

**Paper Title: The Arab Spring is Genuine Revolution,
But a Bumpy and Arduous Road Ahead**

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Paper prepared for The Institute for New Economic Thinking and the Centre for International
Governance Innovation (CIGI) Annual Meeting

Panel: Worldwide Revolutions: Is History Repeating Itself?

Location: Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Canada, from April 10-12.

Introduction

The Arab Spring has been a fundamental event in the Arab world and yet among Middle East scholars, there is great intellectual and analytical debate about the degree of political change or continuity that the Arab Spring had produced. As reverberations of the global economic crisis have continued and the international rules of the game have fundamentally remained unchanged, the demand on post-Arab Spring governments to change policy course is high. Moreover, in cases such as Egypt where regime change occurred and a shift to Islamist governments and then back to the military took place, there is little understanding or analytical conceptualization of whether this pointed to a significant change in style, content, or ideology of policy-making. Moreover, in countries like Syria where the country is aflame, there is doubt about whether it was all worth it and whether regime stability was an ideal after all. This paper argues that despite the chaos that has ensued, the Arab Spring was a legitimate revolution and these two countries are complicated, but were inevitable in part due to the political economic climate produced by autocratic and corrupt regimes.

Unlike many other revolutions that swept the globe to topple autocratic regimes, the Arab Spring was not instigated by the poor, underclass of the Arab world; instead, it was the educated, unemployed, disenfranchised, and likely lower middle class youth, of the region that took to the internet and the streets to protest. The Arab Spring started in countries that actually had economic growth: in 2009 and 2010, Tunisia had 3 and 4% GDP growth, Egypt 4.7 and 5%, Libya 1.8 and 5.2%, Yemen 3.9 and 7.8% and even Syria 4 and 5%; and these countries were also lead economic reformers, ‘successfully liberalizing’ their economies.

The Arab Spring started because of a great feeling of disenfranchisement, growing inequality, relative deprivation, and most importantly because of corrupt and autocratic regimes that had a heavy police and security sector to stamp out all dissent and free thought. The feelings of discontent among the population had been festering throughout the past decade; yet, it was not until late 2010 that political uprisings and social protests became more pronounced in the region. The uprisings began in Tunisia and soon spread to Egypt (*See Alexander, 2011; Gause, 2011; Lynch, 2012*). Both of these uprisings resulted in the fall of the presidencies of their respective countries. In countries like Morocco, we saw some constitutional reforms put in place to heed off continued protests. There remain inescapable questions as to what will happen next. One thing is for sure, the popular uprisings in the Arab are calling for a break with decades of authoritarianism, poverty, chronic unemployment, and social injustice. So did the Arab Spring lead to change or continuity of many of the Arab autocratic regimes?

Theoretical Framework of Understanding the Arab Spring

To theoretical frame an understanding of Middle Eastern and North African politics, regional scholars have focused on two contrasting paradigms of “transition to democracy” and of “authoritarian resilience” (Stepan 2012; Heydemann & Leenders 2012; Bellin 2012; Volpi 2012); or simply ‘change or continuity’.

In support of the view of ‘change’, scholars of the region suggest that the Arab Spring was a wakeup call to long-held perceptions of “Arab exceptionalism” and its various connotations of a static, autocratic and insular Middle East. Moreover, although many commentators have noted that political unrest is not new to the region (*See Gause 2011; Ottaway and Hamzawy 2011; Alexander 2011*), the unprecedented nature of the mass protests, rallies, marches, demonstrations and the use of social media, the opened and sustain opposition to the injustices of corrupt regimes has sparked. With the benefit of time and modest retrospect early proclamations of the Arab Spring as a “Facebook Revolution” – as a cataclysmic and monolithic event that swept the Arab world - have given way to more contextualized studies of regional transformation (Aliboni 2011). For many scholars, such as Lynch (2012), the new Middle East is born after more than a decade of media diversification and liberalization, spread of information

communication technologies, and an aspirant and educated young people. To Lynch and others supporting the view that the region is experience change, the Arab Spring is one offspring of this structural transformation taking place in the region. More importantly, the tides moving the region forward cannot be turned back and one should expect more countries to experience the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring is transformative and therefore constitutes a change in political dynamics both within the countries and between Arab countries and the international system. It may be argued that as the political landscape in the post-Arab Spring countries continue to democratize, there will be calls for a return to some form of economic populism. To concur with this, in a study of 76 developing countries in Africa and Asia from 1974 to 2007, Limpach and Michaelowa (2010) have argued that World Bank and IMF loans can actually induce positive changes in civil liberties and empowered civil society groups have newly gained domestic oversight of their governments. Indeed, the transition to democracy in Latin America under a time of IMF and World Bank structural adjustment was a reference point for some scholars of the Middle East to take cues from (*See* Carothers 2002, Anderson 2006). The Latin American experience demonstrated that economic liberalization lead to political liberalization and this fundamentally changed the region's relationship with its own domestic constituencies in favour of more populist politics. That said, economic development and growth in the Middle East will need to become more populist and inclusive but may not be a return to statism per se. Instead, governments will be under pressure to provide conducive environments that promote jobs. The political imperatives of this demographic shift will mean that a change in policies will be demanded by the Arab people.

In support of the view of 'continuity', scholars of the region have taken cues from a large literature that suggests regime resilience to be an all pervasive phenomenon throughout the decade of so called political and economic reforms preceding the Arab Spring (Teti & Gervasio 2012; Zemni 2004). In contrast to the above arguments in support of seeing the region undergoing change, a number of regional scholars provide conceptual tools that can be used to explain the Arab Spring as a continuation of the same kind of international and domestic politics. Despite the presence of new governments in North Africa for instance, there has not been a

purging of the top echelons of government. Beyond the overthrow of say Ben Ali and Mubarak, the personnel of former regimes clearly still play a prominent role in the bureaucracy and arguably therefore in domestic decision-making processes and in international negotiations. The key interlocutors of the IMF and the World, for example, are the Ministries of Finance, the Central Banks, and Departments of Planning. Despite the change in ministers, the likelihood is that those in the rank and file of the bureaucracy remain firmly intact.

The analytical tools used to understand the dynamics of how political continuity in the region can be found alongside the liberalization of some political spaces can be found in comparative politics literature. The concept of regimes, for example, is helpful in understanding the deep penetration of state economic decision-making (Beblawi & Luciani 1987, Ayubi 1994, Anderson 1991, Pawelka 1985, 2002). To explain regime resilience concepts such as of neo-patrimonialism (Brownlee 2002) and mechanisms of legitimation and stability using rent-seeking (Bank and Richter, 2010) and elite cooptation (Perther, 2004) are helpful analytical tools to also explain how regimes and states kept key societal elements to support the maintenance of the autocratic state, despite moves toward economic liberalization. Similarly, Oliver Schlumberger's *modes of legitimacy* (2010) or Steven Heydemann's "networks of privilege" (2004) and "upgrading authoritarianism" (2007), are useful to also understand how elite relationships are an instrument to advance economic liberalization whilst preserving the illusion of reforms.

This paper argues that we ought to understand the Arab Spring as transformative revolutionary movement, but one that will be faced with numerous bumps in the road ahead. To politically analyze the never-ending Arab Spring, is a difficult task today as the Arab Spring continues to evolve and change by daily events. Numerous conferences and workshops with academics, policymakers, and think tank analysts are all trying to understand why the Arab Spring happened when it did. After considering all of the opinions, debates and rebuttals, admittedly, academic analysis of this watershed moment is frustrating. (Neo) Ottomonianism, Neoliberalism, Zionism, (Neo)imperialism, (Neo)colonialism, Americanism, Globalization, Islamism and Gulfinization: all of these words have been put forward as explanations and paradigms to explain the Arab Spring by a plethora of academics particularly of the critical types that dominate academia.

Explaining the Arab Spring: Forget the 'ism', it's a real revolution

One can appreciate the fact that academics want to tie the events of the Arab Spring all together, but these grand, global ideas — and yes, they do exist and have at times been domineering in so many ways — cannot explain what happened. It is sad to see that the Arab people have been denied their agency. Arm-chair academics should stop trying to fit political history into familiar and convenient theoretical frameworks.

Structural arguments have been convenient frameworks for understanding many aspects of Middle East politics and history, but they don't work in this case. When the university educated Tunisian fruit seller set himself ablaze in December 2010, he did not think "...today I will fight the neo-imperialist system that is forcing me to this hellish life." He reacted to corrupt police who told him that he couldn't sell his fruit without paying a bribe. When Tunisians saw Mohamed Bouazizi set himself aflame; when Egyptians saw the brutal attack and indignity caused to Khaled Said; and when the Syrian children of Deraa wrote those fatal words "down with the regime," they weren't attacking Zionism or trying to remove the shackles of neoliberalism. Simply put, they weren't living in "isms."

Why are academics and analysts generally unable to go beyond these grand theories and structural paradigms? The very pills swallowed so many times to explain Middle East politics does so little to shed light on the agency of these incredible movements. The Arab Spring was about people who said enough is enough. Incredible. Who knew individuals mattered? It might sound like a wild idea to many academics, but this was a revolution and uprising comprised of men and women. The collection of these individuals is like an Arab proverb: "when you add a hair, to a hair, and to a hair, you make a beard." This time, each and every hair stood up and said, "I deserve better." The work of Ted Gurr (1970) helps us understand the psychological aspects and essence of revolution. In Gurr's (1970) seminal piece he pointed out how 'relative deprivation' pushes many people to revolt, protest, and commit violence because they perceive their economic and social standing to be fairly divided. It's the Arab Spring at its core.

As Arab countries experienced stunning macroeconomic growth — GDP growth was rising around four to five percent in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria — the rise in per capita GDP was very low and not rising fast enough. What Arab individuals believed they *deserved* is the truly important aspect and it is immeasurable. The Arab population was unconvinced by false symbols of modernization — shopping malls, full of young citizens lacking purchasing power, and lavish tourist resorts, where foreigners experience luxury. For the past ten years, the urban landscape of the Arab Middle East changed before our eyes, yet the average resident was not participating. At the same time, the region has been producing university graduates, both men and women, at an incredible pace. Alas, we must get out of the mindset that there's a lack of educated people in the region (Momani, 2013). Yet, unemployment and underemployment are rampant among Arab youth; for example, 60 percent of youth are unemployed in Egypt, 56% in Syria, 48% in Yemen, and 54% in Bahrain. The frustration experienced by so many, fueling the Arab Spring, is attributable to factors that cause feelings of indignity: being educated, lacking money, and experiencing unemployment. One may be a doctor or an engineer, but in this hyper-consumer and status-conscious society that is interconnected to the outside world, you consider yourself a nadir.

While the Arab Spring has been about indignity in the marketplace, it's also been about every facet of life across all age groups. For Arab youth, their frustration was expressed beyond traditional areas of government concern and control. The online world wasn't subject to the old tactics of secret service brutality. So young people clamoured onto online groups and social networks where they empathized, shared their disillusionment and realized that "hair, by hair, by hair makes a beard." Who did the Arab masses blame for their predicament? Not structural tropes, but the very leaders who claim to be representing these people.

Arab governments were rightly blamed for socio-economic problems, and they are the ones that are being held accountable today. ' The most refreshing aspect of the Arab Spring is that the Arab individual has woken up to hold so-called leaders in presidential palaces and the prime ministerial offices accountable for socio-economic prosperity and wealth. The Arab people know that they deserve better. Finally, listening to the news about Syria and Egypt, it is easy to be depressed. But both remain real revolutions and the world should not ignore its developments.

Syria: It's complicated, so do nothing?

Yes, Syria is a mess. When the Syrian uprisings started, things were clear. An authoritarian regime, run by the same cronies and mafia group for nearly 40 years, were suppressing the rights and freedoms of average Syrians to express themselves. The Syrian people, like their brethren in the Arab world, were longing for a more accountable government. Simply put: Syrian government, bad. Syrian people, good.

Moral clarity for a conflict zone is necessary for Westerners like their Lonely Planet guide book to "the other". People want mental shortcuts. "Just tell me who the good guys are in this fight?" is the perennial question that political analysts get asked. Well, it's not that easy and our Western palate may not like the taste of the dish being offered. Make no mistake the Syrian regime still has blood on its hands and continues to ruthlessly suppress its people. That has not changed and generations of Syrians will continue to remember the Assad family for the death and destruction they have caused on its people over the past three years. But, it's now more complicated than before.

The secular-leaning, if you could have ever called it that, Free Syrian Army was the opposition we could back morally and politically- but the West stalled and retreated from supporting the FSA with the kinds of military arms needed to tip the balance of power against the Assad regime. This ragtag army was cobbled together with its political counterparts under the Syrian National Coalition. For the West, these opposition figures were the best hope, at least it seemed at the start of the revolution, for a transitional government that could usher in an alternative to Assad and his ruthless army.

But, the hope of a strong SNC and a secular oppositional army that could create a defacto state in a clear territorial space, is no more. There are plenty of people and factors that could shoulder the blame for the failure of this secular opposition- the Western hesitance in giving the FSA armaments, the Arab Gulf funding and arming of franchise militia groups that increasingly

radicalized over time, or the opposition SNC that became comfortable in their Istanbul five star hotels, growing farther and farther from the roots of the revolution and its people.

The brutality of the regime- from starving defiant neighbourhoods, using chemical warfare on its people, and targeting children and pregnant women had further radicalized the opposition. This only scratched the surface of the dehumanizing experience shared by all those who dared to oppose the regime. Fact is, the strongest militarized opposition to the regime are a combination of foreign and domestic fighters with extreme views of a post-Assad Syria. How did a once moderate opposition force produce a radicalized system?

A number of factors were at work. On the one hand, after seeing the evil of Assad's "secular" regime, many of the fighting forces have turned to puritanical and fringe interpretations of Islam that removes any moral ambiguity of what social behaviour is permissible. There's truth in the saying that "few atheists exist in foxholes". On the other hand, under the state of anarchy that prevailed in many rebel-held areas, many ruthless warlords came into Syrian neighbourhoods to profiteer from the basic life necessities of providing bread to allowing people passage in and out of their own communities.

The result of these factors produced unsavoury characters, broadly termed as radicalized Islamists, that rule many parts of rebel-held Syria today. Yes, the rebel-held areas are dominated and controlled now by radicalized groups with fringe views about Islam. For some Syrians, these new rulers provide comfort in creating a cleaner system of governance than under either the FSA or the regime. But for most Syrians, this puritanical version of Islam is foreign and doesn't fit the interpretation of Islam that they have grown up with. Rightly or wrongly, foreign ideas, particularly backed by Arab Gulf financing, are often blamed for this rising trend.

Indeed Syria today is complicated, yet least we forget the good guys in this conflict, the Syrian people. Millions are refugees, even more are internally displaced, more than a hundred and thirty thousand have been killed- of which more than 11,000 are children- and the rate of this death and refugee exodus increases exponentially with every passing day. The Syrian crisis will

get worse before it gets better. Hopes of a Geneva peace conference working are fleeting. The future of a country and 22million people depend on it.

Egypt: A revolution and a case for continuity?

During the short-lived one year rule of ousted Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood bemoaned against the ‘deep state’ while liberal-secularists accused the former of consolidating power throughout Egypt to push through its conservative social policies. Rebutting these accusations, each side of the political spectrum accused the other of sheer paranoia.

In what will only give further political ammunition to the polarizing narrative in Egypt, the impending verdict on former dictator Hosni Mubarak’s release from prison will be the validator — and tip the balance in favour of one of these opposing arguments.

For almost a year, liberal-secularists cried against what they saw as the ‘Brotherhoodization’ of Egypt, where the Morsi government and its Muslim Brotherhood supporters had been consolidating power to take over Egyptian state institutions. They pointed to the removal of General Tantawi and the appointment of General Sisi as head of the armed forces, the rushed constitutional process, the appointment of Islamist state governors, and the sacking of the Cairo opera house director. Most importantly, liberal-secularists have complained against Brotherhood attacks on the judiciary, which started with the overthrow of the prosecutor general and lowering the retirement age of judges in order to remove old members of the bench. These decisions have been noted as evidence that the Brotherhood wanted to forever change Egypt into a “Brotherhood dominion.”

The Morsi government, and its Muslim Brotherhood supporters, claimed they were forced to fast-track the constitution in December of 2013 and were unable to implement reforms and policies because of the ‘deep state’: where powerful Mubarak-era cronies continued to dominate key Egyptian institutions. Throughout its time in office, Morsi supporters claimed that at every turn the isolated President was unable to change the country because of fervent resistance from the judiciary, bureaucracy, and liberal media. After taking office, they realized

that the civilian government was a mere fig leaf for democracy; the real power brokers were Mubarak-era economic elite, security and intelligence forces, and the military.

Proponents of the deep state claimed that Mubarak's economic cronies withheld domestic investment and coordinated their capital exodus to raise the carrying costs of Egyptian bonds. Billionaire business people, like Naguib Sawiris, used their vast media empire of private newspapers and television stations to spread (mis)information about the Morsi government. Sawiris, a vocal critic of the Brotherhood, later revealed he had bankrolled the grassroots campaign Tamarod to collect signatures that would be used by the military to justify its coup. Bureaucrats allowed the interruption of electricity and fuel supplies to create artificial shortages and line queues throughout the country. On rumours of energy shortages in liberal Egyptian media, fuel prices further skyrocketed causing panic buying and hoarding. The Morsi government, as a precondition to an International Monetary Fund loan, had tried to implement a smart card system to better target subsidized fuel for the country's poor. Fearing the government could track fuel supplies, corrupt petroleum ministry officials with ties to Mubarak-era cronies refused to implement the smart card system.

By the time Morsi had taken power, security and intelligence forces let law and order lapse, allowing for rival soccer fans to fight each other off the field and religious violence against Coptic Christians to go uninvestigated. Traffic police disappeared from Cairo streets, and notorious thugs called *beltagaya* were sent out by illusive forces to cause mayhem and incite further hatred toward the Brotherhood. Adding insult to injury, when demonstrations against Morsi started on June 30, Egyptian police stood by and watched the ransacking of the Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters in Cairo.

The day after Morsi was removed from power, Egypt's fuel shortages were no more, its electricity supply went uninterrupted and traffic police suddenly went back to work. Who wins the debate in Egypt's exchange of accusations between the 'deep state' and 'brotherhoodization'? The majority of Egyptians who have supported the popular coup, believe the 'Brotherhoodization' needed to be countered with a new revolution. But, the release of Hosni Mubarak re-entry of old cronies into the policy, and return of unlikely rule, would be a clear

vindication of the existence of the deep state. To the Brotherhood- as Joseph Heller author of Catch 22 poignantly once said- “Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't after you.”

The grassroots Egyptian movement that marshalled millions into Tahrir Square on June 30 will call this great amassment of people power a revolution. The formidable bottom-up collection of petition signatures on the streets of Egypt was nothing short of an incredible show of popular will. But when the dust settles and the euphoria of another night at Tahrir dissipates, people will wake up to the realization that they are effectively under a military regime. A coup d'état is not to be celebrated, regardless of the populist means Egyptians used to get to Tahrir. Military regimes are rarely beacons of liberal values. They come from a cultural mindset to protect against and to destroy enemies of the state. Historically in Egypt, the military identified the Muslim Brotherhood and a number of its more radical offshoots as enemies of Egypt. This does not bode well for any transition.

Understandably many Egyptian supporters of the Brotherhood now feel robbed of participating in a free and democratic election. The impulse of many Islamists may be to lose complete faith in a democratic process. This occurred in Algeria in 1992 when Islamists who won free elections in a first round, were denied participation in government after a western-backed Algerian military annulled elections. Algeria saw a devastating civil war that ensued for a decade with tens of thousands killed.

Throughout Latin America, we witnessed similar coups d'état with Marxist parties identified as the enemy of state du jour. Today, Latin America is still healing the awful wounds of military dictatorship, missing persons of Marxist persuasion, and overturned democratic elections. One doesn't need to go into history to know how the military fared as government in Egypt. For a little over a year, the military ruled Egypt after it overthrew Hosni Mubarak in the January 2011 revolution. Under its watch, the military was vilified for its role in a number of crackdowns on protesters and its use of “virginity tests” on female protesters.

There remain dozens of young people imprisoned by the Egyptian military, which conducts its trials outside the civilian court system under the guise of great secrecy. These are no

liberal democrats and the military's so-called roadmap announced will usher in a decade of instability. The return of the military to power will not resolve the underlying economic problems facing the Egyptian people today. The frustration of people will continue after the dust settles and the streets and Tahrir Square are cleared.

Today, the Egyptian people are in a state of hysteria—mixed with nationalistic fervour—that makes it difficult to have a rational conversation about the state of affairs with many in the country. Indeed, the June 30, 2013 overthrow of a democratically-elected Islamist president—Mohamed Morsi—was a moment of national pride for many Egyptians. To deny the many Egyptian people the hope and pride they feel is akin to being a buzz-killer—though coup critics have been called worse, specifically a terrorist-sympathizer who is undermining the security of the great Egyptian revolution. Egyptian prisons are full of these buzz killers; their crime was nothing more than to report, criticize, tweet, or offend the current regime. Following his coup, the Egyptian Army's chief, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, asked the Egyptian people to demonstrate to the world that the overthrow of Morsi was not a coup, but a populist demand of the people. In a soft spoken voice, with words of love and images of honour and valour, Sisi told his people that coming to show their support of the military overthrow would return Egyptian dignity. He would, in his words, selflessly serve the people because they were after all “the light of his eyes. After three years of violence and uprisings, the Egyptian people needed a fix. Sisi would be the drug of hope to soften the pain of a country that on so many socio-economic and institutional measures is quite simply failing.

Its education system boasts two Egypts: a highly educated group that fills the Middle East and the West's university corridors with some of their best technical minds; and another group sporting a 40 percent illiteracy rate from predominantly rural areas of the country. Its official unemployment rate is 13.4 percent while over 70 percent of the unemployed are aged between 18 and 29 years old, its GDP per capita has fallen to less than that of Syria, and it relies upon the support of a massive influx of Gulf money to shore up its liquidity lest its currency crashes due to slacking exports and outflows of capital. In the near term, Egypt's economic problems appear unlikely to disappear as a violent insurgency plagues the peripheral region of Sinai and bombings in Cairo continue. With some 25 percent of the Egyptian economy linked to its tourist sector,

fewer holidaymakers have signed up for the “Egyptian experience.” In combination with the economic problems noted above, the Egyptian people continue to see their real income per capita fall and many are feeling what was once considered an economic pinch turn into a vice. For now, it seems, the Sisi drug is still working to blunt the pain of economic despair. The Egyptian people continue to celebrate “revolutionary” milestones and adore their new leader. Meanwhile, the coy Sisi teases his people on whether he will run for President. Testing the waters, ever so slightly, he releases rumours that he will run. The Russian media even quotes Putin as a reliable source that Sisi will run.

Of course, many of the Egyptian people respond with glowing praise and call for him to save Egypt. After all, only in Egypt would the sitting Prime Minister say that Egyptian women adore Sisi because of his handsome stature. Only in Egypt would a popular TV station broadcaster say on air that Sisi could have any woman he wanted. Only in Egypt, could you find Sisi cookies at bakeries and countless images of his face superimposed on a lion’s body. The Egyptian people are on a high, and the drug of choice is Sisi. Only a fool would bet that Sisi is not going to run for President in the upcoming “elections.” If optics were anything on his recent trip to Russia, boarding his plane in a suit and not military uniform was a way to signal to the Egyptian people that he is a statesmen and not just a soldier.

Sisi’s trip to Russia was not to soak in the Winter Olympics in Sochi (Egypt did not have any participants in the Games), but instead to signal his reorientation from the United States to Russia for arms and military support. But then here is another optical illusion as Russia will never match the United States’ \$1.5 billion in military and development aid given annually to Egypt that began in 1979. Moreover, Egypt would face the unenviable task of reconciling 30 years worth of U.S.-manufactured military hardware with Russian military technology. Few military experts credibly believe Egypt is reorienting its military and security relationship to Russia. But many of Egypt’s 85 million people don’t need to know that. For many in Egypt, their soon-to-be President Sisi will shun the Americans, save them from American hegemony, and return Egypt to its former glory days with support from an alternative superpower.

Without the restructuring of the Egyptian economy, society, and culture, however, there is little hope for survival or success in a globally competitive and modernizing world. Sadly, Egyptians on this high will crash and rock bottom will be a deep hole indeed. As Egypt descends into economic failure and a violent insurgency, the Egyptian body politic will search for a new fix and Sisi will, ironically, be the next target of mass protest.

Conclusion

The Arab Spring started because of a great feeling of disenfranchisement, growing inequality, relative deprivation, and most importantly because of corrupt and autocratic regimes that had a heavy police and security sector to stamp out all dissent and free thought. The feelings of discontent among the population had been festering throughout the past decade; yet, it was not until late 2010 that political uprisings and social protests became more pronounced in the region. To theoretical frame an understanding of Middle Eastern and North African politics, regional scholars have focused on two contrasting paradigms of “transition to democracy” and of “authoritarian resilience”; or simply ‘change or continuity’. Both Egypt and Syria are on the path to change but will have bumpy roads ahead.

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