control over the region as the new core power since the 1970s, but the region remained on a similar path of dependent development nonetheless.

Against the background of the rise of global neoliberalism, and as a response to the second oil price shock, the U.S. and OECD countries raised their interest rates to unprecedented levels after 1981, thereby significantly slowing down global GDP growth (Köhler 2005, pp. 179 ff.). This global recession decreased the global demand for crude oil. The subsequently plummeting price of oil entailed a regional economic crisis: less income from oil, "shrinking demand for migrant labor, and reduced remittance flows" (World Bank 2004, p. 3). The crisis reflected the need to diversify the economies and thereby reduce dependency on oil trade. It also exposed the dangers and contradictions of dependent development, which had only been contained by social transfers based on the fragile pillar of

oil profits. Without those revenues, Arab governments faced a major crisis and needed to re-respond to foreign indebtedness and fiscal deficits. Structural adjustment policies, as promoted by IMF and World Bank, were seen as the alleged solution:

- "Reduction of government subsidies
- reduced public expenditure
- reformed exchange rate regimes
- privatization of state-owned enterprises
- fiscal reform and trade liberalization
- deregulation
- strengthening the institutional foundations for a market-led economy" (Ali 2008, p. 6)

The contemporarily hegemonic neo-liberal paradigm advised governments to meet fiscal and foreign deficits with a reduction of government spending and privatizations. The Arab social contract was undermined, and fastened dependent development, including the associated social ills, was the consequence. Between 1995 and 2004, Ali Abdel Gadir Ali (2008, p. 8) calculates the aggregate Arab Gini coefficient as rising from 0.3623 to 0.3876, with an annual growth of real consumption expenditure of 0.63%. In fact, in the same period consumption expenditure per capita decreased in the two poorest quintiles of the Arab population, relatively and absolutely (Ali 2008, p. 27).[3] The third richest quintile profited slightly, the second richest moderately and the richest tremendously from economic growth. Among the countries with a substantial increase in inequality are Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen (Ali 2008, p. 27), all of them experiencing substantial political unrest during the recent uprisings.

The Arab world's dependence on Europe, North America, and Asia for many of its goods is mirrored by the fact that only 8% of Arab trade is conducted within MENA (Ben Jelili, 2010, p. 27). The total amount of exports has increased since the start of structural adjustment, but most of the Arab states still export almost exclusively primary products (UNDP 2009, p. 243). Minor degrees of industrialization have to be seen in the context of the successive deindustrialization of core powers, and the subsequent industrialization of peripheral countries. Far from being a sign of catching up, peripheral industrialization does not significantly change the patterns of global inequality, as pointed out by Giovanni Arrighi (2005, p. 35). The peripheralization of low-tech, manufactured goods such as textiles raises the competition and reduces the profit that can be derived from those products, as leading capitalist organization shift their resources to new, more profitable market niches.

The region faces wide-ranging environmental pressures, from a shrinking supply of water and arable land to increasing water and air pollution, stressed groundwater systems and desertification (UNDP 2009, p. 2). Whereas 38% of Arabs were living in urban areas in 1970,

this number had grown to 55 per cent by 2005, and it is likely to grow even further in the next years. This fast urbanization process created severe problems for the urban infrastructures (UNDP 2009, p. 3). In addition to that, despite bearing little responsibility for the greenhouse effect, climate change has already adversely affected the region (Johnstone & Mazo 2011) and will lead to water shortages, reduced agricultural production, climate refugees, decreased economic output, and national security threats in the future (UNDP 2009, p. 4). The weighted aggregate unemployment rate rose from 10.6% in the 1980s to 14.5% in the 1990s and finally to 15.5% in the 2000s (Ali 2008, p. 16), while it is subject to national variation. Female and youth unemployment rates are far higher (UNDP 2009, p. 10). They are complemented by extremely high levels of poverty (UNDP 2009, p. 11) and relatively low rates of adult literacy and education in comparison to the rest of the developing world, despite an aggregate GDP per capita above average (UNDP 2009, p. 229).

Between 1991 and 2001, 67% of Arab children have lived in "severe deprivation", defined as the lack of one basic need of food, water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education or information, and 42% in absolute poverty, defined as multiple deprivations (Ali 2007, p. 13). Health levels have stagnated in recent years, with huge inequalities between and within Arab states. The relatively high standards are more and more challenged by insufficient government expenditures (UNDP 2009, p. 13). The number of undernourished Arabs has grown from about 19.8 million in 1990-1992 to 25.5 million in 2002-2004. While Djibouti, Kuwait and Mauritania have made significant progress in this area, Syria and Algeria have stagnated, and Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and Yemen, "recorded increases in both the absolute numbers and prevalence of undernourishment", as a UNDP report (2009, p. 12) notes. While Arab states are somewhat self-reliant in food commodities favored by the rich, such as meats, fish, and vegetables, they are dependent on global markets, the size of foreign aid, and other insecure variables for the supply of food commodities important for the diet of the poor, such as cereals, fats and sugar, which resulted in wide-spread bread riots during the spikes in food prices in 2008 and 2010/11.

To sum it up, while the region experienced sustained although moderate levels of economic growth since the adoption of structural adjustment policies, the living conditions of most of the people have hardly improved, and a significant amount actually underwent a deterioration of their overall situation. Such a combination of sustained GDP growth above the population growth rate, and a deterioration of the living conditions for vast parts of the population reflects the role of dispossession for accumulation. Hence, growth rates render illegible the dispossession of the Arab population in favor of Arab compradors allied with

core elites. In reality, the Arab world experienced a process of "de-development", a concept used to describe the political economy of the Gaza Strip by Sara Roy (Roy 1995), and expanded to describe the Arab economic history since the advent of neoliberalism by Ali Kadri (2011).[4]

3.2 Reproducing dependent development: state forms in the Arab world

The dispossession of the Arab world was accompanied by extensive state repression. Regional political systems can be roughly divided into three different categories: polyarchic democracies, monarchies, authoritarian republics. The present military rule in Mauritania constitutes an exception and, in accordance with Foran's (2005, p. 20) assumption that military juntas "provide a less vulnerable target for cross-class social movements", proved relatively resistant to the revolutionary wave. The superficial distinction into republics and monarchies mainly goes back to the period of colonization, when France and Great Britain exported their respective political systems to their colonies (Selvik & Stenslie 2011, p. 41). To be sure, most of the Arab regimes are characterized by a certain degree of polyarchy. Robinson (1996, pp. 6 ff.) defines polyarchies as elite-based "low-intensity" democracies creating the outward impression of political justice, while not threatening the exploitative socio-economic status quo. The inclusion of opposition inherent to democratic practices, however corrupted and asymmetrical, channels contention into formal procedures instead of subversive action. Inclusion and exclusion, however, are not a binary concept: All Arab political systems are characterized by a carrot and stick approach, that is harsh repression goes hand in hand with minor degrees of compromise and inclusion as methods of counterinsurgency.

Iraq and Lebanon represent the only formal democracies in the Arab region. Iraq is a federal parliamentary democracy, which is partially dysfunctional due to the sectarian and ethnic divides and some polyarchic features. Lebanon is a confessional democracy, which distributes political and institutional power proportionally among Sunnis, Shiites, and Greek Orthodox and Maronite Christians. There are polyarchic features, as the confessional political system upholds the sectarian divide and is protected by elitist sectarian politicians thwarting reform by holding onto their own benefits (Muhanna 2012). Voters chose their party according to sects, not political affiliation. Both countries experienced uprisings in 2011, but

proved relatively resilient due to the semi-democratic, polyarchic political structure and the divided political cultures of opposition.

More strikingly, the monarchies have also proven rather resistant to socio-economic and political change. Especially the absolute monarchies have avoided major unrest, with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) remaining rather peaceful, and the minor protests in Oman and Saudi-Arabia being effectively suppressed by a combination of repression, minor political reforms, and economic concessions. The constitutional monarchies in Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain all experienced government changes, the latter also struggling with sustained civil unrest. However, they all managed to maintain their political and socio-economic systems. In contrast to their absolute equivalent, they all possess some kind of representative body, although the monarch retains most of the power. This system could be described as a polyarchic monarchy, channeling contention below the monarchical level. Still: Why did all the Arab monarchies prove rather resilient to contentious action, despite the fact that a monarch normally provides a solid target for revolutionary actors by epitomizing the injustice of the status quo?

First of all, most of the monarchies enjoy Western support, and are also aided by the core country's regional partners Saudi-Arabia and Qatar (Landler & Cooper 2011). In addition, most of the monarchies were able to use their substantial oil wealth to dissipate or at least limit contention. However, there are also systemic reasons for the monarchies' resistance to rebellion. Since elections do not threaten monarchic rule in the regional constitutional systems, minor liberalizations in the constitutional monarchies do not significantly change the power relations, which are strongly in favor of the monarchs. Furthermore, and maybe most importantly, Arab monarchies base their rule on the regionally particular development of traditional legitimacy, defined by Max Weber (1974, 130 pp. ff.) as the authority of rulers derived from the sanctity of tradition. The monarchies were mostly established by colonial powers and predated the rise of nationalism. They were therefore able to shape the invention of tradition associated with nation-building and state formation and thus construct monarchy as an inherent feature of nationalism (Anderson, L. 1991, pp. 4 ff.). Reform debates and promises are thus less likely to question the political system as a whole. This is not to say, however, that Arab monarchies will be resistant to revolutionary attempts once foreign support ceases and political cultures of opposition will be able to bridge sectarian, ethnic, and ideological gaps more effectively.

The political system most vulnerable to insurgencies during the Arab uprisings has so far been the authoritarian republic. As autocratic presidents in Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya,

Sudan, Algeria, and Yemen were (are) struggling to base their rule on rational-legal legitima-legitimacy, based on custom and law, and complement it with a certain amount of charismatic legitimacy, based on the extraordinary capabilities of the respective leader (Weber 1972, 140 pp. ff.), despotism, weak economic performances, extensive election frauds, and severe repression thwarted the construction of both (Weber 1972, 124 pp. ff.). In contrast to the monarchies, which so far relatively successfully managed to base their rule on traditional legitimacy, recent contentious actions in Arab authoritarian republics always directly question the whole political system due to lack of legitimacy and the subsequent equation of policy shortcomings and the system per se. This cluster of political regimes contains some polyarchic features, although outward impression of democracy has become increasingly flimsy.

Despotism, the predominant form of autocracy among Arab republics, needs a certain level of economic growth in order to "fuel the patronage machine" and thus keep domestic peace (Goldstone 2011, p. 331). However, this economic growth in the form of dependent development raised inequality and unemployment, as the elite reserved most of the wealth to itself. Economic growth also expanded the level of education and therefore created an excluded intellectual middle class to question the status quo (Goldstone 2011, p. 332). Many rulers alienated both elites and the rest of the population by their blatant despotism, which failed to maintain the balance between personal enrichment and an authoritarian bargain, that is the use of personal wealth for enriching the elite and supporting poorer classes for their basic needs. Hosni Mubarak's and Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's families, for instance, have concentrated huge amounts of wealth. This evident despotism and the blatant corruption have successively alienated the elites and radicalized excluded classes at the same time, which facilitated the emergence of revolutionary coalitions consisting of normally conflictive opposition groups, and concurrently explains the lack of loyalty from the militaries to the despots. Finally, as Jack Goldstone (2011, p. 333) correctly pointed out, the whole political elite is associated with the autocrat in such a system, and therefore cannot easily be substituted by someone else, which increases the likeliness of revolutionary change. Hence, all of the authoritarian republics experienced tremendous amounts of contentious action.

To sum up the first two preconditions for social revolutions, dependent development and repressive, exclusionary, and personalist rule are predominant features of the Arab world. The modern structures of domination were put in place during European colonization related to the insertion of the region into the world-system. These structures were inherited by local elites after the formal independence. These new elites started a precarious process of regional

dependent development based on oil revenues, the worst ills of which were soothed by a cer-certain degree of redistribution. The socio-economic status quo was exacerbated by recent structural adjustment, which got rid of former social achievements, and put the region on a path of even more tenuous dependent development. The individual states adopted different political strategies in maintaining order despite wide-spread grievances. Democracies and monarchies proved rather resilient to the recent uprisings due to different degrees of inclusionary political strategies. In addition, monarchies could fall back on a significant amount of traditional legitimacy and foreign support. In contrast, authoritarian republics were far more vulnerable to revolutionary action, as most rulers failed in maintaining the outward impression of democratic procedures, while wide-spread despotism alienated elites and lower and middle classes alike. This facilitated the emergence of broad-based revolutionary coalitions, which shall be analyzed below.

3.3 The importance of timing: economic downturn

Economic downturns may be caused by internal contradictions, external shocks, or the revolutionary movements themselves. While the Arab uprisings have seen all three causes, the strong regional economic downturn was mainly precipitated by a mélange of increasing food prices and the failures of a regional economic concept of dependent development, that chained the fate of regional economic performance to the export of oil, and thus to the performance of the global economy. Hence the Global Economic and Financial Crisis (GEFC) severely exacerbated economic performances in virtually every single Arab state.

As stated above, the Mashreq and Gulf region effectively integrated into one big oil-economy with an internal division of labor (Farsoun 1988, p. 12). Oil-rich states import labor from non-oil economies, and the migration laborers send back remittances in order to support their families. Natural gas, oil and other commodity prices rose rapidly during the first half of 2008, but collapsed by the middle of the year in face of the imminent global recession and only slowly recovered (Rivlin 2009). Consequently, the GEFC affected the region tremendously, which simultaneously reflects the fact that its socio-economic well-being is determined not domestically but externally. The economies dynamics of the Maghreb are somewhat different, but the GEFC exacerbated the regional economic performances as well. Algeria suffered tremendously, with oil constituting virtually all of its exports. The Moroccan

and Tunisian economies are more diversified, but nonetheless highly dependent on Europe. 70% of Moroccan and 80% of Tunisian exports end up in Europe, and are thus adversely affected by the enduring European recession (Achy 2009).

While the whole Arab region region registered an annual aggregate GDP growth of 5.2 percent between 2000 and 2008, it has experienced rapid changes in its economic fortune since then (Rivlin 2009). Economic growth slowed down substantially, the balance of payments deteriorated, and unemployment increased. At the same time, the economies and social stability of the region was severely threatened by rapidly rising food and raw material prices.

The economic downturn stayed immanent and actually exacerbated in face of a new severe spike in food prices in 2010 / 2011, caused mainly by the growing use of biofuel and speculation (Lagi & Bertrand & Bar-Yam 2011), and exacerbated by climate change (Johnstone & Mazo 2011). Extreme rainfalls in Canada and Australia, drought in Argentina, Western China, Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, poor weather in Brazil and Pakistan as well as Cyclone Yasi in Australia adversely affected food production all over the world. Increasing prices for wheat, sugar, and milk threaten the very existence of the poorest, as they lack the financial means to adapt to higher prices and are heavily dependent on subsidies and imported goods such as cereals and sugar for their diet in the first place. Growing food speculation, as well as the GEFC itself, are indicators of an more and more volatile world-economic system in a period of economic "financialization", as will be elaborated below.

To sum up, the GEFC severely exacerbated regional economic performances, and the rise in food prices due to various reasons threatened food security all over the Arab world. The grievances associated with dependent development were aggravated, which radicalized the middle classes into collective action with other groups. Furthermore, labor strikes in various countries in the context of the uprisings further exacerbated economic performance, and thus created an incentive for elites to cease supporting the respective leader. For instance, the Egyptian labor strikes incited the military to oust Mubarak and defend the revolution, thereby reflecting the role of human agency in revolutionary processes (Wright 2011). While this clear economic downturn constituted the conjunctural spark to entail regional rebellion, the second conjunctural factor, i.e. world-systemic openings, remains ambiguous and double-edged.

3.4 The importance of timing continued: world-systemic opening

Hostile world-systemic forces have always been impedimental factors for revolutions. The victory of global neoliberalism and the advent of U.S. unilateralism may have exacerbated the situation (Callinicos 2008, p. 158), but they are contrasted by an increasing hegemonic crisis and systemic volatility in the world-system. The international and geopolitical context of the Arab uprisings has been perceived in fundamentally different, sometimes peculiar ways among critical scholars. Some claim that the rebellion is a carefully planned event exercised by individuals, liberal and Islamic activists, who were trained by Western-backed organizations, and are expanding Western hegemony.[5] The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are seen as the geopolitical cornerstone of U.S. imperialism, the Arab rebellion as an U.S. masterplan in a geopolitical scramble for MENA. The supposed goal is to impose Islamic regimes embracing U.S. hegemony and neoliberal economic policies. Others optimistically celebrate the events as the "end of postcolonialty (Dabashi 2012), as the rise of the Arab people against imperialism and neo-colonialism. I disagree with the essentialism inherent to both perspectives. While it is important to take hegemonic activities and geopolitical interests into account, there is no use in abstracting complex multi-class and multi-status-group movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, forming various tactical coalitions with other actors, into a supposed duality of "democratic" and "reactionary" forces (Amin 2011). In order to grasp the global dimension of the Arab uprisings, and the world-systemic structural forces determining the space for human agency, some historical reflections may be beneficial. I will therefore first attempt to elucidate some current dynamics of the world-system, and then apply these findings to the more immediate situation of the Arab region.

As argued by various world-systems theorists, the power of the U.S. as the contemporary hegemon of the capitalist world-economy has been in relative decline since the 1970s (Arrighi 1994, pp. 300 ff.). The U.S. "governmental-business complex" has transformed from the world's leading creditor into the world's biggest debtor nation, thereby mirroring structural tendencies that have been present during prior hegemonic struggles (Arrighi 2005, p. 38). In general, leading capitalist organizations move from one market niche to another due to increasing competition. As the contemporary hegemon successively loses its comparative advantage, they face diminishing profitable investment possibilities, and consequentially a tremendous crisis of overaccumulation arises (Arrighi 2005, pp. 36 ff.). A period of financialization allows the hegemon to experience a late belle époque "stemming

from the institutionalized centrality of the hegemon in the larger world-system", from its ca-capability to center global markets in its territory (Chase-Dunn et al. 2005). Financialization equals the dominance of financial leverage over capital, and of financial markets over the industrial and agricultural economy.

This process has recently been referred to as economic globalization, but it resembles, for instance, the rise of the laissez-faire ideology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the melting of capital borders entailed a global restructuring of capital accumulation (Silver 2005, p. 309) Financial expansion and the associated redistribution of resources and social dislocation in the world-system previously precipitated extensive social struggle and new social coalitions by old and selected new privileged groups. The fall of the Dutch and the subsequent rise of the British have seen the embourgeoisement of the dominant social bloc, and the transition from British to U.S. hegemony was accompanied by large-scale labor and anti-colonial struggles (Arrighi 2005, p. 39), while both have been followed by huge waves of decolonization (Chase-Dunn & Gills 2005, p. 51). If the emergence of large-scale social unrest is potentially signified by the "Occupy" movements and protests in Greece, Spain, Chile, Quebec, and other current struggles remains subject to discussion (Wallerstein 2011a; 2011b). We hasten to note that periods of hegemonic transition are often characterized and followed by extensive amounts of social struggles (Arrighi 2005, p. 39).

However, prior periods of hegemonic transition have also seen an extensive willingness of the hegemon to use its military capabilities in order to maintain its privileged position (Arrighi 2005, 42). The prospective (re-)shifting of the center of the global economy towards East Asia will lead to growing conflict between the hegemon and various prospective successors. While military endeavors have previously fastened the hegemonic decline, at present, there is no serious challenge to U.S. military power. This might lead to a conflictive situation of increased militarism in the absence of an international balance of power. The war in Iraq, referred to as "accumulation by dispossession" by David Harvey (2003, pp. 137 ff.), has already given an impression of what a growing U.S. unilateralism in order to control global accumulation and defend hegemonic supremacy would entail. Against the background of this volatile world-systemic environment, the Arab uprisings should not be perceived merely as the awakening of the post-colonial subject in the process of liberation from foreign imperialism due to hegemonic impotency, but rather as a complex, multi-layered struggle characterized by geopolitical interests, multiple coalitions in various spaces, and overlapping goals in a period of increasing social and international struggle, with an outcome that is yet to determine.

The Arab region, and MENA in general, are home to resources pivotal for global accumulation, i.e. crude oil and gas. The combination of international conflicts in the context of hegemonic transition, as mentioned above, and the central geopolitical role of MENA, creates a dangerous world-systemic environment, in which the U.S. might be tempted to raise, or rather aggressively reassert imperial control over the region. However, at the same time the fatigue after extensive military endeavors in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the sluggish economic performance, and tremendous fiscal debts have made Western populations rather hostile towards the idea of new military endeavors, while the intervention in Libya and the growing involvement of the U.S. military in Yemen (Baker 2012) have shown that there is still space for political maneuvers. The increased tendency to link domestic socio-economic justice to military activities abroad is a tremendously significant development in limiting U.S. (and European) military activities (Silver 2005, p. 311), the importance of which further grows in the context of the upcoming elections. If military actions are somewhat limited, which forms do world-systemic constraints then take?

The preferred alternative in influencing the outcomes of the uprisings is supporting actors, whose concerns are well-disposed to imperial ones, such as liberal and Islamic activists and parties embracing the neo-liberal paradigm (for a perspective concisely reflecting the U.S. strategy, see: Ratner 2012). The U.S. strategy goes along the lines of what Robinson describes as a shift in U.S. foreign policy from backing authoritarianism to promoting polyarchic political systems (Robinson, 1996a, p. 318). This paradigm shift was precipitated by globalization, defined in this case not as neoliberal political ideology related to the financialization of the world-economy mentioned above, but as an "expansion and intensification of large-scale interaction networks relative to more local interactions" (Chase-Dunn & Gills 2005, p. 45). As rising global interaction empowers local democracy movements, and the accompanying human rights discourse successively discredits the backing of authoritarian leaders, U.S. policy expands its soft power by instrumantalizing this very discourse. It thus legitimizes itself to shape the outcomes of democratization processes by preventing more radical social change (Robinson 1996a, p. 319). The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), that is a U.S. state-funded agency to promote "democracy", and other branches of the U.S. state have been active in 109 countries between 1984 and 1992, while other core countries started modeling their own institutions after the U.S. archetypes since the early 1990s (Robinson 1996b, pp. 652 ff.). Reviewing U.S. foreign policies in pre- and post-authoritarian South Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union as well as other cases, Robinson (1996, p. 320) concludes that the strategy consisted of selectively supporting the

most favorable contentious actors to "promoting the agenda of the transnational elite", and therefore tipping the balance of power in favor of these actors. The role of Otpor and Canvas, for instance, has been subject to much debate.[6]

The author does not endorse notions claiming that the Arab uprisings have been instigated by Western countries training supposed Arab agents (as an example: Cartalucci 2011), which equals embracing the conspiratorial discourse adopted by local autocrats in order to discredit contentious actors. These conceptions reproduce an erroneous Western perceptions, which marginalize the crucial contributions of the dispossessed, youth, and women. The U.S. and other core countries are no driving forces of the uprisings, but merely reacting to shifting global realities and trying to cut their losses, that is attempting to prevent a change of asymmetrical power relations. It is nonetheless important to note that foreign support has had a major impact on the dynamics of the many actors and consequently significantly influenced the outcomes (Nixon 2011). This goes along the lines of the criminal prosecution of 43 foreigners in Egypt in early 2012, some of them being related to the International Republican Institute, the Democratic National Institute, and Freedom House (Falk 2012). All three NGOs are closely related to the realm of American politics. The events reflect the struggle between the military rulers, local activists, and foreign powers over influence in Egypt.

Since the revolution of 1979, Iran was perceived as an existential threat to U.S. geopolitical interests in the region, even more so since the conflict about Iran's nuclear program. Hence the increasing collaboration with Sunni-led states such as Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, and Jordan, in order to create a united front with Israel against the Shiite bloc consisting of Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah (Hersh 2007). It is against this background that the U.S. foreign policy in the Arab world and MENA in general has to be comprehended. U.S. officials were exercising restraint towards a condemnation of the violent crackdown of protests in Bahrain, home to the U.S. Fifth Fleet, of pivotal geostrategic importance, and governed by a Sunni minority. Robert Cooper, a senior advisor to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, commented that "the authorities were right to restore calm and order and that's what they've done" (Rettman 2011). At the same time, the U.S. and the European Union have introduced economic sanctions against Iran's close ally Syria, supported the local opposition movements, and tried to initiate resolutions against Syria condemning Syrian actions in the United Nations Security Council. In addition, the West's most important regional allies, i.e. Saudi-Arabia and Qatar, are steering military supplies to the Syrian rebels (Anderson 2012), but simultaneously

supporting allied leaders such as King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein in Jordan, and King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in Bahrain.

Returning to our set of preconditions for successful social revolutions, consequential geostrategic maneuvers of both sides may constitute world-systemic openings and closings at the same time. The NATO intervention in Libya and the ousting of former Western allies such as Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt, Gaddafi in Libya, and Saleh in Yemen are clear cases of world-systemic openings. However, as mentioned above, Western support is limited to political revolutionary, but socio-economically conservative actors. Bahrain has not seen a world-systemic opening due to its pivotal role for Western and Saudi interests. Several Gulf states led by Saudi-Arabia intervened and aided in the crackdown of the uprising. The Syrian opposition has been supported by Western states and their regional allies, but due to continuous support of the regime by Russia, Iran, Venezuela and other allies a world-systemic opening has been thwarted so far. In sum, the imperial tactic has hitherto been to support hospitable forces and authoritarian allies if they seem to be able to maintain stability. If not, support will shift to popular contentious actors not threatening structures of dependency, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Massad 2012b). This once again reflects the crucial role of human agency: The success of forming contentious coalitions and mobilizing huge segments of the societies increases the likeliness of (limited) world-systemic openings.

Besides direct military intervention and the support of hospitable political groups, loans provided by various institutions have been another instrument to influence the developments. The G8 have promised financial support for Arab economies, but this "aid" will be mostly in the form of loans provided by various lenders (Breidthardt & Bremer 2011). These loans are to ensure that Arab countries stay on the present path of dependent development and abstain from socio-economic transformations. Without said transformations, however, the loans will only benefit small elites as they have done beforehand (Mackell 2011). Financial incentives are even used to further advance neoliberal restructuring. They have so far been much lower than promised, as they are chained to renewed neoliberal reform policies (Arnold 2012). In Egypt, for instance, a 3.2 billion IMF loan is desperately needed in face of low investment rates since the revolution. However, such a loan is tied to enforced structural adjustment policies "including cuts to subsidies and tax hikes" (Arnold 2012). It may be considered somewhat ironic that the failed neoliberal economic policies precipitated a regional crisis, which in turn is used as an excuse to further advance said policies. Such reforms will strengthen the old elites, and thereby hinder social change as well as democratization, as the future political systems will reflect socio-economic power relations, as

it did under the rule of post-colonial autocrats (Hanieh 2011). At the same time, however, increasing social grievances will raise the incentives for contentious action.

To sum up the world-systemic environment, growing geopolitical conflict due to the pivotal role of Arab region and the struggle of the U.S. to maintain and renew global hegemony characterizes region world-systemic forces. Material foreign influence takes three different forms. First, military intervention as a traditional form of imperial control was exercised in Libya. Support of the local revolutionaries ensured a hospitable political transition, but thwarted deeper transformations. In general, however, U.S. military options are limited due to domestic opposition, while Europe is preoccupied with a substantial financial crisis at home. Second, and more predominantly, foreign influence takes the form of support for well-disposed political actors. Depending on the location of the individual state in the struggle for regional hegemony, such foreign support or non-interference may sometimes open space for political, but not social revolutions, as it did in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Third, loans tied to the expectation of neoliberal reform policies may further reduce the chances of successful socio-economic transformations in the short term, as they selectively support neoliberal policies, while said loans and policies will successively exacerbate the overall economic situation even further in the long term. Rising debt reduces the space for independent national policies and raises foreign control. Consequently, despite a severe regional economic downturn since 2008, U.S. supremacy and foreign influence have thus limited the space for social revolutions for now, although extended research will be necessary to more accurately evaluate non-transparent factors such as the involvement of U.S.-.financed NGOs promoting polyarchy.

Renewed structural adjustment, as mentioned above, will in the short-term strengthen the prevailing social structure, but at the same time successively increase social grievances. Social movements might benefit from those developments. In addition, the further rise of some semi-peripheral hegemonic contenders and the restructuring of the global economy might soon further limit U.S. power, and therefore provide possibilities for new alliances or more independent action. Global rebalancing might thus open political space for social revolutionaries to navigate between foreign interests, and thus provide the world-systemic opening necessary for social revolutions.

3.5 Structures are what revolutionaries make of them: political cultures of opposition

With the existence of exclusionary, repressive, and personalist regimes securing the fastened process of dependent development, and a regional economic downturn coinciding with some partial world-systemic openings, political cultures can be seen as the most important factors shaping the revolutionary outcomes of the Arab uprisings. The rise of neoliberalism significantly reshaped regional contentious action, and the consequences were manifold. As mentioned above, the majority of the Arab people did not benefit from economic growth and were subject to various social ills. Structural adjustment policies also entailed the further rise of Islamist groups and the partial post-Islamization of parts of said movements, who filled the socio-economic gaps opened by reduced governmental social services. In addition, increasing suffering of workers precipitated the resurgence of labor movements, while the feminization of poverty simultaneously gave birth to a highly active women's rights movement. Those developments fundamentally shaped the regional contentious landscape, which shall be the subject of this chapter, as well as some other factors shaping the emergence of revolutionary coalitions consisting of distinct political cultures of opposition, such as the hegemonic struggle for dominant narratives.

Some preliminary general reflections might be beneficial. First of all, I reject the concept of "individual economic rationality" when analyzing political cultures of opposition (Beinin & Vairel 2011a). Contentious actors perceive reality through a subjective lens shaped by historical memory, personal experiences, cultural idioms etc., and act accordingly. Furthermore there is no such thing as an Islamic, Arab or Middle Eastern "exceptionalism". Orientalist accounts describe Islam as a monolithic and static entity subject to some inalterable features. Notions claiming that the Arab or Middle Eastern region is home to a peculiar culture, that is inherently different than other regions, follow the same Eurocentric lines of thought. Cultural features are produced in accordance to the process of capitalist expansion in a peripheral country. In the Arab case, the period of colonization was accompanied by the reproduction of pre-capitalist modes of production, thereby reinforcing traditional social relations (Farsoun 1988, pp. 14 ff.). Patriarchy, patronage and the mercantile spirit consequently stayed predominant characteristics of the region. Hence, although these features have a long history in North Africa and the Middle East, they are not the inevitable outcome of certain essential and permanent cultural straits of a supposed Arab exceptionalism. They are in reality correlates with the contemporary reality and therefore not culturally specific, but politically and socially contingent (Ayubi 1995, p. 168). At the same

time, the notion of "Arab patriarchy" is not meant to convey the idea that other regions are not gendering and sexualizing their social relations as well. Bearing those ideas in mind, it is more useful to view Islam not as an entity of its own, but as produced by Muslims via performative acts. When analyzing Muslim societies, it is thus necessary to focus on the conditions that render a particular perception of Islam hegemonic and produce certain cultural elements (Bayat 2007, p. 12). Based on those conceptions, what were the main political cultures of opposition and how did they interact with each other?

Workers' movements have played a crucial role in the Arab uprisings, although their role is often undermined in Western discourse (Burris 2011). In the context of structural adjustment, traditional class-based social movements such as "peasant organizations, cooperative movements, and trade unions" have successively lost importance (Bayat 2010, p. 214). Trade unionism was based on public-sector employment, while new private businesses remain relatively free of union activity. The discontent of the "lumpen intelligentsia", that is the educated but unemployed or underemployed middle classes, was often channeled into Islamist movements, and "social fatigue" has simultaneously become a wide-spread phenomenon. Social fatigue is defined by Marie Duboc (2011, p. 62) as the "tension between actors' longing for change and the permanence of the status quo". This condition differs from apathy and demobilization and should instead be perceived as a "decentered notion of activism" (Duboc 2011, p. 62), as the adoption of different contentious strategies. As Joel Beinin has recently illustrated, the workers' movements are far from demobilized and have been regaining some strength in recent years (Beinin 2011). Their response to neoliberal economic restructuring has been class-based, and refutes the notion that labor is an outdated analytical category, shared by neoliberalism and "postmodern radical democratic theory" alike (Beinin & Vairel 2011a, p. 19). The fact that the deindustrialization of the Global North was accompanied by the industrialization of the Global South means that patterns of global inequality remain intact on the one hand, and perpetuates the importance of class and labor on the other (Arrighi 2005, pp. 34 ff).

Beinin and Frédéric Vairel have argued that contentious actors mostly respond to threats instead of opportunities, as was illustrated by the regional urban protests of the 1980s (Beinin & Vairel 2011a, p. 22; Vairel 2011, p. 42). The populations saw their traditional social contract threatened in the face of economic restructuring and spiraling living costs (Bayat 2010, p. 213). Popular resistance often managed to delay structural adjustment or at least soothe their effect. When structural adjustment was tremendously enforced since the 1990s, resistance successively grew and organized itself. In Egypt, for instance, strikes,

gatherings, sit-ins, and demonstrations became more frequent since the 1990s, and spiked in 2004 and 2007 respectively (Beinin 2011, pp. 188 ff.). The total number of contentious actions by workers increased over time from 114 in 1998 to 609 in 2008. However, workers' movements are mostly organized in informal networks, which facilitate mobilization, but simultaneously keep engagement low and disable national organization (Beinin 2011, p. 182). Hence, although class struggles are far from unimportant and powerless, Farsoun's old verdict that the fragmented and heterogeneous social structure, mirrored by weak and fragmented industrial labor classes and a stratified petty bourgeisie, hinders class-based mass mobilization still remains valid to a certain extent (Farsoun 1988, p. 26).

In addition, fastened neoliberal restructuring of peripheral states have shaped labor migration and class formation. While IMF and World Bank advocated economic policies continue to impoverish whole regions, African and Asian migrants are trying to escape war and poverty by heading to Europe (Dabashi 2012, pp. 197 ff.). The Arab uprisings may well mark the end of the collaboration between Europe and compradors such as Ben Ali and Gaddafi upholding a racialized geography of intercontinental labor migration, in which migrant laborers are prevented from entering Europe by authoritarian coercion, and South Asian and Arab migrants perform "virtually all of the productive labour in the Gulf economies" as temporary workers without citizen rights (Hanieh 2009). A new geography of labor might influence class formation in the region and entail anti-systemic pressures, as capital inflows into the Gulf region were contrasted by surplus capital outflows, mostly derived from said cheap migrant and female labor. These outflows mainly ended up in the U.S., where they helped to sustain the U.S. account deficit, and thereby U.S. hegemony.

For the moment however, informal economies, continuous labor migration, and weak industries fragment the dispossessed classes. Marginalized groups hence often adopt pragmatic forms of resistance, which Bayat terms "quiet encroachment of the ordinary", that is noncollective actions "to acquire the basic necessities of their lives" (Bayat 2010, p. 45). This informal way of dealing with challenges is directly related to the fact that the urban poor are not as affected by the impact of modernity as other groups. They often lack the access to modern "rights at work, goods, entertainment, power, opportunities, and above all, information", which would illuminate their state of deprivation (Bayat 2010, p. 227). They lack the capabilities to compete in modernity and therefore adapt pragmatic strategies in their daily struggles. The disenfranchised, as Bayat puts it, "cannot afford to be ideological", although they are likely to form coalitions with revolutionaries, if they estimate improvements for their socio-economic living conditions (Bayat 2010, p. 184). Consequentially fragmented

social structures explain the lack of substantial social change in countries with strong workers movements such as Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco, where worker have so far failed to develop strong political programs out of their economic demands. The disenfranchised are capable of expressing discontent and achieving economic benefits, but often lack the ability to mobilize on a national level in order to fundamentally transform the social structure and political system. The educated middle classes thus still remain the strongest contentious actors (Bayat 2010, p. 215).

A large segment of this intelligentsia also lacks the material ability to participate in modernity. In contrast to the urban dispossessed, however, they are constantly made aware of the benefits of modernity such as expensive commodities or facilitated travel, while being excluded from their availability. This group is thus highly revolutionary and may adopt both secular or religious ideologies. The rich, on the other hand, experience a somewhat different situation. They enjoy the economic and cultural benefits globalization offers to certain groups, while also being exposed to modernity's "existential uncertainties" because of their access to global elites, travel, communication, and global commodities (Bayat 2010, p. 228). Modern lifestyles contrast with former moral orders and may therefore entail existential intellectual struggles for identity in an increasingly complex world. Religion then often provides answers to the quintessential questions of identity in a post-modern world. Because of their material status, these groups may not be as revolutionary, but they are at the same time inclined to promote a religious transformation of society, for reasons mentioned above (Bayat 2007, p. 14). They are thus likely to adopt of "moderate" version of Islam. In addition to these groups, artisans, religious elites, and merchants may collectively support Islamic contentious action against secular states.

As elaborated above, mobilization of workers is mostly secular. Contrary to popular Western belief, the disenfranchised are not prone to follow Islamist ideologies, and neither are Islamists particularly concerned with the mobilization of the poor beyond the provision of social services by Islamic NGOs (Bayat 2010, p. 184). Why then, in contrast, is contentious action of other groups often based on Islamic ideologies and why do some of the mentioned groups adopt religious identities? Some of the reasons have already been elaborated, such as the existential security Islam provides for newly rich elites. However, the spectrum of Islamic movements is far more complicated, and it is thus fruitful to reflect on the nature of political Islam some more in order to grasp recent developments that significantly influenced the events of the Arab uprisings.

Attempts to explain the recent rise of religious politics have often perceived religious

activism as an essentially anti-modern reaction to the arrival of Western modernity (Bayat 2010, p. 225). Other scholars, however, have pointed out that religious politics are rather the post-modern quest for an alternative to secular nationalism. Religious activists are often very modern people, who merely strive for an alternative modernity rejecting secularism and embracing religious values (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 5). Islamism, in particular, is a response to what is perceived as Western imperialism. This perspective sees secular nationalism as the most recent form European Christian culture associated with the cultural mission of the European colonizer (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 16, p. 26).

It is beneficial to think of nations as "imagined communities" in this context, an imagination that destroyed the legitimacy of religious order in a hegemonic struggle over the right to sanction violence (Anderson, B. 1983). When peripheral states are incorporated into the world-system, pre-capitalist modes of production, and with them traditional social relations, are often reinforced. Religion therefore often assisted in the construction of nationalism and provided legitimacy to the state, even more than in Western countries (Juergensmeyer 2008, pp. 26 ff.). However, secular nationalism and religion both provide frameworks for a social order based on the submission to an ordering agent holding the monopoly of legitimacy to use of physical force, and can therefore be rivals (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 17). Since globalization started to weaken nation-states, and along with them national ideologies justifying social order, virtually all religions saw the rise of fractions articulating a resistance to secular nationalism. Christian militias in the United States, ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel, violent Sikhs in India and Buddhist activists in Sri Lanka are but some examples. To be sure, most religious activists are aiming to reconstruct the social order of the nation-state, notwithstanding the existence of some transnational actors such as Global Jihad (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 36). Yet they are aiming to do so with a more central role of religion in the construction of social order.

In the Middle East and North Africa, this process was tremendously strong due to the continuous failure of secular nationalism, be it in the form of Ba'thism, socialism or neoliberal capitalism, to live up to its promises of development. The traumatizing effect of the colonial encounter entailed the rise of ideologies of Arab national modernization (Aksikas 2009, p. 16). The dichotomy between Islamism and secular nationalism, against this background, is as old as Arab modernity, but the rise of Islamism as the predominant critical theory started in the 1970s, when the shortcomings of other secular ideologies became evident (Bayat 2010, p. 229). Ba'thism in Iraq and Syria led to despotism, while "Arab socialism", that is state capitalism, managed to achieve some social successes, but eventually faced the

incoherence of its concept of dependent development. Pan-Arabism was defeated in the war in 1967, and buried in 1991 when most Arab states joined the U.S.-led coalition to defeat Iraq (Aksikas 2009, p. 30). Neoliberal capitalism failed to improve the living conditions of the majority of the Arab population.

Islamism then rose in a hegemonic struggle for independence and an alternative modernity from Western-style secular nationalism (Buck-Morss 2003, pp. 47 ff.). Islamic political movements, to be sure, are not centrally organized, but united by the rejection of secular nationalism. In fact, many Islamic activists are nationalists, and the respective interests might be conflictive (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 83). In general, Islamism is a fundamentally heterogeneous phenomenon and different forms are adapted in different circumstances. Islamism can be militant, authoritarian, neo-liberal, egalitarian, and so forth. There is no reified Islam, but only a set of social practices produced by living Muslims. As mentioned above, the focus thus has to be on living Muslims, and the social, cultural, and political environment that propels them to construct Islam in a certain fashion.

Islam often served as the interpretative frame through which individual contention could be unified into collective action. Muslim activists aim to contrast the status quo with Islam as an "alternative social, political, moral, and even economic order" (Bayat 2010, p. 231). When neoliberal reforms then undermined the social order of nation-states, as the coerced reduction of financial expenses forced the states to retreat from Arab social contracts, the subsequent social vacuum was often filled by Islamic activists and their social institutions. Many Islamic militants thus successively supported neoliberal economic policies, a process being fueled by the fact that socialism was perceived as Islamism's historical nemesis. In addition, structural adjustment allowed a new bourgeoisie to emerge, which, as mentioned elsewhere, often adopted moderate forms of Islamism.

Other groups adopted more radical interpretations of Islam and the struggle thus often remained a violent one. Even though nonviolence is a popular theme in virtually all religions, their political power is derived from their ability to sanction violence, and concepts of just war or other justifications to exercise violence are thus common (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 217). Religion provides "vehicles of social mobilization", an organizational network, moral justification and an all-encompassing worldview. That is not to claim that other ideologies are not capable of justifying violent struggle, or that political ideologies do not often exhibit significant similarities with religion. The difference, however, often is that religion absolutizes and personalizes the conflict as a sacred struggle against evil, yielding personal rewards on an eternal timescale (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 255). The question which

interpretation of Islam will be rendered hegemonic depends on the social, economic and polit-political environment.

For many Islamic activists, the markets, education, and media function as spaces for the struggle over the social production of meaning, since they are excluded from the political realm. Islamic banking and finance, Islamic media, and Islamic social institutions succeeded in spreading Islamic values. A newly rising educated Islamist middle class increasingly became aware of its marginalization, and used the discursive capability of political Islam to provide an alternative social order. Islamist frameworks are very adaptive, in this respect, and may support neo-liberal capital accumulation and anti-capitalist discourses at the same time, due to a focus on morality discourses. Still the struggle often remained a violent one and frequently faced state repression.

Islamic activism succeeded in mobilizing parts of the lower social classes by carrying out charity work and appealing to moral and cultural virtues. However, it faced a profound crisis in the mid-1990s, when it became clear that the chances of violent struggles against the state were somewhat limited on the one hand, and Islamist rulers encountered major difficulties when trying to put their ideology into practice in Iran, Sudan, and Pakistan (Bayat 2007, p. 16). This led many Islamists to revise their violent ideology, and successively adopt a more democratic approach, a process termed post-Islamization by Bayat (2010, pp. 242 ff.), and strongly advertised by "secular Muslims, human rights activists, and, especially, middle-class women". Post-Islamist activists seek to transcend exclusivity and totality of Islamism and focus instead on pluralism (Bayat 2010, p. 236). That is not to say that Islam is not used as a political framework anymore, far from it, nor does post-Islamism constitute the end of Islamism. Post-Islamism is not secular, and many actors may use elements from both Islamist and post-Islamist discourses.

Although many Islamic activists left the violent trajectories since the 1990s, violence remained a major theme, due to the rise of Global Jihad, among other reasons (Juergensmeyer 2008, pp. 205 ff.). The transnational Islamic movement gained popular support after 9/11, as the events showed the magnitude of the impact militant Islamism can have, and concurrently entailed acts of U.S. imperialism to fuel anti-American sentiments. The majority, however, departed from this notion of Islam. Groups such as Al-Qaeda are increasingly isolated in many states and failed to adequately respond to the new rules of the Arab uprisings, vis-à-vis highly active and rapidly operating youth and women's movements, which refused to embrace old-fashioned ideological approaches (Wright 2011).

In summary, the two dominant currents of political cultures of opposition were the

workers' movements and post-Islamist groups. Workers' movements have been a resurgent, class-based response to neoliberalism. They have been able to achieve substantial successes via contentious action in the last decade and have played a crucial role in many Arab states during the uprisings. Due to huge informal economies, continuous labor migration, and weak industries, however, the poorer classes continue to be rather fragmented and the educated middle class remains the strongest political actors. The lumpen intelligentsia often adopted Islamic discourses in order to criticize the status quo, mobilize for collective action, and provide an alternative social order. It did so very effectively and used the market, media, and education as space for its hegemonic struggle. Islamism stands in decided contrast to secular nationalism, which was perceived by many as an alien political culture and increasingly discredited after its evident failure to achieve development. This is neither to claim that workers' movements and (post-)Islamic-groups were the only political cultures of opposition, nor that they are homogeneous themselves. There is a tremendous diversity and complexity of contestation on the region, and other groups such as women's rights groups were highly influential as well, as will be elaborated below. Nonetheless, the resurgence of labor and the post-Islamization of religious movements have been two of the most important developments to facilitate the emergence of revolutionary coalitions.

3.6 Coalitions emerge: youth and women, discourse, and gender

The recent post-Islamization of religious movements led to the rise of a nonviolent, democratic, more inclusive ideology, and thereby provided the foundation upon which to build a successful revolutionary coalition between secular and religious activists. While the last chapter has mostly focused on class and ideologies, it is also useful to examine groups such as youth and women, and the struggles over the social production of meaning various classes and status-groups are involved in.

Young people do not only constitute the majority of the population, but also the bulk of the protesters. The Arab region is one of the youngest in the world, with some 60% of the population being under 25 years old (UNDP 2009, p. 10). The youth is also particularly affected by unemployment, even more than other developing regions. Young Arabs have struggled to reclaim youthfulness, that is the capability to "assert their individuality, creativity, and lightness and free them[selves] from anxiety over the prospect of their future"

(Bayat 2010, p. 18) Just like women's non-mobilized collective contention, the youth is often not collectively organized when defying the lack of perspectives and freedom in their everyday struggle. However, they may act as a democratic and revolutionary force when they challenge the dogmatism of exclusivist authoritarian regimes, after those regimes failed to accommodate their claims (Bayat 2010, p. 19).

Social injustice also has a female face. The rise of neoliberal capitalism precipitated a global "feminization of poverty", as cheap, and thus often female, labor constituted the foundation for a new international division of labor (Moghadam 2005, p. 351). The Arab world is no exception: Female unemployment rates are higher than their male equivalents, women constitute a big part of the informal economy, and they are overrepresented in low-paying jobs and underrepresented in the high-wage oil sectors (Moghadam 2012). While women became increasingly involved in the production of surplus-value, they still remained responsible for reproductive work. This combination of lower economic power and a "patriarchal gender contract", reinforced by the rise of religious fundamentalism, resulted in many other gendered social ills. Women are excluded from education and political participation (Moghadam 2011). Their health often suffers from gender biased traditions, as they are often prevented from pursuing physical exercise and thus suffer from obesity more often than men. (UNDP 2009, p. 12) In addition, their decision-making capabilities are limited by traditional gender roles, and physical assaults, as in other parts of the world, are a wide-spread problem. Female genital mutilation is banned in some Arab states, but still a prevalent cultural practice. Child marriage before the age of 18 years is not prohibited and frequently entails female vulnerability to violence, social exclusion, and adverse health effects (UNDP 2009, p. 7). In order to overcome those discriminations, women have participated in an informal struggle defying gender inequality. Despite the rise of women's NGOs over the 1980s and 1990s (Moghadam 2005, p. 352-353.), which tried to fill gaps of social provision opened by the withdrawal of the state, more organized collective action was thwarted by authoritarian patriarchal repression. Nonetheless, the existence of feminist networks, even if often informal, helped mobilizing female activists.

To sum up the most important groups: Workers and the urban poor, the lumpen intelligentsia, youth and women are crucial sociological categories to keep in mind when analyzing the Arab uprisings. A revolutionary coalition, as mentioned elsewhere, emerges once contentious actors overcome secular-religious divides, or such of class, age, and gender. Workers' movements and Islamic groups provided strong networks and organizational capacities, drawing upon ideological legacies of socialism and Islamism. The secular-

religious divide is still strong in the Arab world, but coalitions were often made possible, however temporary, on the basis of the post-Islamization of many religious groups. Common idioms concealed ideological differences for some time. The actors were often capable of creating what Vairel (2011, p. 27) has called a "contentious space", that is a "social world" built against the political system by actors united by common contentious practices, the belief that change is possible, as well as friendship and comradery, despite potential ideological discrepancies.

As elaborated in the beginning of this paper, the construction of such as contentious space may be achieved by drawing upon formally articulated ideologies and cultural idioms. What is important to note is that the actions of the revolutionaries were mainly informed by cultural idioms, not ideologies. Exploitation and social justice, the dislike of political exclusion and despotism, the wish for dignity, and, often to a lesser extent, the distrust of foreign influence were the predominant themes. Granted, ideologies such as formal democracy, nationalism, socialism and Islamism were present, and their corresponding networks often facilitated mobilization, but the uprisings were nonetheless essentially non-hierarchical and post-ideological. Non-hierarchical networks of direct action groups relied on mentioned idioms to create coalitions of contentious actors with some specific demands, but were not subjugated to parties or overall hierarchical groups and networks. They were not only post-Islamist, but also post-ideological in the sense that the grand revolutionary narratives of anti-imperialist nationalism, Third World Socialism, and fundamental Islamism "epistemically exhausted themselves" (Dabashi 2012, p. xxi).

This trend goes along the lines of new waves of contentious political cultures, which started in the late 1980s, forcefully manifested for the first time with the Zapatista movement in Mexico, and were also reflected by recent contentious actors such as the Occupy movement, the Spanish indignados, and Chilean students (Foran 2008, p. 246). The tendency was intensified by the phenomenon of regional social fatigue among classical social movements, and the non-organized every-day struggles of the disenfranchised, young, and women. Arab autocrats did not allow for competing hierarchical networks, whereby contentious actors had to rely on popular idioms in addition to workers' and Islamist networks to mobilize the population, which in turn was facilitated by the existence of informal contentious networks. Cultural idioms were manifold and, depending on the national context, ranged from the middle-class dislike of political exclusion and cronyism, the demand for social justice by impoverished workers and the poor, the distrust of foreign powers related to experiences of colonialism and imperialism, the demand for gender equality by women, the

reclaiming of youthfulness by the young, the wish for freedom of religion by both Muslims and minorities such as the Copts.

The struggle then took the form of various narratives, somewhat competing for hegemony over the social production of meaning. Eric Selbin accurately observes that revolutions are "intrinsically storied processes", in which subversive actors aim to construct new narratives and reconstruct old ones, while using idioms from the traditional local culture (Selbin 2010, p. 86). Selbin discerns four types of stories, all of them being present to a certain degree in the Arab uprisings: the Civilizing and Democratizing Revolutionary story, the Social Revolutionary story, the Freedom and Liberation Revolutionary story, and the Revolution of the Lost and Forgotten story.

The democratizing civilizing story is profoundly liberal, and stands in the tradition of bourgeois revolutions in England, American, and French (Selbin 2010, pp. 96 ff.). Enlightenment thinking and the triumph of civilization, progress, and democracy are central tropes. This narrative is popular with elites, and essentially Eurocentric, although often popular with subaltern comprador groups, termed native informers by Hamid Dabashi (2011, pp. 12 ff.). In the Arab uprisings, it is widely used by Western commentators. The story focuses on young social activists, who used the possibilities of the internet (read Western civilization) to bring down despotic autocrats. Popular themes were the brutal murder of Khaled Said by Egyptian police forces, the non-violent character of the protests, and the arrest of Wael Ghonim and others. A common issue was the fear of a fundamentalist hijacking of the revolution, illustrated by the support for authoritarian forces by liberal elites, such as in Egypt, but also by Western media.[7]

The social revolutionary story is one of socio-cultural transformation (Selbin 2010, pp. 115 ff.). 1789 is perceived as a pivotal turning point in modern cultural history as the ideas of political change and the sovereignty of the people were unleashed (Wallerstein 2004, pp. 60 ff.). History then is a story of social struggle told by events such as the Russian, Chinese, and Cuban revolution. In the Arab case, the focus is on workers' movements and the struggle of the disenfranchised. A popular theme is the self-immolation of the Tunisian fruit-vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, which epitomized the social injustice of a corrupt system, although this story also fits the democratizing civilizing narrative. The grievances of the lumpen intelligentsia such as the diplômés chômeurs in Morocco or labor struggles, for instance in the Tunisian phosphate-mining region or the Egyptian industrial city El-Mahalla El-Kubra, are common stories as well.

A third story is the one of freedom and liberation in the form of slave revolts, anti-

colonial revolutions, that is the struggle of the marginalized (Selbin 2010, pp. 141 ff.). West-Western discourse somewhat marginalizes this aspect of the Arab uprisings, but it is an ever-present feature. It focuses on similar events as the democratizing civilizing narrative, but rejects the Eurocentric notion of a democratic catching-up process with the already "civilized" liberal democracies. It is present in every contentious action against neoliberal capitalism and state repression, be it in the form of workers' movements or the non-organized every-day struggle of marginalized groups: the dispossessed, women, the youth. The freedom and liberation story is therefore one of dignity ("Karama"), of the emancipation of the colonized mind in a dual struggle against domestic exclusion and foreign imperialism. The revolution against post-colonial autocrats, in this sense, is simultaneously a struggle against foreign influence and globalization from above. Stories of U.S. and European double standards when responding to the uprisings, the invasion of Bahrain, and the use of U.S. tear gas canisters by U.S. trained Egyptian and Tunisian police are also common themes of this narrative (Khalidi 2011).

There is also a fourth story, one of the lost and forgotten, but since we are currently experiencing a revolutionary process that might still continue for some time, it is too early to judge which stories will be forgotten. The other three narratives are still struggling for discourse hegemony and have done so since the beginning of the rebellion. At the same time, authoritarian regimes were trying to discredit them by using a narrative of the revolutionaries as irrational, dangerous mobs and Western agents. They were thereby telling a story of impending danger from within and outside, in which they provide shelter from chaos, fundamental Islamism, and foreign imperialism, a narrative that was sometimes reproduced by conservative Western media and conspiratorial leftist discourses.[8]

The revolutionary stories found a common denominator in the opposition to state repression and political injustice, while differing over the importance of other factors. Exclusionary leaders and state repression provided solid targets against which to construct a common contentious space. This space was appealing to different groups of Arab societies, as the elites were often alienated by excessive despotism, the dispossessed found their very existence threatened by spiraling living costs, and the lumpen intelligentsia increasingly radicalised by a lack of perspectives in the face of a continuous economic downturn. So were the youth, women, and other underprivileged or minority groups, who were more and more enraged by authoritarian states adopting gendered, sexualized, and racialised violence and morality discourses in order to legitimize rule (Amar 2011b, p. 315). The exclusionary leaders, mainly of Arab authoritarian republics, provided an excellent target to channel all this

discontent.

Mobilization was facilitated by the arrival of new media in the region. This is not to reproduce the Orientalist tale of "Lawrence of E-rabia" (Burris 2011), which focuses on the role of a privileged minority having access to the internet and an alleged technological determinism, thereby neglecting the role of political time and space (Zivkovic & Hogan 2008, p. 197). Still, social activists managed to rapidly collect and spread information about the uprisings, which were then made accessible to the majority of the population by mass media such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya. The mediascape was thus shaped by a conglomerate of distinct but interrelated media. Whether this constitutes an entirely new phenomenon in the long-run, is subject to further debate. If the revolutionaries often managed to find a common narrative to articulate their grievances, mobilization was facilitated by new technological possibilities and a continuous regional economic downturn, why did the Arab uprisings produce rather limited outcomes so far?

Most of the reasons were already mentioned above, yet it might be fruitful to reconsider those ideas in the face of the actual events so far. In general, the different political cultures of opposition often managed find a common ground upon which to build a coalition. Nonetheless, theses coalitions were based on a compromised focus on regime change, while individual focus of political cultures of opposition on the issue of social change differed significantly. Post-Islamization and post-ideologicalisation rendered coalition building across the secular-religious divide possible, but due to the unfinished nature of the process they sometimes only masked the historical animosity between Arab socialism and Islamism, which impaired the chances of mass mobilization and collective action in some states. Social fragmentation among the lower classes and the social fatigue of many leftist movements shifted the balance of power within the coalitions in favor of socially conservative powers in countries where mass mobilization succeeded, such as in Tunisia and Egypt. The social revolutionary and freedom and liberation stories initially formed a strong narrative calling for the end of injustices of authoritarian regimes, but the socio-economic themes were often successively marginalized in favor of a political focus. In Egypt, for instance, economic demands linked to political reforms articulated in the beginning of the uprisings, were eventually replaced by a call for immediate regime change (Beinin & Vairel 2011b, p. 245).

The limited world-systemic openings exacerbated this circumstance, as the U.S. and its regional allies Saudi-Arabia and Qatar selectively supported hospitable groups in various ways. When elaborating those circumstances in detail above, I have relied on a notion of hegemony consistent with orthodox world-systems theory, which conceives of the hegemon

as the dominant state within the interstate-system, which is allied with the leading social bloc of a period. While many critical theorists increasingly abandon the nation-state as a crucial category in the face of a changing world-economy (see for instance: Robinson 2005), the supposed substitution of state power with a transnational capitalist class, and the subsequent end of the North-South-divide, Arrighi has pointed out that peripheralization of manufacturing has obscured the fact that global income is still distributed along the North-South-divide (Arrighi 2005, p. 34). Nonetheless, along the lines of neo-gramscianism, hegemony can also be perceived as the combination of state power with the construction of consent via cultural and intellectual leadership (Cox 1987). Such a notion elucidates the crucial role of discourses and culture.

Western discourse predominantly used the democratizing civilizing narrative in order to shape the ideoscape, and to justify foreign intervention, the intensification of influence via economic incentives, and the selective support of hospitable groups. This story inherits some highly racialized. gendered, and sexualized aspects. It describes the Arab world as one of excessive gendered and sexualized violence. In this story, revolutionary Islamists, that is a homogeneous construct of the Orientalized "other", threatens the rights of women and sexual minorities, and thus supposedly reflects the discrepancy between Western and "Islamic" countries (Buck-Mross 2003, p. 14).

To be sure, the Arab uprisings have seen excessive gendered and sexualized violence. Female contentious actors have been charged with claims of "immorality", while experiencing beatings, rape, and virginity tests by authoritarian regimes, regimes that are supported by many Western states (Mikdashi 2012) The essentializing notion of "Arabs" and the selective fear of "Islamists", as if those were homogeneous categories, ignores the gendered and sexualized policies of non-Islamist parties and secular states, and concurrently pretends that Muslims are the only people to live in patriarchal societies (Mikdashi 2012). Such a narrative necessitates foreign intervention, be it in the form of military or financial assistance, and thereby reflects the colonial trope of "white men saving brown women from brown men" identified by Gayatri Spivak (1999, p. 284; Mikdashi 2011a). "Moralized, criminalized, racialized, colonized masculinities in the Middle East" are thus linked to "their fetishized Others or victims - the supposedly suppressed traditionalized veiled woman and the supposedly Occidentally-identified modernized gay man" (Amar 2011a, p. 40). Foreign interference, justified by the need to save women and sexual minorities from allegedly uncivilized and misogynist Arab men, is thus necessary.

Transnational humanitarian discourse, often closely related to the democratizing and

civilizing narrative, focuses on citizen rights instead of concepts of justice. It emerged in the core of the world-system, and is increasingly widespread on a global scale due to asymmetrical power relations in the global mode of knowledge production, that is the rewarding of "politically correct discourse" (Beinin & Vairel 2011a, p. 21; Mikdashi 2011b). Such a discourse may accurately criticize Arab states' repressive policies, but at the same time fail to equally depict the structural conditions, that is the neoliberal policies related to IMF and World Bank involvement, that render these states incapable of providing the rights they are allegedly responsible for, such as health care. When Arab contentious actors adopted the vocabulary of human rights discourse themselves in response to excessive political repression (Beinin & Vairel 2011a, p. 17), they thus also started to use "neoliberalism's forked tongue", i.e. the discursive frameworks of neoliberalism, in order to criticize the outcomes of this very neoliberalism (Mikdashi 2011b). Yet such a narrative fails to embrace the socio-economic injustices responsible for the status quo, and may therefore lead to neoliberal revolution against neoliberalism.

In summary, in addition to workers, the urban poor, and the lumpen intelligentsia as class-based actors, youth and women were the crucial status-groups to shape the course of events during the Arab uprisings. They have sought to reclaim youthfulness and oppose gendered and sexualized exclusion and violence respectively. The emergence of strong multi-class and multi-status-group revolutionary coalitions was often hindered by the still existing secular-religious gap, although weakened by the post-Islamization of Islamic groups, and a somewhat fragmented social structure. Still, activists and protests managed to construct contentious spaces by drawing on various cultural idioms, such as social justice and freedom from oppression, the distribution of which was facilitated by mass and social media. Socio-economic themes initially formed a popular narrative calling for social justice, but were often successively marginalized in favor of a political demands. Social transformations were mostly thwarted by social fragmentation, the adoption of human rights discourses, and Western interference informed by an essentially Orientalist discourse shaped by a racialized, gendered, and sexualized perception of the Arab world. Depending on the national context, the Arab uprisings have thus either led to revolutionary failure or started political revolutions, with outcomes that are yet to be determined.

In order for more favorable social outcomes in the future, Arab political cultures of opposition will need to bridge the still existing gaps and seek to reframe hegemonic discourses. Depending on the future political systems emerging in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, social revolutionaries might be able to precipitate social change within a possibly

open polity, if foreign interference does not lead to polyarchies. Monarchs will be more and more vulnerable to reform despite foreign support and traditional legitimacy. Even more so as the lack of social transformation might increase the suffering related to dependent development in the whole region. A decidedly post-ideological contentious space may then create the possibility to exploit the world-systemic openings, which might in turn be provided by rising social unrest related to global rebalancing. The prospects of social change are thus more than vague. The Arab uprisings might have started a process of social and political transformations, but may just as well end up as a short-lived period of upheaval challenging authoritarian rule, while not threatening the exploitative social system which has impoverished vast parts of Arab societies.

4. Case Studies

4.1 Pandora's box: the Tunisian revolution

With this chapter we enter the second part of this study. The above elaborated theories, dynamics, and developments shall now be illustrated by several case studies. Due to the limited space of this paper, the study will mostly focus on Tunisia and Egypt, and only provide a concise overview over other cases. It will then conclude with a comparative overview using Boolean analysis to distinguish some of the central factors shaping the revolutionary events and outcomes.

When France occupied Tunisia in 1881, it established a protectorate and exported its republican state structure, as it did in Syria, Lebanon, and Algeria, but at the same time reinforced traditional political institutions in order to increase legitimacy (Selvik & Stenslie 2011, p. 59). After independence in 1956, president Habib Bourguiba established a state capitalist system in accordance to the contemporarily popular proclamations of "Arab socialism", including a redistributive social contract and corporatist one-party rule (Selvik & Stenslie 2011, p. 59). The political system featured the top-down authoritarian bargain with the state-organized interest groups, that is the workers', farmers', students', and women's union. Bourguiba himself maintained tight political control via the populist *(Neo-)Destour* Party, but the president and the corrupt political system more and more lost legitimacy. In response, Bourguiba slowly began to liberalize the economy and the political system. After he was ousted in a bloodless coup d'état in 1987, justified on medical grounds, his successor Ben

Ali accelerated these trends. The new president institutionalized a new multi-party polyarchy, which coopted various opposition groups not too hostile to the ruling party, now termed *Rassemblement Constitutionel Démocratique* (RCD), but effectively excluded the most potent Tunisian social force, i.e. the Islamic movements (Selvik & Stenslie 2011, p. 60).

Despite the popular economic liberalization – political liberalization hypothesis, structural adjustment in fact undermined democratization aspirations. As in other Arab states, market liberalization coincided with the demise of the left and the rise of Islamic activists as the regimes most potent opponent (King 2003, p. 41). Neoliberal reforms reinforced traditional social arrangements, and thereby led to the resurgence of clientelism and a moral economy at the local level. Increasing inequality was met with Islamic values favoring redistributive social relations based on moral obligations (King 2003, p. 3). Hence, the Islamic Renaissance Party and the moderate Ennahda ("Renaissance") gained popularity and posed a growing challenge to authoritarian rule. In the early years of his rule, Ben Ali was perceived as a modernizer who would incrementally democratize the authoritarian political system, but by the 2000s it had become evident that democratization was but a rhetoric to legitimize rule. The presidents early credential were more and more overshadowed by repression, despotism, corruption, and the exclusion of some of the most popular political forces. After enforcing a constitutional amendment to eliminate the three-term limit for Tunisian presidents, Ben Ali was elected for the fourth time in 2004, and for the fifth time in 2009, respectively receiving 90 percent of the votes against a group of handpicked secular oppositional leaders (Schwedler & Chomiak 2006). Increasingly failing to uphold the pretense of democratic procedures and inclusion as a foundation to channel contention into electoral channels, Ben Ali's rule fulfilled the precondition of an exclusionary, personalist, and repressive authoritarian state.

Besides reinforcing traditional social relations and thereby empowering Islamic movements, structural adjustment was also precipitated the momentous exclusion of various social groups and geographical areas. Sustained economic growth was contrasted by a restructuring of social means towards the upper classes. Inequality in Tunisia is among the highest in the Arab world, and unemployment rates are soaring, eventually climbing to 14% in 2010 (Anderson, K. 2011, p. 4). Again, youth and female rates are far higher. The unemployment rate for male Tunisians with higher education aged between 15 and 24 was over 50 percent in 2010, while women in the same group suffer from an astonishing rate of 64,5 percent (Haouas & Sayre & Yagoubi 2012). Geographical inequalities complement social injustice. The Tunisian southern and inland territories experienced increasing pauperization, the Gafsa mining basin for instance having long been riddled with social

struggles, while the Sahel on the eastern shore is economically thriving (Globe 2011, p. 20).

There is a tremendous sense of being "left behind" by a government that favors the well-off northern and coastal regions of the country, and it thus is no surprise that the Tunisian revolution started exactly in one of the impoverished areas, namely Sidi Bouzid. In 2008, the phosphate towns Redeyef and Gasa in the south-east had already experienced clashes of workers, students, and trade unionists with authorities over unemployment and corruption. The demands of the dispossessed were met with harsh state coercion, but police violence and arrests entailed strong popular discontent. After several months of protest, the death of four protesters and numerous arrests, increasingly brutal state violence succeeded in ending the protests. As a concession, the regime promised minor economic incentives such as the creation of new jobs in the region (Globe 2011, pp. 16-17). The events in Redeyef are of tremendous importance for the revolution in 2011, as they put forward the vehicles of contention such as strikes and sit-ins organized via local networks of workers, unionists, activists and graduates.

After a decade of sustained economic growth, Tunisia experienced a strong economic downturn after the GEFC in 2008. Growth rates stagnated and were accompanied by spiraling living costs, especially food prices, and rising unemployment. The economy did not manage to recover vis-à-vis the continuing sluggish performance of European economies, which are targeted by 80 percent of Tunisian exports (Achy 2009). Against the background of growing social discontent, the self-immolation of twenty-six-year-old street-vendor Mohamed Bouazizi constituted the spark to cause national contentious actions. Bouazizi operated an unlicensed fruit-stand in Sidi Bouzid, a small poor town in the south of Tunisia. On December 17, 2010, a policewoman publically slapped him and confiscated his cart and produce. After a failed attempt to recover his belongings, Bouazizi set himself alight in front of the police station. While the actual course of events remains unconfirmed (Totten 2012), the narrative reproduced above immediately spread like a wildfire, as it vividly reflected the daily injustice of a corrupt socio-political system along the lines of the social revolutionary and freedom and liberation stories.

When relatives and friends gathered in front of the police station to protest the evident injustice, this episode could have passed as another anonymous victim of Tunisian socio-political injustice. Yet, protesters filmed the events with cameraphones, and immediately uploaded the video on youtube and social networks, where they were distributed globally, and eventually picked up by al-Jazeera, thereby being accessible for all Tunisian via television (Beinin & Vairel 2011b, p. 238). Without neglecting the crucial role of political time and

space in the making of revolutions, as elaborated above, these dynamics of the mediascape facilitated the distribution of important information, and thereby mobilization, as the ancient regime had not yet learned to control the new contentious media spaces of the internet.

Consequentially, demonstrations quickly spread from Sidi Bouzid to nearby towns such as Kasserine, Thalla, al-Regab and Menzel Bouzaine (Beinin & Vairel 2011b, p. 238). Mirroring the events that unfolded in Redeyef and Gafsa in 2008, local and regional networks marginalized groups of workers and graduates, significantly supported by unions, rapidly managed to mobilize significant parts of the population. The protest turned into national contentious action when they eventually spread to bigger towns such as Kairouan and Sfax on January 27.

As in other Arab uprisings, the events were shaped by the strong presence of youth and women, and popular idioms such as social justice and political freedom, in contrast to an older generation of socialist and Islamist activists. To be sure, socialism and Islamism were significant in shaping discourses, and often in providing organized networks, but protests were again initiated by local networks of workers, unionists, activists and graduates. The role of General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) was crucial, but ambiguous, and any analysis needs to take the heterogeneous nature of this organization into account. While the high ranks of UGTT are widely believed to be an arm of the regime, there are also significant regional differences, which were frequently expressed during interviews conducted in Gafsa and Redeyef (footnote?). Local leaderships outside of the capital joined the protests and provided networks and savoir faire in contentious actions.

The regime responded with the well-known carrot-and-stick combination of harsh repression and economic concessions (Beinin & Vairel 2011b, pp. 239-240). As it adopted increasingly brutal measures, with police using live ammunition and killing hundreds of protesters (Ahram source), repression only strengthened the solidarity of the contentious space constructed upon the decided will for regime change. In contrast to Egypt, Tunisia possesses a relatively weak military, which supported the revolution by refusing to back the regime (Anderson, L. 2011, p. 3). On January 13, Ben Ali eventually promised additional economic concessions, as well as democratic reforms, but the protesters were determined to replace him.

Tunisia experienced a world-systemic opening in that the whole Western world was completely surprised by the speed and magnitude of the political events. Tunisia had close relations with the U.S. and Europe, predominantly France, before the revolution, and Ben Ali was long considered a close ally. However, Wikileaks had earlier revealed that Western

diplomats were increasingly weary of the despotic tendencies of Tunisia's elite, thereby pub-publicly reflecting cracks in the alliance (Anderson, K. 2011, p. 4). Islamic discourses being dominated by the moderate Ennahda party, and Tunisia not possessing any significant oil resources, the Obama administration refused to support Ben Ali and in fact endorsed the protests, and France refused to allow Ben Ali into French exile. When protesters finally invaded Tunis's main street *Avenue Bourguiba*, Ben Ali fled to Saudi-Arabia.

After his departure, former RCD members still maintained in central posts of power. Protesters continued to demand a clean cut, and successively succeeded in precipitating the substitution of old ministers with new civil servants. The 2011 Constituent Assembly elections brought about a strong political position of the popular Ennahda movement, as the socially progressive forces split their votes among a plurality of parties. Ennahda clearly reflects the post-Islamist tendency of Islamic movements, as it rejects violence and embraces pluralist and democratic principles. On the other hand, Ennahda enjoys the support of the U.S. and Qatar as it embraces neoliberal economic principles. The discrepancy between the social power and popularity of revolutionary movements in the Arab uprisings, and their lack of actual political power obtained after regime change is referred to as Refo-lution by Bayat (2011b), thereby reflecting the tendency of trying to effect socio-political change via the old institutions without actually capturing state power. These tendencies may be a product of the lack of institutionalization of social movements due to the highly repressive political space they had formerly operated in. The final revolutionary outcome is yet to be determined, but Tunisia is on a solid path to finish the political revolution that started with the ousting of Ben Ali. The military is not influential enough to shape the further events, a fact that should facilitate the democratic transition. As for social change, the social system remains untouched so far, but Tunisia possesses the strongest labor movement in the Arab world, which will continuously influence further events. Social change will be determined by the outcome of a struggle between youth, women, workers and students on the one side, and socially conservative powers such as Ennahda and their foreign support, the still active forces of the ancien regime and the neoliberal forces surrounding them on the other side.

4.2 A revolution in 18 days: Egypt and its intricate transition

Egypt has long been on a path of dependent development. It had tried to emerge from the periphery of the world-system in the 19th century, but was prevented from doing so by the imperial aggression of the contemporary hegemon Great Britain (Amin 2011, p. 2). British military occupation after the Egyptian defeat of 1882 entailed a reshaping of the local socio-economic structure in accordance to peripheral capital accumulation. Resistance to foreign dependency took the form of an emerging liberal-nationalist bourgeoisie organizing around the Wafd Party, as well as workers' and students' struggles (Amin 2011, p. 3). The successive rise of the Wafd Party was ended by two military coups in 1952 and 1954, after which Gamal Abdel Nasser took over. The new leaders refashioned the institutions in accordance to the state capitalist model mentioned above, and adopted a socialist discourse in order to justify the construction of a repressive, undemocratic regime. Nasser and his military allies embarked on an ambitious development path of import-substitution industrialization, the nationalization finance, industry and infrastructure, an extensive agrarian reform, and domestic redistribution in favor of the lower classes. Social reforms brought about free health care and education, and substantially increased literacy, life expectancy, and real incomes (Kadri 2011). Social rebalancing was accompanied by a foreign policy of nationalist aggrandizement vis-à-vis pan-Arab nationalism, which eventually failed after the defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

After Nasser's death, Anwar al-Sadat's "Infitah" ("openness") policies effectively ended prior development strategies, and replaced them with market liberalism. In 1976, an IMF mission to Egypt recommended a drastic reduction of social services, which was implemented in the following year despite social discontent (Beinin 2010, p. 12). Sadat also signed the Egypt-Israel peace treaty in 1979, which further cemented the accelerated integration into the world-system, and was frequently perceived as undermining pan-Arab nationalism. He and his successor Hosni Mubarak successively transformed Egypt from state capitalist into a liberal free-market economy. The pace of structural adjustment was continuously slowed down by workers' resistance, which ultimately failed to stop it. The fall in oil prices of the mid-1980s adversely affected the whole Arab region, and Egypt's economy suffered from reduced labor migration and remittances (Beinin 2010, p. 13). This economic downturn exposed Egypt to increasing foreign pressure to fasten the pace of neoliberal reforms. The 1991 Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSARP) agreements with the IMF and World Bank, approved by the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) despite prior resistance to structural adjustment, entailed massive privatizations of

enterprises and subsequent mass layoffs (Beinin 2011, p. 186). In 2004, the new government headed by Ahmed Nazif comprised several Western-educated businessmen surrounding Gamal Mubarak, and further enforced the implementation of neoliberal reforms (Beinin 2010, p. 14).

The rise of global neoliberalism in general precipitated extensive international and national disparities, and Egypt went along these lines as well (Hussein 2012). Accelerated structural adjustment led to high rates of economic growth, but failed to benefit the poor. Initial reforms raised unemployment, which then slowly declined until 2008, but severely rose again after the GEFC. In a country where 40% live beneath the poverty line, inequality substantially stifles national demand, and thereby economic performance. In a recent report the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development warns that widening gaps will adversely affect economic growth, and UNCTAD spokeman Mahmoud El-Khafif accurately concluded that unrestricted market liberalization and privatization combined with a decreasing role of the state have tremendously increased inequality (Hussein 2012). The loss of state support for basic needs and the impoverishment of vast parts of the Egyptian society were exacerbated by a severe economic downturn during the GEFC slowing down economic growth. In addition, food prices had continuously soared after 2005, and eventually spiked in 2008, and again in 2010/11, thereby leading to severe food crises resulting in "immediate casualties" (Kadri 2011). Egypt is the world's biggest wheat importer and thus tremendously affected by global events (Johnstone & Mazo, 2011, p. 13).

The political system practiced by the Mubarak regime had long managed to dissipate revolutionary discontent, and may well be termed "polyarchy" for most of its time. Mubarak managed to coopt the National Progressive Unionist Party ("Tagammu") and other leftist organizations, and responded to the rise of Islamism by embracing their discourses letting the Muslim Brotherhoods participate in the recent economic boom (Amar 2011c). The combination of varying degrees of cooptation and selective repression, that is the deterrence of violent opposition via state-based repression without leaving any contentious space, succeeded in oppressing all organizations articulating alternative social orders (Vairel 2011, p. 36). Islamist and socialists were made aware that any violent actions questioning the political and social system would entail harsh repression, and therefore adopted more moderate contentious strategies. In contrast to popular belief that state repression will necessarily lead to violent responses, such a selective and partially inclusive strategy of repression effectively demobilized opposition groups in the long-run (Vairel 2011, p. 35).

The clever cooptation of parts of the opposition, minor liberalizations and the

"relatively" open presidential and parliamentary elections of 2005 led many observers to fore-forecast the advent of Egyptian democracy (Vairel 2011, p. 29), but rendered illegible the fundamentally oppressive nature of the Mubarak regime. After the Muslim Brotherhood won nearly twenty percent of parliamentary seats in 2005, the regime increased repression targeted at the Brothers, and arrested hundreds of their members. Mubarak tried to respond to the Brothers' popularity by adopting an Islamist morality rhetoric targeting other religions, sectarian groups, women, homosexuals, and others in order to boost the regime's legitimacy, but ended up alienating many Egyptians (Amar 2011c). The democratic expectations raised earlier were dashed by increasing oppression and the "utterly fraudulent" presidential elections of 2010, which thwarted any attempt to uphold any pretense of democracy (Beinin & Vairel 2011b, p. 246). As argued above, exclusion and inclusion are not a binary concept. Along these lines, polyarchy is not a static political system, but a political reality navigating between democratic inclusion and authoritarian exclusion. Hence when Mubarak more and more failed to include parts of the opposition and thereby dissipate revolutionary sentiments, oppositional actors questioning the political and socio-economic order gained popularity, while the authoritarian political system ceased to incorporate polyarchic features.

At the same time, decades of trickle-up economics and the contraction of the Egyptian state had entailed tremendous class- and status-group-restructuring. First of all, as mentioned above, structural adjustment reforms always coincided with class struggle (Beinin 2011, p. 193). As the pace of neoliberal reforms fastened, Egypt experienced the resurgence of a strongly class-based workers' movement resisting the loss of prior benefits and rights. Due to the sale of public assets and the high price of oil, the regime managed to use its resources to soothe discontent with economic concessions in order to avoid clashes with contentious labor groups. As striking proved successful, and did not seem to be accompanied by state repression, workers' more and more began to adopt contentious strategies such as strikes, sit-ins and gatherings so as to achieve economic gains. The textile industry constituted the pivot of the movement, but other sectors increasingly joined in (Beinin 2011, p. 187).

Capitalist transformations have incorporated women from the lower and middle classes into the economy as sources of cheap labor, and therefore unintentionally entailed the rise of a highly active women's movement (Khalili 2011, pp. 6-7). Women mainly work in low-paid jobs and are often subjected to humiliation and violence (Beinin 2011, pp. 196-198). Hence, labor movements benefited from the mass participation, in fact often the leadership, of women. The youth's recent experiences with social injustice and state repression went along similar lines. Overrepresented in low-paid work and unemployment rates, many face a

complete lack of perspectives. Hence, young and female workers constitute the foundation of the workers' movement.

The resurgence of labor has to be perceived against the background of the collapse of the Egyptian Left in the 1980s. Communist parties were increasingly irrelevant, Islamic movements rose as the principal challengers of the Mubarak regime, and Tagammu failed to articulate and alternative social order (Duboc 2011, p. 70). The authoritarian state continued to repress any competing hierarchical network, and leftist organizational frameworks thus successively decayed. In their struggle for socio-economic benefits, workers therefore adopted pragmatic contentious strategies not aiming to overthrow the political system, but to improve their real living conditions. At the same time, demobilized leftist intellectual elites, who were formerly crucial in organizing leftist and class-based discontent, "decentered" their notion of activism and consequently articulated their protest in literary and journalist fields, but were happy to participate in contentious activities organized by other groups (Duboc 2011). Workers' and leftist activities reflect the importance of idioms such as social justice in contrast to ideologies such as, in this case, socialism. Labor organized its contentious efforts without the help of Islamists or communists, and was not even joined by Tagammu or the Nasserist Karama Party, but merely received the help of some local NGOs (Beinin 2011, 184).

Workers' activities, as well as their intellectual support, nonetheless often face structural limits to their contentious activities. Local and informal networks may facilitate mobilization, but at the same time locality thwarts national organization, and informality enables participants to keep their engagement low (Beinin 2011 p. 182; Duboc 2011, p. 65). Strongly focusing on socio-economic gains instead of openly articulating political opposition, workers were not capable of directing the events during the Egyptian revolution. Since ETUF was seen as the arm of the regime, labor organized their protests without the conventional union framework. The new movements lacked financial and organizational capacities, a national network and leadership, and a coherent political and economic program (Beinin 2012, p. 6).

Instead, the middle class thus took over as the most powerful contentious actor. The Egyptian Movement for Change "Kifaya" (Enough) inherited the popular momentum of solidarity with the Palestinians and resistance to the Bush administration's expansive Middle Eastern policies, and had actively called for democratic reforms since 2004. It was hardly related to the workers' movement, which preceded urban middle class demonstrations by nearly a decade (Beinin 2011, p. 186). The urban intelligentsia rallied around demands for

freedom of oppression and political reforms, whereas workers mostly focused on socio-economic issues, thereby respectively reflecting the freedom and liberation and the social-revolutionary stories.

Micro-credits had targeted women and youth in order to enhance their economic leverage. Lacking the "collateral to guarantee these loans", repayment was often enforced by police sexualized violence (Amar 2011c). Such a tough socio-economic environment shaped the highly contentious youth and female entrepreneurs, who had already experienced a daily-struggle to resist state and police repression. Hence, as in the workers' movements, women and youth took the lead in contentious action, and echoed calls for democracy as the most frequent victims of police oppression. The freedom and liberation story, and the popular idiom of youth struggle, was precisely incorporated by the death of 28-year-young Khaled Said, who was dragged out of an internet café he partially owned and brutally beaten to death, after he had refused to bribe the police (Amar 2011c). Leftist youth concerns manifested in the popular April 6 movement, which had formed in support of a planned labor strike in El-Mahalla El-Kubra on said date in 2008.

The role of Islam in the Egyptian revolution, in fact in the Arab uprisings in general, has been controversially debated topic (for an accurate evaluation of the role of religion, see: Bayat 2011a). Secularism, in the form of liberalism, socialism, and nationalism, has struggled with Islamism for state power and discourse hegemony since independence, although the roots of this struggle go back even further (Juergensmeyer 2008, pp. 27 f.). Nasser had tried to accommodate both the Muslim Brotherhood and the modern elite, but ended up alienating and eventually suppressing the Brothers. Sadat repeated this pattern, and was assassinated by members of the al-Jihad group in 1981, despite the fact that he had tried to embrace Islamic discourses and idioms. Mubarak adopted a more pragmatic approach than his predecessors, and opportunistically adopted elements from anti-imperialist, socialist, Islamic, and neoliberal discourses, his cooptation of Islamist popularity already being mentioned above (Selvik & Stenslie 2011, p. 144).

Islamic groups remained precluded from the political arena, and therefore occupied other social spaces, such as finance, media, and education. As the government was forced to withdraw vis-à-vis neoliberal reforms, Islamic groups gradually gained hegemony over the Egyptian civil society. The activities of the pious Islamic movement Jama'a al-Islamiyya illustrate this phenomenon. It gained popularity by providing various social services, such as free food and health care, and was very active in marginalized urban areas and universities (Meijer 2011, p. 155). The group had successively transformed from an apolitical pious

student movement into a radical Islamic group since the early 1970s. Growing politicization and state repression entailed "cycles of contention", but after a series of violent attacks in the 1990s the movement successively rejected violence as a contentious strategy (Meijer 2011, pp. 161-162).

So did the Muslim Brotherhood, the best organized Egyptian opposition force, and was therefore rewarded by being increasingly allowed to participate in the political realm via independent candidates, and to benefit from recent economic growth (Amar 2011c). After years of post-Islamization, the group now embraces democratic and pluralist principles, but due to its multi-class and multi-status-group nature still experiences internal struggles between its conservative traditionalist, youth, and women's wings. In decided contrast to the regime's and senior conservative Brothers' politicization of Islam, young and female Islamic activists have sought to "reclaim Islam as a project of personal self-governance, ethical piety, and social solidarity", without the need to define themselves in contrast to Islam (Amar 2011c).

Against this background, Egypt, as Tunisia, was an excellent example illustrating the post-Islamization of social protest. When about 15000 protesters, spearheaded by women of all ages, and youth of both genders, demonstrated in a "day of wrath" on Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011, seculars and religious protesters found common themes in the calls for social justice, political freedom, and dignity. Beinin and Vairel (2011b, p. 242) summarize their demands as:

1. "rasing the monthly basic minimum wage to 1200 Egyptian pounds (about 215$)
2. assistance for the unemployed
3. an end to the state of emergency in force continually since 1981
4. dismissal of the hated (now former) Minister of Interior Habib al-'Adli, who commanded the police and internal security forces
5. release of all those detained without charges
6. disbanding the parliament fraudulently elected in November-December 2010 and holding a new, free and fair elections
7. establishing a constitutional limit of two presidential terms"

Protests erupted throughout Egypt, with similar demonstrations occurring in Alexandria, Suez, and El-Mahalla El-Kubra. Despite popular figures such as Asmaa Mahfouz and Wael Ghonim, the protests were essentially non-hierarchical and non-ideological (Beinin & Vairel 2011b). Demonstrators rallied around idioms such as freedom from oppression and social justice, and were strongly influenced by the traditional parties or social movements. The protests were initiated by April 6, Kifaya, and various online groups, and endorsed by the Ghad and Karama parties. The Tagammu leadership refused to join, and Wafd did not

articulate a decisive position. The Muslim Brotherhood abstained at first, and later supported the demonstrations, only to regularly leave to negotiate with Mubarak, and later the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), while youth and women's wings were more and more drawn towards a coalition with April 6 (Amar 2011c).

Brotherhood internal struggles reflect the class- and status-groups-conflicts precipitating the revolution, and staying predominant even after Mubarak left the country. The revolution was a direct reaction to the crony capitalists surrounding Gamal Mubarak, who were confronted by a coalition of youth and women, leftists and democracy activists. As the Mubarak regime adopted increasingly brutal and often sexualized violence to crack down the protests via paid thugs and plain-cloth policemen, the military proved as the crucial actor to decide over revolutionary success (Amar 2011c). As the military was deprived from fighting activities since the Camp David accords, it used its land ownership and U.S. aid to construct "shopping malls, gated cities and beach resorts" (Amar 2011c). It thus appreciates stability and order so as to secure its economic interests. Because of nationalist sentiments, however, it was at the same time appalled by the extensive selling of national property to foreign investors by and sympathized with the protection of the Egyptian people from regime brutality.

Military nationalist middle-class concerns went in accordance with the interests of emerging national capitalists, such as the Brotherhoods business wing, who also felt alienated by the increasingly narrow Mubarak regime. Against the background of an economic downturn exacerbated by the flight of one million tourists and the threat of extensive labor strikes (Wright 2011, p. 36), both groups supported the social movements and thus ensured the resignation of Gamal and finally Hosni Mubarak (Amar 2011c). They were enabled to do so by a partial world-systemic opening, that is the ousting of Mubarak by the Obama administration. Mubarak had long been a crucial regional U.S. ally, before Obama publically urged him for a swift transition. Saudi-Arabia maintained support for Mubarak, but Qatar joined the U.S. by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood (Massad 2012a). This opening was only partial, however, as the U.S. and their allies swiftly shifted support to national capitalists, that is the military and recently the business wing of the Muslim Brotherhood (Massad 2012a). If successful, this coalition will most likely aim to maintain the social structure by imposing a polyarchic political system on Egypt.

With the ousting of the ruling crony capitalists, the opposition coalition thus successively disintegrated and left a new confrontation between the nationalist business-military bloc and the progressive social forces. Different class-interests had already been

reflected by the fact that the social-revolutionary story was successively marginalized by the freedom and liberation story, illustrated by the shift from mostly economic demands complemented by political reforms to calls for immediate regime change. The SCAF took over political power and promised to supervise upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections as well as the formulation of a new constitution. These developments reflect the shortcomings of the fragmented revolutionary coalition and again mirror the discrepancy between the revolutionary's social and political power (Bayat 2011b). As soon as Mubarak was ousted, structures of domination were inherited by national capital and the social struggle continued. Since then, social actors have continued to demand a democratic transition from SCAF to a civilian government and continuously been confronted with violence.

In a second revolutionary situation during the open 2012 presidential elections, the fragmented socially progressive forces, that is unexperienced socialists, liberals, and nationalists, failed to unite their power and decide for a single candidate (Bishara 2012). The leaderless revolution, as in Tunisia, thus unfortunately stayed leaderless in the elections. With the left splitting its forces, Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Mursi, supported by Qatar, and the reactionary former prime minister Ahmed Shafik, supported by Saudi-Arabia along with the Salafists (Massad 2012a), managed to win the first round of the elections, closely in front of the socialist Hamdeen Sabahi and the liberal Islamist Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh. Parts of the progressive groups abstained from the second round, while others supported Mursi, who many felt at least supported democratic principles, and thereby secured Mursi's narrow success. The Muslim Brotherhood had already won the 2011 parliamentary election in a landslide. During the second round of the presidential election, however, the military granted itself sweeping political powers and dissolved the parliament in what can only be described as a coup. Since then, Mursi and the military have continuously struggled for political power, while the social forces on the left are regrouping. With the neoliberal businessmen currently constituting the hegemonic wing in the Muslim Brotherhood, social reforms are not to be expected. If the near future sees the establishing of new political system, the developments may be termed a political revolution. In addition, progressive actors would then receive another change to unite and thereby precipitate social change within the open polity, as youth and women's groups remain popular. However, they face strong reactionary groups supported by Qatar, Saudi-Arabia, and the U.S., the latter maintaining close relations to SCAF, the Muslim Brotherhood, and liberal secular groups alike (Massad 2012a). IMF, World Bank, and the Obama administration are already using economic incentives to ensure the continuation of the exploitative social status quo (Khalili 2011; Arnold 2012). The final revolutionary

outcome is thus yet to be determined.

4.3 Some reflections on the rest of the Arab world

Aiming to provide an all-encompassing overview over all the individual cases of recent Arab uprising would go well beyond the constraints of this paper. In the following lines, I will thus merely outline suggestions for the main reasons to entail the respective expected outcomes in Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Morocco, and Jordan, and very briefly summarize some of the other cases. It goes without saying that every individual case needs much further research in order to both analyze the revolutionary events accurately and determine the prospects of future social change.

Libya is a strong case of dependent development, with its growing economy being completely dependent on the export of its oil reserves. The large returns of oil rents were used to achieve a high level of human development, and a substantial welfare system allowing the access to free education and healthcare, and providing financial assistance for housing, among other social achievements. However, a high unemployment rate, severe repression, and the extensive despotism alienated parts of the population. The economic liberalization of 2003 fastened economic growth, but the GEFC tremendously hit the little diversified economy by decreasing the price of oil. Gaddafi, a personalist ruler of there ever was one, established a political system he himself described by the term "Jamahiriya", i.e. a formal direct democracy controlled by Gaddafi's patronage, without him holding any official posts. This personalist, non-exclusionary regime linked to dependent development with social achievements resembles the case of Cuba, but lacks the latter's popular political culture continuously legitimizing rule. Tribalism and a tremendous degree of social fragmentation have thwarted the emergence of a strongly united coalition of political cultures of opposition (Anderson, L. 2011, p. 6), but Gaddafi's evident despotism and the brutality of political repression have nonetheless provided a common theme for the contentious space. The coalition was aided by a NATO intervention, which secured the start of a political revolution, but further impeded on the chances for social change, with European oil companies quickly regaining access to Libyan oil fields (Anderson, K. 2011, p. 18; Massad 2012a). The importance of post-Islamism, as well as the lack of social change, was mirrored by the recent electoral success of the liberal, post-Islamist National Alliance Forces, and the second place of the Islamic Justice

and Development Party, the Muslim Brotherhood's Libyan arm.

Yemen constitutes one of the most complicated cases of the Arab uprisings. It had long been in a state of sheer underdevelopment and dependency, until recent years brought about dependent development in the form of accelerating economic growth. Except for the richest quintile, however, the population has yet to gain from this economic expansion, as the lower four quintiles were poorer in 1998 than in 2005 in the face of a tremendous increase of the Gini coefficient (Ali 2008, p. 27). In addition, unemployment rates are extremely high, especially among women and the youth (UNDP 2009, p. 109, 246). Economic grievances have grown sharply since 2008, vis-à-vis the GEFC and rising food prices (Breisinger & Collion & Diao & Rondot 2010) The General People's Congress headed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh completely dominated the political realm, but regular elections maintained the outward impression of democratic procedures. Political cultures of opposition are completely fragmented due to regional, sectarian, and secular religious-divides, but united under the common banner of regime change. The al-Islah party, influenced by tribalism and Islamism, which was incorporated into the Joint Meeting Parties comprising five opposition parties, the Zaida Shia Houthis, and the formerly secessionist Southern Movement formed a coalition, which managed to precipitate a power-transfer deal after a tumultuous course of events. In February 2012, former vice-president Abdu-Rabbo Mansour al-Hadi was elected interim president to oversee the drafting of a new constitution until new parliamentary and presidential elections in 2014. The near future will decide if the uprising has started a political revolution, or will merely stay a revolutionary attempt. A change in the social structure, however, is highly unlikely considering the strong influence of the U.S. and Saudi-Arabia, who ousted Saleh in order to maintain control. The U.S. increasingly conducts "anti-terrorist" attacks via drones in Yemen, and is thus reluctant to reduce its involvement (Baker 2012).

Syria has seen a precarious period of structural adjustment and dependent development, in recent years, during which the richest quintile profited tremendously, while the rest of the population was poorer in 2004 than in 1997 (Ali 2008, p. 27). Despite high rates of economic growth, unemployment continues to be an enormous problem, with youth and female unemployment rates being substantially higher (UNDP 2009, p. 109, 246). When economic growth slowed down in the last years, and food prices continued to soar, this economic downturn exacerbated the injustices of the socio-economic status quo. Syria is ruled by its extremely exclusionary Alawi elite, who remains most posts in the government and the security services. Hafez al-Assad established an authoritarian republic controlled by the Baath party in 1971, and was succeeded by his son Bashar al-Assad in 2000. In 2012, a new

constitution revoked a clause stating that the Baath party was the ruler of state and society, but added a new clause banning various parties, such as tribal and religious ones, among others. The Sunni majority represents 74% of the population, and is well aware of its marginalization. Regime defiance was somewhat delayed in comparison to the swift events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, but in march 2011 Syrians finally took their frustration about brutal repression and deteriorating standard of living to the streets. In the months to follow, regime brutality continued to unite a rather fractured opposition consisting of liberals, Islamists, and Kurds (Black 2012). The world-systemic environment remains double-edged: While Russia and Iran continued to support the Syrian regime, and China and Russia vetoed UN Security Council resolutions, the Syrian opposition receives military aid from Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi-Arabia, and nonlethal and intelligence support by various Western states (Abouzeid 2012; Schmitt 2012). The revolutionary outcome is once again yet to be determined. The Syrian case may stay a revolutionary attempt that turned into a civil war, or might just as well lead to a political revolution, but the social structure is unlikely to be strongly affected due to fragmented political cultures of opposition and foreign interference.

Bahrain is an evident case of dependent development, with an economy relying on its nearly dried-up oil reserves and the banking and tourism sectors. The government has achieved a successive reduction of poverty in recent years, but the youth unemployment rate with over 25 percent remained extremely high, even before the GEFC (Clements 2009). Economic performance continuously worsened in face of the GEFC and the European monetary crisis. The hereditary leadership of the al-Khalifa family, in which the king retains most of polical power despite the existence of a national assembly, provides a solid target for revolutionary movements. Still, the constitutional monarchy remains a certain degree of legitimacy related to culture, which hindered mobilization. The protesters demanded democratic reform and equal treatment of the Shia minority, which is ruled by a Sunni family, but the deep sectarian divide continuously impedes the emergence of a broad coalition. In addition, a lack of world-systemic opening, that is mainly the sustained support of the U.S. and Saudi-Arabia, allowed the government to brutally crack down the protests, eventually with the aid of troops from the Gulf Cooperation Council led by Saudi-Arabia. The outcomes have thus been limited, notwithstanding economic concession and the release of political prisoners. Ongoing protests have sustained the economic downturn, with Western capital leaving the country due to political instability (Stephens 2011). Despite U.S. reflections to relocate its Fifth fleet, however, a world-systemic opening is not likely anytime soon. A U.S. departure would merely be substituted by increased Saudi influence maintaining the regional

Sunni-coalition (Massad 2012a).

The focus on civil uprisings and regime changes so far is not meant to convey that an analysis of small uprisings or the lack of revolutionary attempts is not equally fruitful. Algeria, for instance, reflects the importance of political cultures of opposition, and their capability to form coalitions and collaborate. After a long episode of economic stagnation, a set of structural adjustment reforms, succeeding an earlier attempt of further integrating the country into the capitalist world-economy, marked the beginning of a decade of rapid dependent development since the late 1990s. Sustained economic growth, although recently slowed by the GEFC, was contrasted by extremely high levels of unemployment, once again especially for women and the youth (Furceri 2012), and increasing food prices. However, Algeria remained relatively peaceful for several reasons. Economic aid packages soothed some of the worst grievances, the strong security forces enjoy a good salary and thus remained loyal to the regime, and the deep involvement of the military in the political sphere and the economy proved problematic as well, as the military elite did not feel alienated by the regime and saw no incentive to side with the protesters (Achy 2011). In addition, extreme social fragmentation thwarted mass mobilization as "associations of petroleum workers, public health employees, telecommunications professionals, fire fighters, religious preachers, municipal civil servants, and the unemployed" expressed their contention separately (Achy 2011). The political cultures of opposition are fractured as well and the organizational capacity of the protesters therefore weak. In addition, the memory of the cataclysmic decade-long Algerian civil war further impeded mobilization. As mentioned above, social grievances and structural adjustment may be perceived as a threat and thereby entail contentious action, but in the Algerian case another period of sustained violence was often seen as a threat of an even grander magnitude. Finally, close relations to the United States, and especially to France (Ryan 2012), reduce the probability of a world-systemic opening in the near future.

A tremendous level of social grievances related to dependent development, a recent economic downturn slowing down GDP growth and increasing food prices, and the oppressive monarchy provide a very fertile ground for contentious action in Morocco. Yet, the fragmented political cultures of opposition, the monarchy's clever cooptation of the Islamists in order to maintain legitimacy, and the close relations to the U.S. and France thwart the chances of any revolutionary attempts, let alone success (Pelham 2012). Jordan is a rather similar case. Socio-economic grievances related to the recent period of dependent development, continuously rising food prices, and the recent economic downturn vis-à-vis the GEFC will continue to precipitate contentious action (Ferguson 2012; World Bank 2009, p.

10). But the king retains a certain degree of traditional legitimacy, even more so as most Jor-Jordanians are concerned that their country might be turned into a substitute Palestine if it disintegrates, a fear shared by both indigenous East Bankers and the Palestinians (Farrell 2012). It is for this reason that the opposition, mainly consisting of the Muslim Brotherhoods Jordanian arm, leftists, and nationalists merely call for reforms, not a revolution. In addition, the opposition is fractured into seculars and Islamists, Jordanians and Palestinians, and coalition building is thus complicated. Finally, Jordan is a very close ally of Saudi-Arabia and the U.S., who will be reluctant to reduce their influence on the country. Against this background, Morocco and Jordan mirror the importance of culture, as social ills and the existence of exclusionary, repressive, and personalist monarchies do not entail strong political cultures of opposition articulating alternative social orders. The kings retain a high degree of legitimacy vis-à-vis the nature of the respective "imagined communities", a process that also profits from clever cooptation in Morocco, and a fragmented domestic ethnoscape in Jordan. Hence, political cultures of opposition often do not question the existing status quo, but merely wish to transform it.

In Iraq and Lebanon, contentious action was hindered by sectarian and ethnic divides and the polyarchic political systems. Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait and Oman managed to drastically limit contentious action, which was mostly not threating rule because of traditional legitimacy in any case, with economic concessions and government changes. Qatar and the U.A.E., two of the richest countries in the world, did not face major unrest due to the high legitimacy of their rulers, foreign support, and their capability to buy off discontent. All five monarchies managed to dodge the worst impact of the GEFC with expansionary fiscal policies, possible because of the oil-wealth, and thus soothed the economic downturn (Rivlin 2009). Sudan is a special case, as dependent development, Omar al-Bashir's ruthless rule, foreign isolation, and the recent economic downturn, heavily reinforced by the South's secession make it a good candidate for future revolutionary change. The outcome will be determined by the opposition's capability to form a coalition and mobilize the masses, which has hitherto been thwarted by fractures between political cultures of opposition, and the recent political turmoil related to the South's secession. Mauritania, Western Sahara, and the Palestinian territories and other regions will be excluded from this summary, not because they lack interesting phenomena to observe, but as a consequences of the limited space of this paper and study.

4.4 Quantifying and evaluating the findings

The case studies presented above, however briefly, may be divided into different clusters. In order to quantify his theory of social revolutions in the Third World, and to ensure comparability, Foran (2005, p. 25) uses Boolean truth tables coding the respective factors "1" if present and "0" if absent. In addition, he expands this concept by introducing "1-" for partially present, and "1/0" for a temporary presence followed by a backlash. Such a concept allows for distinct codings, i.e. preconditions, entailing the same outcome, and holistically perceives the individual factors as combinatorial in nature (Foran 2005, pp. 26-27). Applying this concept to the five factors determining the likeliness of social revolutions, we are left with the following possibilities:

A: Dependent Development: "1": present; "1+": strong dependent development reducing socio-economic grievances; "1-": weak dependent development ;"0": not present

B: Political System: "1": exclusionary, personalist, repressive state; "1-": authoritarian with inclusion of parts of the opposition or collective military rule; "1*": open polity; "1*-": polyarchy: elite-controlled semi-democracy

C: Political Cultures of Opposition: "1": strong opposition questioning the political and socio-economic system; "1-": present but fragmented; "0": not / hardly present

D: Economic Downturn: "1": severe economic crisis; "1-": present but weak / soothed; "0": not present

E: World-Systemic Opening: "1": let-up of foreign control; "1/0": present temporary then backlash / partial opening; "0": not present

A present factor ("1") is finally coded with the respective capital letter, whereas a minor one will signify absence ("0"). Some factors, such as political cultures of opposition in Sudan and world-systemic opening in Syria, remain subject to future developments and are thus indicated with a question mark. In the case of the Arab uprisings, then, I suggest the following coding, which is but a tentative proposal necessitating further research:

State	Dependent Development	Exclusionary rule	Political Cultures of Opposition	Economic Downturn	World-Systemic Opening
Tunisia	1	1	1-	1	1/0
Egypt	1	1	1-	1	1/0
Libya	1(+)	1	1-	1	1/0
Yemen	1	1	1-	1	1/0
Syria	1	1	1-	1	1-/0?
Bahrain	1	1	1-	1	0
Sudan	1	1	0?	1	1
Morocco	1	1	0	1	0
Jordan	1	1	0	1	0
Algeria	1	1-	0	1	0
Lebanon	1	1*-	0	1	0
Iraq	1	1*-	0	1	0
Kuwait	1+	1	0	1-	0
Saudi	1+	1	0	1-	0
Oman	1+	1	0	1-	0
Qatar	1+	1	0	1-	0
U.A.E.	1+	1	0	1-	0

State	Coding "1-" as present	Coding "1-" as absent	Outcome
Tunisia	ABCDE	ABcDe	Political Revolution (estimated)
Egypt	ABCDE	ABcDe	Start of political revolution
Libya	ABCDE	ABcDe	Start of political revolution
Yemen	ABCDE	ABcDe	Start of political revolution
Syria	ABCD?	ABcDe	Attempted revolution with open end
Bahrain	ABCDe	ABcDe	Attempted revolution
Sudan	AB?DE	ABcDE	Weak attempt with open end
Morocco	ABcDe	AbcDe	no / weak attempt
Jordan	ABcDe	AbcDe	no attempt
Algeria	ABcDe	AbcDe	Weak attempt
Lebanon	ABcDe	AbcDe	no / weak attempt
Iraq	ABcDe	AbcDe	no / weak attempt
Kuwait	ABcDe	aBcde	no attempt
Saudi	ABcDe	aBcde	no attempt
Oman	ABcDe	aBcde	no attempt
Qatar	ABcDe	aBcde	no attempt
U.A.E.	ABcDe	aBcde	no attempt

A first cluster comprises the four cases experiencing regime change: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen. All cases managed to mobilize vast parts of the populations and precipitate a regime change, which might entail a transformation of the political system, but hitherto failed to change the social system. So far, they thus only fulfill two of the three criteria for social revolutions as defined in accordance with Skocpol earlier, and might instead be termed political revolutions if (!) successful. In Boolean terms, coding "1-" as present focuses on the similarities of revolutions in general, and thus on the reasons why a revolution of any sort succeeds (Foran 2005, pp. 253-254). The result would be "ABCDE" in all cases, and therefore explain revolutionary success. Coding "1-" as absent, in contrast, emphasizes the limits of certain factors and the reasons why social revolutions have not occurred. The results would then be "ABcDe", and thereby contrast with the successful social revolutions in Cuba, Nicaragua, and elsewhere mentioned above, which were ranked "ABCDE" by Foran (2005, p. 250). Such a score mirrors the limits of political cultures of opposition and world-systemic openings in the Arab uprisings. As mentioned above, the secular-religious gap may have been reduced by the post-Islamization of religious groups, and multi-class and multi-status-group coalitions were thus possible, but social fragmentation and dissent among the contentious groups was still often strong enough to limit the actions of revolutionaries. In addition, core states were often happy to promote polyarchy by supporting hospitable actors and ousting autocrats, but thwarted social rebalancing by strengthening socially conservative forces, financial "support", or military interference.

Then what will future success depend on? Foran (2005, 252) suggests that revolutions may be reversed, when political fragmentation, dependency (often including economic downturns), and outside intervention coincide. In the case of the Arab uprisings, we already experience economic problems related to continuous political uncertainties and increasing foreign intervention as the U.S. tries to reassert control over the developments (Massad 2012b). The success of the revolutions seems to depend on the capability of political cultures of opposition to quickly introduce new political systems. Subsequently, if they manage to install open polities, social movements will face a much higher chance of success for social change, that is if they engage in the electoral struggles and succeed in forming new socially progressive coalitions.

The second cluster termed "attempted revolution" contains all cases that saw a revolutionary challenge to the persisting status quo, but (hitherto) failed to transform the political or social order. The Boolean coding needs to reflect similarities with social and political revolu-

tions, in order to explain why there was a revolutionary attempt. At the same time, existing differences suggest reasons for revolutionary failure.

Bahrain and Syria have both experienced dependent development, which was slowed down by a recent economic downturn. Despite the differences among the political systems, they share repression and exclusion and are headed by personalist rulers. Just as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen, Syria is a formal republic holding regular elections, but the ruling president Assad is evidently dominant to a degree where Syria hardly qualifies as a polyarchy anymore. Bahrain recently transformed from a hereditary emirate to a constitutional monarchy, but despite regular elections, it is still effectively a repressive, personalist, and exclusionary state. In both cases, political cultures of opposition are rather fragmented, but unified in their opposition to the current rulers. Foran (2005, p. 253) has suggested coding "1-" as present in order to explain revolutionary attempts, and as absent to illuminate the reasons for failure. Provided that the Western support for Syrian rebels will not outplay foreign support for the regime, the two cases share the coding "ABCDe" elucidating the revolutionary attempt, and failed to deliver a revolution due to the coding "ABcDe". This goes along the lines of Foran's (2005, pp. 205 ff.) results for eight other revolutionary attempts, such as, for instance, Algeria in the early 1990s and China in 1989. The coding "ACD", i.e. the presence of dependent development, elaborated political cultures of opposition, and an economic downturn, seems to favor revolutionary attempts regardless of the political system and world-systemic environment. The lack of strong political cultures of opposition and world-systemic opportunities ("ce"), however, seems to thwart success.

In contrast to Foran's (2005, pp. 220-221) findings, which suggest that an unfavorable political system ("b") prevents revolutionary success, the Arab cases indicate that even highly repressive, personalist and exclusionary regimes may remain intact during sustained foreign support ("e"). Such a non-permissive world context differs from the cases precipitating regime change. While the core powers were content to oust the authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, they were reluctant to do so in Bahrain, for example. Regime change may have been supported in Syria, but this support was countered by the backing of Assad by Russia, Iran, and other foreign powers, while the outcome, and thus the coding, remains open.

A third and final cluster are the states not experiencing revolutionary attempts. Such cases comprise states that may have seen major protests, while no or hardly any contentious actors questioned the political and socio-economic system per se. A first set contains Iraq and Lebanon, where the polyarchic political systems channel grievances into elections, aided by

sectarian, religious, and ethnic divides. Another group includes Morocco, Jordan, Sudan and Algeria. Here, dependent development, repressive, exclusionary political systems, and severe economic downturns provide a fertile ground for social movements, but historical and cultural reasons thwarted mobilization so far. Clever cooptation of the Islamists in Morocco, the Palestinian refugee problem in Jordan, and a significant amount of traditional legitimacy in both monarchies have weakened the respective opposition so far. In Algeria, the wounds of a devastating civil war are still fresh, and the deep involvement of the military make the political system less vulnerable. Sudan just experienced the secession of the Southern part of the country, which strengthened nationalist sentiments and hindered contentious action. Still, protesters are currently reforming and the coding thus has to be preliminary. In addition, Morocco, Jordan, and Algeria enjoy strong foreign support and revolutionaries thus face a hostile world-systemic environment. Hence, these states did not experience a severe state crisis. Again, Sudan is a special case: Despite a hospitable world-system, contentious actors have so far failed to strongly articulate an alternative social order related to the political turmoil caused by secession of the South. This case suggests that weak political cultures of opposition, or friction among them, for whatever reason, may prevent revolutions despite the presence of all other factors, thereby once more confirming the theoretical axiom that all five factors are necessary for success. Again, it should be noted that such a coding is preliminary, and future developments may change the location of the individual cases in the respective categories.

A last set of states comprises Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and the U.A.E. These Gulf monarchies differ from the other groups in the third cluster in that their enormous oil wealth simply bought off contentious sentiments. The respective economies are highly dependent on the global economy, but the accompanying wealth reduces socio-economic grievances, and the factor dependent development is therefore coded “1+”. Such a performance reduces the incentive for a population to question the status quo, and also enabled the states to soothe the impact of the GEFC. In combination with strong foreign support, such a set of preconditions prevented massive uprisings, despite the existence of repressive, exclusionary, and personalist states. That is not to say that contentious action in these countries was useless, far from it. As in other revolutionary failures, protesters often achieved economic concessions and some (minor) political reforms. Due to the unfavorable preconditions, however, the outcomes were very limited.

If “1-“ is coded as present, the result for non-attempts is ABcDe (except for Sudan, which ranks ABcDE in both cases). The third cluster thus seems to confirm the suggestion that the coding “ACD” precipitates a “revolutionary attempt”. In all cases, the lack or weak-

ness of political cultures of opposition precipitated protests that did not challenge the political and socio-economic system. In addition, the absence of a permissive world context, i.e. the strong support from the U.S. and other foreign powers for Arab autocrats, reduces the likeliness of a government crisis empowering revolutionary action. Coding "1-" as absent, the result are different. Morocco and Jordan are coded "ABcDe", Algeria, Lebanon, and Iraq "AbcDe", and Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and the U.A.E. "aBcde". The lack of a strong revolutionary opposition, due to good economic performance, inclusive states, or cultural reasons, seems to have prevented revolutionary attempts, and was aided by a non-permissive world-systemic environment. These findings go exactly along the lines of what Foran (2005, pp. 254-255) has suggested as factors ("ce") thwarting the emergence of revolutionary attempts, for instance in Argentina and Turkey since 1983.

5. Conclusion

To sum up this journey through the social realms of the Arab condition, let us recapitulate the main aspects of this study. The central questions were:

1) Which global and regional developments precipitated the regional character of the Arab uprisings?
2) Why did the different states experience distinct outcomes, despite regional similarities?
3) What are the preconditions for successful social revolutions, or future social change in general, in the Arab world?

The author suggested answering these questions on the methodic foundation of Foran's theory of Third World revolutions. The five factors crucial to said theory translate to the Arab context in the following way:

A: *Dependent development:* Most of the Arab world has been on a path of dependent development for some time. Sustained GDP growth is contrasted by social grievances, which were tremendously exacerbated by structural adjustment policies following the regional recession of the mid-1980s.

B: *Exclusionary, repressive, personalist state or open polity:* There are no open polities in the Arab world. The polyarchic democracies in Iraq and Lebanon, the military junta in Mauritania, and the monarchies Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, U.A.E., Omar, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, and Morocco proved relatively resilient to contentious action, although to different degrees. The authoritarian republics in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen, in contrast, were more vulnerable as they lacked foreign support and mostly failed to buy off discontent or justify the legitimacy of their rule.

C: *Political cultures of opposition:* The advent of neoliberalism in the Arab realm has precipitated the resurgence of class-based workers' movements and the Islamization of Arab middle- and upper-classes alike. The latter process was succeeded by a recent trend of post-Islamization, i.e. the rejection of violence and adoption of pluralism and democracy by Islamic movements. Youth and gender constituted the crucial status-groups in the emergence of contentious actions, as the most groups most marginalized by social injustice and political oppression. Labor, democracy movements, youth, and women united under the banner of social justice and political freedom, although socio-economic narratives were increasingly marginalized. Thus social fragmentation and the influence of internal and external socially conservative groups thwarted strong social mobilization along class-lines, but severe repression of exclusionary, personalist rules often managed to overcome the divergence among opposition groups.

D: *Economic downturn:* A severe regional economic downturn aggravated Arab social ills. While the GEFC slowed down economic growth and further increased unemployment, spiraling food prices adversely affected the lower social strata.

E: *World-systemic opening:* The mélange of hegemonic decline and the pivotal geopolitical role of MENA increase the incentive for core powers to intervene in Arab internal affairs. Along the lines of the U.S. strategy to promote polyarchy as a means of maintaining the exploitative global social system, the Obama administration was content to oust some authoritarian leaders, who had often been close allies beforehand, in order to avoid deeper transformations. Such a selective world-systemic opening created the possibility for political revolutions, but in combination with IMF and World Bank interference thwarted any chance for social change so far. Such a Western stance was justified with a racialized, gendered, and sexualized Western narrative of the Arab "Other" along the lines of the democratizing and civilizing story.

Against this background, the study then went on to interpret the individual cases, and eventually quantified the findings with Boolean analysis. It should once again be kept in mind that

all findings are preliminary and a lot of further research will be necessary to confirm the conclusions. Three clusters were distinguished:

1) Regime change opening chance for political revolution: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen
2) Revolutionary attempt which failed so far: Syria, Bahrain
3) No attempt: Sudan, Morocco, Jordan, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, Oman, Qatar, U.A.E.

With the Boolean outcomes elucidating both similarities and differences among individual states, the first question regarding regional and global developments seems to be related to the outcome "ABD", when coding "1-" as present. Hence, regional uprisings are a product of the combination of dependent development, exclusionary political systems, and a recent economic downturn. States scoring "ABD" also in restrictive coding, namely the first two clusters, experienced stronger contentious action than countries from the third cluster. It should be noted that Sudan so far constitutes an exception in face of recent historical events.

The different extent of dependent development, political exclusion, and economic downturn already leads to the second question. The level of socio-economic grievances and political oppression seems to be directly related to the strength of political cultures of opposition, as all states with a score of "ABD" in restrictive coding saw the emergence of revolutionary political cultures of opposition, whereas the third cluster did not. The findings suggest that both a strong economic performance and a relatively inclusionary political system may thwart mobilization of revolutionary groups, as there is less of an incentive to articulate grievances in the framework of an alternative social order. Countries without potent political cultures of opposition did not experience revolutionary upheaval, as contentious action did not aim to overthrow the status quo or failed to mobilize significant parts of the society. In the case of a revolutionary situation, states only succeed in the presence of an at least partial world-systemic opening, as illustrated by the divergence of the first two clusters. Even in case of regime change, however, social transformation has so far been thwarted by the limited strength of political cultures of opposition, and an eventual world-systemic backlash, signified by "ce" in restrictive coding.

The existence of socio-economic grievances, political repression, and a revolutionary opposition ("ABCD" in less restrictive coding) is accompanied by a partial world-systemic opening in all cases but Bahrain, which is pivotal for U.S. regional geopolitics and therefore hitherto exceptional. Foran (2005, p. 221) argues that "regimes that allow some political participation make it difficult for cross-class alliances to coalesce and can often attract outside military and

economic support". The findings of this study suggest an amendment to that hypothesis. States with relative inclusive political systems (cluster two) or strong economic performance (cluster three), are less likely to experience political cultures of opposition, as mentioned above. The correlation of political inclusion and foreign support is thus complemented by stability vis-à-vis the absence of a revolutionary opposition often obtaining foreign support. Against the background of U.S. foreign policy, such a relationship reflects the fact that if the current regime is not likely to be capable of maintaining stability, the U.S. might shift support from one elite group to another, legitimized by the discourse of democracy promotion. In the case of Egypt, for instance, the Obama administration ousted the former U.S. ally Mubarak, and subsequently backed the Egyptian military. When the military failed to maintain order and increasingly lost popularity, U.S. support moved on to the Muslim Brotherhood for the present (Massad 2012a). In summary of the reasons for distinct outcomes, then, the combination of particular political cultures of opposition in their respective world-systemic context, i.e. "CE", entailed different results, although these two factors are in turn shaped by the other three preconditions.

The third question regarding the future of social change is only to be answered by some rather general suggestions, with the velocity and dimension of recent events, and the preliminary character of this study thwarting the possibility simple answers. Future progress will depend on the successful creation of open polities, within which social change would be possible. If the political system is not truly open, revolutionary actors might do better to boycott elections and thereby delegitimize political rule. In any case, social change is only possible, if existing gaps between distinct political cultures of opposition are overcome. Global rebalancing will thus only entail social rebalancing, if the current trend of post-Islamization continues, and revolutionary actors manage to articulate powerful common themes for the contentious space to precipitate mass mobilization.

Notes

[1] Foran adopts some world-systemic concepts. World-systems theory is a multi-disciplinary macro-theory arguing that modern world-system is essentially a capitalist world-economy. Individual countries are located in a hierarchical inter-state system comprising core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral states in an international division of labor.

[2] The Pink Tide means the resurgence of leftist ideology in Latin America.

[3] The absolute share has been calculated by the author.

[4] Albert Hirschman (1973) put forward the idea of a "tunnel effect", which was recently brought back into development economics (Ali 2008, p. 9 ff.). The tunnel effect reflects the importance of equity in the distribution of income in early stages of development. Its name is derived from an analogy with a driver stuck in a tunnel traffic jam on a street with two lanes moving in the same direction. Initially, a driver will be disappointed about the fact that they have to wait because of the traffic jam. Once the cars of the other lane start to move, the driver feels better off and expects his lane to start moving soon as well. However, if this is not to happen, the stuck driver might get discontented and more inclined to break the rules of the game by taking action, "such as crossing the double lines separating the two lanes" (Hirschman 1973, p. 545).

Taking this analogy back to development studies, in the early stages of development, when income inequalities often increase sharply, a society might be somewhat tolerant towards inequality. Unprivileged parts of the population might still be content that the time of stagnation is over and interpret the increase in inequality as an indicator of future flows of income to themselves. However, even if such a tunnel effect exists, it is not indefinite and might end after a certain amount of time. It is tied to the expectation that the disparities will eventually narrow again, or otherwise lead to social unrest. Ali (2008, pp. 12 ff.) calculates the average tunnel effect in the Arab world as 24.27 years with a standard deviation of 11.66 years, although he admits that further investigation is necessary. Without generalizing complex regional phenomena also influenced by cultural and political factors, and in no way claiming that the date of rebellions could be calculated, it is nonetheless interesting to note that Ali warns Arab governments to reconsider their development policies in 2008 vis-à-vis the role of equity in development, with the Arab uprisings being ignited in 2010 – 25 years after the beginning of the era of structural adjustment.

[5] Tony Cartalucci's (2011) and many other leftists' anti-imperialism rendered illegible cause and effect regarding the interrelations of Western organizations and subaltern actors.

[6] Otpor was a civic youth movement, which was involved in the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. It has received funding from several U.S. sources, such as NED and Freedom House (FH), a U.S. NGO financed by U.S. federal government grants (Cohen 2000). Former Otpor members later founded the Centre for Applied Non Violent Actions and Strategies (CANVAS). CANVAS is involved in revolutionary activities in various countries, and trained leading members of the Egyptian Movement for Change ("Kefaya") and the April 6th movement, such as Ahmed Maher and Mohamed Adel. It is apparently funded by individuals related to the political realm of the U.S. The extent of the ties between the U.S. and Otpor / Canvas have been widely discussed, but remain nontransparent at this point and will have to be re-evaluated at a later point.

[7] Tarek Heggy is an example of Egyptian native informers reprodcing Western discourses.

[8] Once again, see Cartalucci 2011 et. al. Such notions of Western omnipresence inherit an essentially racist perception denying the subaltern independent action.

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Summary

Niniejszy dokument ma na celu wyjaśnienie rozwój i wydarzenia wytrącenie Najnowsze powstań na całym świecie arabskim i wyjaśnić fundamentalnie różne wyniki w poszczególnych państwach. Opierając się na tym fundamencie, będzie to również być możliwe do oceny perspektyw zmiany społecznej. Większość społeczności akademickiej, mediów, i sferę politycznej nie udało się przed dict jakąkolwiek formę regionalnej kontrowersyjnego działania takiej wielkości, a następnie marginalny-ized społeczno-ekonomiczny wymiar arabskiego niezadowolenia. Tendencja ta odzwierciedla przestarzałą, ale mimo to popularne pojęcie rzekomej "wyjątkowości arabskim" z jednej strony, oraz konieczność dalszych badań nad warunków wstępnych obrotów na innych.Autor będzie zatem sugerować postrzeganie wydarzeń, zgodnie z teorią Johna Foran w rewolucji społecznej-nych w krajach Trzeciego Świata. Takie podejście godzi rzekomo ekskluzywne takie czynniki, jak tak-sowej struktury, kultury i agencji człowieka. Na tym tle, badania będą formowane przez jakościowej interpretacji danych ilościowych, literatury drugorzędnej i wzajemnych poglądów z lokalnymi podmiotami. W pierwszej części autor przedstawia rozwój wiążące regionalnych powstań, a następnie kontrastuje poszczególne przypadki w perspektywie porównawczej w drugiej części. Odkrycia sugerują istotną rolę zależnego rozwoju związanego neoliber-AL dostosowań strukturalnych i niedawnego spowolnienia gospodarczego vis-à-vis ze światowego kryzysu gospodarczego i finansowego, w uzupełnieniu do reżimów autorytarnych, do powstania regionalnego kontrowersyjnej akcji. Ponadto, rewolucyjne próby i perspektywy zmiany społecznej wydaje się być wysoce zależny od kultury politycznej opozycji, ukształtowane przez odrodzenia pracy, post-islamizm, a wzrost młodzieży i ruchów kobiecych, a świat-systemowy kontekst, który jest podlega coraz bardziej lotny system-świat w obliczu globalnego zrównoważenia.