

CHAPTER TEN

The Arab Spring and the New Era of Uncertainty

Introduction

The protest-driven downfall and removal of authoritarian leaders in Tunisia (President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali), Egypt (President Hosni Mubarak), Libya (President Muammar Gaddafi) and Yemen (President Ali Saleh) marked the Arab Spring. Major demonstrations, worker strikes, e-protests and uprisings occurred throughout the Middle East, challenging autocratic regimes in Bahrain, Jordan and Syria. Stirrings of popular unrest actually first occurred in non-Arab Iran in 2009 following gerrymandered elections but did not result in any form of regime change – in this case, Iran proved resilient. Within the Arab Spring phenomenon that emerged, many of the key themes discussed in this book – such as gender, political Islam, political economy and the Arab state – were tellingly apparent.

In many respects, such protests, as we outline in this chapter, were unprecedented – or at least the response to them and their region-wide impact were considered so. Yet there were other dimensions of the Arab Spring, such as popular discontent, economic woes, frustration at authoritarian rule, cronyism, corruption and the mobilizing power of organized political Islam, that were not unprecedented in the least. Instead, they reflected long-standing concerns among the citizens of the region at the ways in which the state and its rulers had ill served, marginalized, and even abandoned them, and yet still claimed legitimacy.

The outcomes of the Arab Spring have been highly fragmented. Some commentators rushed to declare the events that unfolded a victory for democracy, freedom and universal rights. Others hurried to pronounce that the Arab Spring had turned into an 'Islamicist Autumn' in which gains would be reversed. There has been evident impatience at the transition. What is uncontested is the extent to which the Arab Spring has affected politics across the entire Middle East and disrupted security and political arrangements with its allies in the West as well as elsewhere in the globe.

While it is the case that in the seven countries mentioned above the significant impact on politics, state-society relations and the economy is apparent, other states were made vulnerable, and still remain so, to the same motivating dynamics. Indeed, many diverse voices within and outside the

region were still warning in 2017 that the events of 2010–12 were the 'first wave' of a liberation movement that has struck the politics of the region and established an era of uncertainty.

The Arab Spring was epitomized by a powerful coalescence of factors that marked the politics of repression long endured in the region. Yet what was unprecedented was that the change of power in Arab regimes was effected as a result of actual non-violent popular mobilization of a type previously not witnessed in the regime-change movements of the past. Authoritarian incumbents were forced from power by popular dissent.

Underlying factors

In the wake of the Arab Spring, the flurry of op eds, news reports and analyses making sense of the rash of events breaking out across the Middle East blamed academic scholars for their lack of foresight. In truth, scholars of the Middle East had spent decades looking at, accounting for and objectively presenting analyses that stressed the underlying factors that led to the outbreak of the Arab Spring. The only thing such scholars were guilty of was not naming the day when the region would tilt.

The underlying factors that gave rise to the outbreak of protest and the calls for change, reform and even revolution had been steadily rising in most states of the Middle East and North Africa for at least a decade before 2011. They represented the discontent of a variety of groups and non-state strata in Arab society. Frustration grew at a variety of factors that included suffocating state repression, economic downturn and corruption (Haddad and Atassi, 2013). For example, the global economic crisis of 2008 had serious repercussions, such as growing youth unemployment rates, in the states of the Middle East where the uprisings took place. Furthermore, industries – such as tourism – that played a major part in driving revenues in countries like Egypt and Tunisia were hit. Once again it was the young that were hit hardest. In Tunisia, for example, where the uprisings first broke out, youth unemployment was, according to the World Bank, at nearly 30 per cent (World Bank, 2009). In rural regions and periphery towns and villages, the state was virtually invisible in terms of providing services to its citizens. Neo-liberalization, as discussed in chapter 3, had not delivered benefits to all in society but had instead exacerbated existing inequalities. In countries like Egypt, this depressed wage costs and did nothing to stop spiralling price rises or cuts in government subsidies on basic foods such as flour or bread. While structural adjustment policies in Egypt and Tunisia may have satisfied the IMF, which had forced them to undertake such moves in the first place, and contributed to economic growth rates, they were not actually benefiting the majority of the population. The state was averse to large-scale public investment in the regions or social strata of their countries that needed it most. Grassroots initiatives were sidelined so as to distance the state from its obligations to society.

Corruption, nepotism and a propensity to kleptomania by regime leaders and their families was also an underlying factor that played a key part in popular revolution. It was no surprise then that this dissatisfaction was reflected in the Corruption Perception Index of 2011, in which most of the states of the Arab uprising achieved a score of less than 4 on a scale of 0 to 10. A score of 0 implied that a respondent believes a country is highly corrupt (Transparency International, 2011). It should be noted that corruption in the Arab states came in many guises, but all were a product of a culture of impunity, and lack of transparency and accountability, in such states. High-profile instances of corruption, especially among 'ruling families', were played out 'soap-opera' style. For example, the excesses of wealth amassed by President Ben Ali and his family, including his wife Leila Trabelsi, were exposed on social media and on websites like Wikileaks, which provided details of high-end luxury car concessions and the family's private business interests in banking, shipping, drugs and transport, to name but a few (Embassy Tunis, 2008). The sons of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak were investigated for amassing an estimated \$340 million wealth fund (AlMasry al-Youn, 2011). The barely disguised hold of such ruling families and their business interests over national economies actually discouraged direct foreign investment because this would require dealing with the 'gatekeepers' through their networks of bribery and corruption. These were practices that could not easily be carried through the books of legitimate businesses.

Box 10.1 Key factors of corruption

First, the lack of institutional reforms accompanying economic liberalisation programmes has created new opportunities for rent seeking ... Second, the prevalence of authoritarian rule in the region constitutes a major hindrance to transparency and accountability at both state and private sector levels. ... Libya's oil revenues, for example, constituting 95 per cent of the nation's exports, are held in secret funds controlled exclusively by Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi and his associates. ... Furthermore, most MENA governments compensate for low popular support or poor legitimacy by granting opportunities for bribery to leading families or cliques to ensure political survival.

(Leenders and Stakowicz, 2002)

Corruption, and the perception that interfacing on a daily basis requires bribery to ensure access across the states of the region, established the politics of antagonism and frustration. A simple bureaucratic procedure, such as changing car ownership, which in open societies can be completed quickly and at relatively small cost, is not simple in some countries of the Middle East. Corruption also means that nepotism works strongly to stifle professionalism and meritocracy in public service. This is a problem when such states are also characterized by overblown bureaucracies.

Another major underlying factor, which scholars and analysts had long warned was problematic, centred on the politics of the authoritarian state. States such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya had long featured in reports – from Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International, for example – as repressive and lacking in freedoms for their citizens. The citizens of such states, and others in the region, were prevented from voicing dissent, calling for reform or any form of criticism against state power-holders. In Jordan, for example, where widespread protests broke out in 2011, criticism of the monarchy was considered a punishable offence with a three-year prison term (Zacharia, 2010).

Moreover, in such states, security oversight was so pervasive that they were routinely referred to as 'police states'. Citizens could be arrested and held in indefinite detention, 'disappeared', tortured and killed. In countries such as Syria, secret prisons, state emergency law and the all-pervasive secret police (*mukhabarat*) ensured that politics was a state-run affair carefully stage-managed to keep dictators like President al-Assad in power. The citizens of these states were prevented from airing any form of dissent. Journalists, activists, comedians, artists and human rights workers were all considered fair game.

The state employed an array of legislative measures – under the 'national security threat' mantra – to harass its opponents and limit freedoms. Political opposition was effectively defanged by state policies. State rulers could arbitrarily appoint and dismiss their governments, send their citizens to notorious state security courts, shackle the independence of their legislatures, co-opt political parties and repress meaningful organized opposition. Opponents were spied on, harassed, sacked, regularly detained, prosecuted, kidnapped, disappeared into secret prisons and detention facilities, exiled or killed. Free media, freedom of association and free speech were aspirations, not real rights. The Arab Spring – the public and mass mobilization of discontent – was, then, an event just waiting to happen. The citizens of so many countries in the region lived in a constant state of fear and insecurity. Fear of their rulers and state-agents, insecurity at the limited opportunity to participate in economies and societies building for national prosperity, and lack of freedom were catalysts for change.

Winds of change

As should be abundantly clear by now, there is a challenge to expound the upheavals of the Arab Spring and to find ways to explain objectively the unfolding events in the Middle East and their portents. We need to avoid oversimplistic descriptions like 'the Facebook Revolution' or 'Arab Spring Islamist Autumn' because the changes that are taking place are extremely complex. They involve a variety of local and external forces. This is in fact a long and uncertain transition. There are a number of ways of looking at factors that commonly characterize the uprisings that took place across the region.

Factors

① Teenage kicks: youth and the Arab Spring

At the vanguard of the Arab Spring were the youth. This may be explicable by the simple fact that young people (aged 18–25) in the Middle East make up the majority of the population in most states. Indeed, this is frequently referred to as the 'youth bulge', affecting diverse societies across the region and transcending national, ethnic, sectarian and other boundaries. This means that the region has one of the youngest populations on the planet. As such, youth are a fundamental factor in the socio-economic picture of society. Politically, however, young people tend to feel excluded and marginalized from even those limited forms of political participation that were formally offered by the state before the Arab Spring. They were also largely presided over by political leaders who represented their grandparents' generation.

In the mid-2000s, the issue of youth was central to research and policy debate across the MENA region. In 2007, the World Bank report on *Development and the Next Generation* contended that regional prosperity hinged on utilizing the potential of young people. Since that time, however, progress in youth inclusion has been distinctly unimpressive (see figure 10.1). It is not simply that youth endure high rates of unemployment, but that they are increasingly marginalized politically.

Young people are considered to be developmental assets for the struggling economies of the Middle East and North Africa. Yet their potentialities have still to be truly realized. Youth unemployment, for example, in Jordan was estimated by the World Bank in 2014 as being at 28.8 per cent. Not only was this figure more than double the national unemployment level, but it also meant that more than one in every four young people was out of work (World Bank, 2016b). Jordan is not a special case. Across the region, youth unemployment is at an average of 25 per cent, including well-educated university and high school graduates among its growing numbers.



Figure 10.1 Youth unemployment landscape in the MENA region

Young people clearly acted as agents of change in the unfolding events of the Arab Spring. There were pronounced, gendered differences in such actions. Young men were often portrayed by the media in defining images of the organization of protest, demonstration and forms of resistance against incumbent regimes. Young women were incorporated at a secondary level. They tended to be framed by their veils and hijabs in public spaces, but, as we discussed in chapter 7, were at least or at last visible. Young people were the chief articulators of grievance against the state, and against authoritarian governance for denying them opportunity. Yet what also confounded many scholars of young mobilization in the region is that the Arab uprisings did not witness droves of young people – and young men in particular – rushing into the arms of violent extremist movements. Quite the opposite. Young people employed strategies of non-violent protest, social media, popular culture and mainstream youth activities, such as music and clothing, to promote a strategy for change. But the 'youth movement' that appeared to typify the Arab Spring was a convenient label applied to a highly disparate phenomenon. In truth, there was no such thing as an organized youth movement marshalling events or strategizing for change. Young people in Tunisia, for example, represented a complex dynamic of interests and identities alongside goals which they believed should be achieved once power changed.

When the ruling powers were overthrown, however, the youth faced significant obstacles from the incumbent generations, in both state and non-state organizational form, in the consolidation of their triumphs. The youth remain excluded from power-holding in both the formal and informal realms of society, economy and politics in the Arab world. In tribal contexts, in countries as diverse as Jordan and Yemen, young men have tried to lobby for a share of influence among 'elders' but they have failed. In Jordan, for example, tribal youths had lobbied to be included as candidates on tribal voting lists. Elders excluded them. Young women remain completely excluded from such structures. They remain firmly outside the tent. In non-state opposition movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the energy and political agenda of young people, both during the Arab Spring and in its aftermath, were resisted by those much older leaders presiding over the organization (Milton-Edwards, 2016a). Middle East states, even in the wake of the Arab Spring, still offer too few prospects for youth participation in decision-making, and generally inhibit youth access to governance. The media will highlight some exceptions, such as the Gulf princes in their thirties heading ambitious economic reform agendas, but in general young people remain marginalized. This is illustrated by the example of a young Jordanian graduate. In 2016, Mohammed, who had graduated with top honours in Civil Engineering from university, had been unemployed for over a year. He was driving an Uber car several hours a day just to escape the pressure, frustration, boredom and expectation that home and family

represented to him. He had not voted in the general election that had been held in September 2016. He had abstained, his friends had abstained and no one he knew had voted. It was contended that such a vote was a waste of time. For young people like Mohammed, the vote would not make any difference to how parliament worked or how it was controlled, as he believed it was all in the hands of his monarch. This is not to say that there had not been some progress, but rather that the majority of states in the region do not encourage young people to be invested in governance and politics. It is for this reason as well that, in the past, so many young people were drawn to opposition movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. There they found plenty of opportunities to be involved in political debates and discourses that incorporated a variety of issues. Such exclusion of youth, who are naturally agents of change, makes the rebellions that took place from 2010 onwards entirely explicable.

2. Rebellion and extremism

General rebellion against authoritarianism was also identified as a common feature of the Arab uprisings. This was perceived as an indicator that the 'third wave' of democratization was finally washing up in the Middle East. As discussed in chapter 6, there was some initial evidence that this was the case. The movements for change in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria were all characterized as centred on demands for democratic reforms and greater freedoms and rights. In Bahrain, for example, an array of opposition elements joined together on 14 February 2011 to call for democratic reforms from their leadership. Notably, as many as one in five citizens in this small Gulf state congregated at the Pearl Roundabout in Manama, to call on their ruler to establish an elected legislature and a new constitution. The state responded swiftly and brutally to put down the calls for democracy and protests. The ruling al-Khalifa family also relied on the deployment of thousands of troops from neighbouring Saudi Arabia (as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Peninsula Shield Force) to conquer the protest movement definitively. Jones argues that, six years after the uprising in Bahrain, authoritarianism has deepened:

Box 10.2 Bahrain's non-revolution

While the pro-democracy movement may have prompted minor concessions on the part of the government, the extent of the popular mobilization triggered the al-Khalifa regime's authoritarian reflex, and they have reacted to throttle the uprising by putting in place legislative, ideological, and political barriers to reform, which points not only to a current de-democratization, but also a lack of future democratization.

(Jones, 2016, p. 251)

Authoritarian regimes fought back. By 2017, the Pearl Roundabout was bulldozed, remnant of the past, only distinguished by the ever-preserver armoured vehicles of the Bahraini state. The third wave of democracy has, for the time being, been ruthlessly suppressed.

The fear that the Arab Spring would be hijacked by the forces of Islamism proved partially founded. Yet it was extreme Islamism that has gained the most from the instability and uncertainty of the transition era. Powerful states within the region have employed tropes that have demonized groups like the Muslim Brotherhood to force them from power while at the same time they have pursued sectarian agendas that have led them to support an arm Sunni extremist rebellion in Syria. Yet, despite the tensions between the Muslim Brotherhood in power and the military in Egypt, and the electoral and power-sharing successes of Ennahda in Tunisia, this was not where the threat lay. These elements of reformist and moderate Islam have partially demonstrated their ability to transition from the authoritarian milieu to different forms of governance. In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, there is speculation that the movement was not given enough time or autonomy to promote transition to democracy. Others vehemently disagree with this argument, reasoning that this lack of progress towards democracy was why a counter-revolution was launched and that, once again, the Egyptian military stepped into the breach. Egypt today contends with violent Islamist threat in North Sinai and other relatively ungoverned space across the country.

In Yemen and Libya, Islamist elements now account for newly dispersed and extreme varieties of Islamism. Similarly, in Syria, the democratic opposition, which mutated dangerously into armed rebellion against the government of al-Assad, has spawned a plethora of rival Islamist cells, brigades and groups (Lister, 2016). As in the past, extreme Islamist elements have capitalized on the ungoverned spaces to embark on violent jihad and contest for control of the state, or to declare new caliphate states themselves.

This also brings us to the issue of the Arab state itself in the wake of the uprisings. The notion of statehood, its roles, its foundations and claims to legitimacy have been challenged and questioned. As such, basic conception – for example citizenship, nation, nation-state, sovereignty and nationalism as discussed in chapter 2 – have been tested and found wanting by millions of people in the region. This has led academics and policy-makers to ask whether, in the wake of the Arab Spring, the state has reformulated and changed, particularly in respect of the social contract with its domestic constituencies.

There is little evidence that state rulers have been capable of such change or an ability to negotiate new ways of governing. If anything, as we discuss below, the authoritarian state has remained resilient and has been 'allowed' to defend the interests of entrenched governing elites with little interference from the liberal-democratic states of the West. The so-called statist triad

posed by ISIS and its caliphate claims have proved to be a disruption – albeit temporary – to norms of sovereignty and nationalism in the Middle East. If anything, the threat evident in the ferocious self-rule norms of the caliphate state of Raqqa in Syria and Sunni lands in Iraq has established a foundation for the reactionary rhetoric of power-holding elites in Arab states across the region. Furthermore, in the wake of the Arab Spring, the Arab state is increasingly epitomized by the array of coercive instruments it deploys against its own citizenry, as enemies within. As such, civilian-military relations are largely in abeyance as state military and security institutions preside over the political frameworks of governance. By 2017, the military, security and other state agencies of coercion were actively inserted in the broken politics of Syria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen and beyond. In Libya, for example, General Haftar was put in charge of the Libyan National Army and has remained a pivotal political actor in the pre- and post-Gaddafi era. In the wake of the Arab Spring, he has actively inserted himself into the evolving and fissuring domestic political drama, as well as cultivating important external alliances with states like Russia.

In essence, in the wake of the Arab Spring, the social actors that tried to re-define a new relationship have, with the notable exception of in Tunisia, largely failed. The empowerment of a broad array of social actors, including women, youth, labour activists, business people and the middle classes, that was so evident in the dynamic of the Arab Spring, has butted up against a reactive state that recovered and then went on an all-out offensive against them. The state has continued to treat its social actors with disdain. State rulers have, as we have demonstrated, employed a variety of means to portray such social actors and their grievances as a national security threat. State elites will portray these as 'agents of a hostile foreign state' or as a threat to public order. In Bahrain, for example, the state prosecuted and jailed doctors and nurses on charges equivalent to treason, for treating protesters injured in the Pearl Roundabout uprisings. In Syria, many civil society organizations established out of necessity in response to the state's lethal approach to thwarting the uprisings have been subsequently targeted as hostile actors. Medical organizations, for example, have been deliberately targeted by the Syrian state. It is questionable whether such civil society actors and organizations can survive in hostile environments like these. Yet the state, in such contexts, is frequently incapable of offering the kinds of public service that keep society functioning and the social contract intact.

Unfolding spectacle of political change

It is necessary to have a timeline in order to demonstrate the reach of the Arab Spring. The countries that have been included are the states in which widespread protest was most apparent, and also where some regimes

actually toppled. This was an unfolding spectacle that spread like political wildfire from one country to another across North Africa and the Middle East. At first it appeared uncontrollable and the ruling regimes of states across the region looked, for the first time in decades, to be uncertain of their much-vaunted authoritarian stability.

There were 'features' attributed to the Arab Spring. Such features included the fact that the initial demonstrations and protests were distinctly pacifist and non-violent. Protestors also deployed and enacted forms of creativity in their defiance of their political rulers and governing elite. There were claims that, in specific instances, social media formed a key determinant of mobilization and bringing people together in the public spaces of the largest cities and the smallest towns or villages. As the state sought to counteract protest by employing repressive and violent measures, the protestors organized themselves to care for the injured in makeshift clinics, triages and treatment centres. The people themselves challenged the all-pervasive fear that had, in the case of states like Syria, effectively controlled entire populations.

The uprisings were also shaped by the majority of the youth who streamed to the streets from their homes to occupy public spaces and act as captains of the revolution. Many major barriers enshrined in the patriarchal state and a paternalistic society were also fractured as women emerged as actors in their own right. This is evident from the role played by journalist and activist Tawakkol Karman in the Yemen uprising. Karman was awarded a Nobel Peace prize in 2011.

Tunisia

- **17 December 2010** Tunisian Mohammed Bouazizi sets himself on fire outside the local municipal office in an act of protest after being humiliated by local police officers for not having a permit to run a vegetable stall. Popular protests break out across the country.
- **14 January 2011** Ben Ali announces his resignation and flees to Saudi Arabia, ending twenty-three years in power.
- **27 March 2011** Tunisia unveils a new cabinet of technocrats, none of whom has served in governments under Ben Ali.
- **23 October 2011** Tunisia votes in the first election of the Arab Spring, choosing from among eighty political parties to form an assembly charged with drafting a constitution within a year.
- **19 February 2013** Tunisia's Prime Minister resigns. Former Interior Minister Ali Laaayech is appointed in his place.
- **28 September 2013** After talks with the opposition, Tunisia's Ennahdha-led government agrees to resign.
- **2014** Presidential and parliamentary elections are successfully held.
- **2015** The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, an alliance of workers, employers, lawyers and activists, wins the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Egypt

- 25 January 2011 Mass protests in Egypt demand for Mubarak to resign.
- 28 November 2011 Egypt's first free elections. Islamist parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood, sweep the polls to win a parliamentary majority.
- 2012 Egyptians vote in the first round of the presidential elections.
- 2 June 2012 An Egyptian court sentences former President Hosni Mubarak to life in prison.
- 24 June 2012 Egypt's election commission announces that Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi has won Egypt's presidential elections.
- 22 November 2012 Morsi issues a new constitutional decree, giving himself sweeping powers and banning any challenges to decisions he makes. The move later triggered mass protests in front of the presidential palace.
- June 2013 Anti-government protests break out.
- 3 July - 17 August 2013 President Morsi deposed. General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi installs Supreme Court Chief Justice Adly Mansour as interim president. Muslim Brotherhood leaders arrested. Morsi supporters take to the streets in protest. Egyptian security forces raid al-Nahda Square and Rabaa al-Adawiya Square, leaving more than 500 dead.
- 23 September 2013 Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood banned.
- May 2014 General el-Sisi wins 97 per cent of the vote in election.

Yemen

- 27 January 2011 Protests erupt in Yemen, as opposition groups call for President Saleh to stand down.
- 23 November 2011 President Saleh agrees to transfer power under an agreement brokered by the GCC.
- 27 February 2012 Abd Rabbuh Mansur al-Hadi becomes new President.

Bahrain

- 14-17 February 2011 More than 100,000 Bahrainis participate in demonstrations. State responds by forcibly and violently suppressing protest.
- 14 March 2011 Saudi troops enter Bahrain. The GCC agrees to send troops of the Peninsula Shield Force at the request of the Bahraini government. About 4,000 Saudi Arabian troops and 500 UAE police arrive.
- 18 March 2011 The Pearl Roundabout is demolished. An important symbol and focal point of the Bahraini uprising and opposition movement is destroyed.

Libya

- 15-17 February 2011 Protests erupt in Libya.
- March 2011 UN Resolution 1973 authorizes 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians in Libya from pro-Gaddafi forces.
- 19 March 2011 NATO starts bombing Libya.
- 20 October 2011 Gaddafi is captured and killed by rebel fighters in the city of Sirte. A few days later, the National Transition Council officially declares an end to the 2011 Libyan Civil War.

Morocco

- 20 February 2011 Moroccans take to the streets to demand a change of government and constitutional reforms.
- 1 July 2011 Moroccans vote to approve constitutional changes that curb monarchical power, amid calls by activists to boycott the referendum because changes fall short of popular demands.

Syria

- 6 March 2011 Demonstrations in the southern town of Deraa calling on the regime of President Bashar al-Assad to reform. Protests soon spread to Damascus, Aleppo and other cities. The regime orders state forces to put down the protests.
- March 2011 Rebel groups spring up across the country to represent a myriad of often competing ethnic, confessional and sectarian interests, alongside the Free Syrian Army. Syrian army defectors. Al-Qaeda offshoot Jabhat al-Nusra established and recruits foreign fighters.
- 10 January 2012 President al-Assad makes his first public speech in months, mixing defiance with promises of reform and an insistence that 'victory' for his regime is imminent.
- 15 July 2012 The International Committee of the Red Cross officially declares that the Syrian uprising is a civil war.
- 12 February 2013 Syria's death toll since the start of the civil war exceeds 70,000.
- 21 August 2013 Syrian activists claim that government forces have carried out a poison-gas attack in Damascus.

Algeria

- 3 January 2011 In Algeria, violence erupts as protesters claim the government is responsible for corruption, limitations on freedom of speech, and poor living conditions.
- 8 January 2011 The Algerian government lowers food prices and cuts taxes on sugar and cooking oils.
- 12 January 2011 Algeria faces a state of emergency as protests quickly escalate.

- February 2011 The government announces measures aimed at boosting employment and reducing the cost of food.
- 10 May 2012 Legislative elections are held, which retain power for the incumbent coalition of President Bouteflika's National Liberation Front and Prime Minister Ouyahia's National Rally for Democracy amidst accusations of electoral fraud.

Jordan

- January 2011 Jordanians call for more jobs and an end to government corruption. They soon demand greater democracy and for the king's powers to be reduced.
- March 2011 The National Dialogue Committee is established and tasked with matching government political reform with public opinion. Many decline offers of Committee positions due to lack of confidence in its effectiveness.
- 24 March 2011 Demonstrations include calls for action expressly to tackle over-reaching of the regime's security services.
- November 2012 Clashes with security forces after thousands take to the streets to show their anger at the government's IMF-induced abolition of fuel subsidies.
- January 2013 Parliamentary elections are held two years early, with the king promising to consult parliament over the choice of Prime Minister for the first time. However, opposition parties – led by the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic Action Front – continue to boycott the polls in protest at electoral laws favouring royalist loyalists. (Al Jazeera, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2013/12/timeline-arab-spring-2013121714018534352.html)

Authoritarian resilience

The momentum of change wrought by the Arab Spring across the region and the threat it posed to authoritarian regimes were resisted. The state struck back. In some states, like Bahrain, the regime was able successfully to manage and call upon aid from its near neighbour Saudi Arabia to effect a definitive repression of the protest movement. In other states, the counter-revolution or state response took longer to galvanize, but when it did it was fierce and deeply repressive. This demonstrated the resilience of authoritarian states in the region and their resistance to democracy-promotion approaches. This, in turn, reinforced the prevalent idea that the region was an exception when it came to plural politics and freedoms.

Authoritarian regimes had, in most cases, spent decades funding and building up their security apparatuses to use against their own citizens. The response by actors invested in the maintenance of such regimes was to 'adapt and protect' (Heydemann and Leenders, 2011). As the wave of protest broke

out across the region, state incumbents devised approaches to put incipient demands from citizens in their own states down. A range of means were employed to mediate the ongoing tension between state and citizen. In some nations, like Egypt, state interest was evident in the role that the military played in the counter-revolution to end the presidency of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi and to effectively install General-then-President el-Sisi in his place.

As discussed in chapter 4 of this book, the military in states like Egypt and Syria is a strong stakeholder in the state and economy. Keeping the military on board was key to regime maintenance. In other regimes, rulers resorted to stalling strategies, promising political reforms, delaying change and parsing promises to open up power structures and make them more transparent and accountable. This is evident in states like Jordan, where King Abdullah II responded to protests calling for an end to corruption and democratic transformation. To be sure, there was evidence of some adjustment – for example, to electoral laws – but more significantly the ruling Hashemite regime further consolidated executive power in the hands of the monarch. The regime has subsequently clamped down even further on reformist calls for freedom of association and the press.

Nevertheless, the Arab Spring has exposed the dynamic of power in incumbent authoritarian regimes and the lengths to which mutual dependencies have grown between rulers, the military and heads of powerful security and intelligence agencies. Military spending, as explained in chapter 4, has increased in the wake of the Arab Spring, at a time when the economies of the region can ill afford such expenditure (Small Arms survey, 2015). The state cannot incur the loss of the loyalty of its armed forces or security and intelligence agencies. They are the tool of power employed on an almost daily basis against the citizen. External backing is also apparent in the continuing and expedited support of arms sales and military assistance from countries like the USA, China and Russia to the regimes.

There is also evidence of a strategic calculus in a region-wide dynamic of support from one regime to another. This calculus of power has been complex and has simultaneously operated internally as well as in regional and international diplomatic relationships. Where possible, the status quo has been maintained, and international state actors have supported such states or provided the means of assistance to allow them to continue to repress their populations and inhibit rights and freedom. As such, there has been a region-wide consolidation of power and regime preservation to prevent Arab leaders – such as Bashar al-Assad in Syria – from being toppled from power.

It should be noted, however, that, in preserving power, the authoritarian state has also practised divide and rule tactics in their own nations as well as against others in the Middle East arena whom they consider inimical to their interests. This is most telling and apparent in the sectarian dynamic of

the Arab Spring and conflicts that have subsequently ensued. In particular, Sunni state actors have employed sectarian tropes to demonize the *Shi'a* other. In Arab Gulf states, argues Matthieson, sectarianism during and in the wake of the Arab Spring has been 'encouraged by sectarian entrepreneurs, namely people who used sectarian politics to bolster their own positions' (2013, p. 7). The state has also succeeded in threatening their populations with fear of chaos and instability (*fihad*). Here, the state has employed the threat of the uncertain in order to control and repress in perpetuation of the power of its existing and ruling elite. The state effectively struck back and, with few exceptions, the intervening period since 2011 has not led to meaningful opening of societies, improved economies or transition to plural democratic rule.

Uncertain future

The future of the region is almost impossible to predict. Many of the issues outlined in this book – such as political economy, political Islam, the state and its rulers – will probably continue to determine the political systems which will develop in the Middle East over the next decade – not least of which will be the unfolding legacy of the Arab Spring/Awakening. The resilience of authoritarian regimes – whether monarchical, presidential republic or theocratic – will continue to be tested and challenged by the region's citizens. The previous notion of enduring authoritarianism as key to the stability of the region has been partly debunked. New political systems and dispensations will be shaped by a number of factors including historic legacy and tradition, elite constellations, economic development, the role of the military in the state, regional and external interests, and – perhaps meaningful for the first time – the preferences of a truly enfranchised citizenry. The following case studies have been chosen because they are all examples of power being toppled, rather than regime resilience. Libya and Yemen have also been selected as they tend otherwise to be overlooked in many accounts of contemporary politics in the Middle East. Yet in these two states, the most fragile of political arrangements emerged. In both countries, the collapse of state authority and proliferation of violence, including that of al-Qaeda and ISIS, have major security implications for the wider region and the West.

Case study

Libya fracturing

After more than forty years in power, the resilience of the authoritarian regime of Muammar Gaddafi looked assured. It was not, Libya's Arab Spring, with America-led NATO support, toppled Gaddafi. The bloody collapse of the

regime, however, would not herald the opportunities of stability, prosperity and equal governance for the country's 6 million citizens.

Instead, Libya's Arab Spring was typified by the proliferation of rival local militias that quickly overran the mostly peaceful civil protest that broke out in February 2011. Within a year of Gaddafi's death, the country was in the grip of a civil war. The opportunity for free and fair elections had led to the outbreak of violence as Islamist-aligned rebel militia took up arms against the elected government, forcing it in turn to flee from the Libyan capital Tripoli to the eastern city of Tobruk.

Since 2011, political change has been dislocated by the extent to which rebel militias have impacted transitional governance. The transitional ruling authorities have constantly struggled to address substantive governance issues such as the economy, law and order, security and post-conflict reconstruction. The transition was initially heralded by elections to Libya's new legislative structures. Additionally, constitution drafting in the post-Gaddafi dispensation also got underway. By 2014, open dispute was occurring and the descent into civil collapse and crisis seemed inevitable.

Subsequent conflicts involving Libyans from all parts of the country immobilized the political transition. Since 2014, militia groups and locally organized political leaders (such as those from the Islamist Libya Dawn) remain the most powerful arbiters of rule. Violent Islamist extremists such as ISIS have exploited these circumstances to gain a foothold in Libya – for example, in Sirte – to use it as a North African base from which to organize. Criminal elements, including human traffickers and smugglers, have also exploited Libya's ungoverned spaces to turn the country into one of the major embarkation points for migrants to Europe.

Despite the obviously ill-fated NATO intervention – which was perceived as an excuse for US-inspired regime change rather than protection of civilians – the international community remained engaged with Libya. In August 2014, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2174, authorizing financial and travel sanctions on individuals and entities found to be 'engaging in or providing support for other acts that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct or undermine the successful completion of its political transition'. UN-supported governance-building has drawn in a variety of political groupings including: two competing parliaments, political parties and their activists, local municipalities (including mayors and representatives of local councils), tribes, militia and women. At meetings and sessions in Libya, Switzerland, Morocco, Algeria, Belgium and Tunisia, negotiating parties discussed ceasefires, frameworks for a political process, unity government formation, the phased withdrawal of armed groups, prison visits, the rights of the Tawergha, reopening airports, refugee return and enhancing the participation of women in politics.

By December 2015, some Libyan leaders had been encouraged to support a UN-negotiated agreement to create a Government of National Accord (GNA)

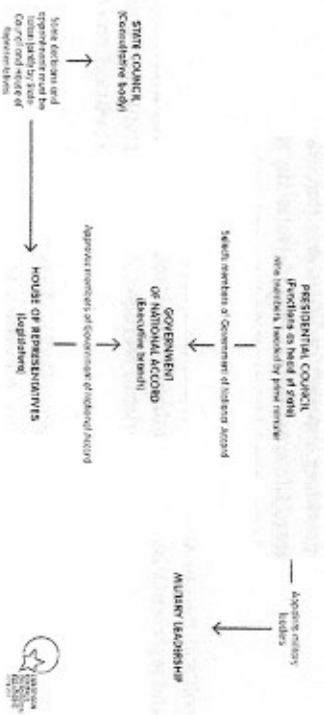
to oversee the completion of the transition from dictatorship to a growing democracy.

The GNA Prime Minister would be Fayez al-Sarraj. In March 2016, the new Prime Minister and his government returned to Libya. Al-Sarraj has not enjoyed anything like unanimous support. Despite – or because of – UN backing, al-Sarraj cannot command authority or establish unitary legitimacy over the whole of Libya. In eastern Libya, for example, the governance of al-Sarraj is considered nothing more than a cover for foreign agendas. This has led to a spiral of competition to control oil installations, as well as in seeking to combat the threat from ISIS.

More than six years after the Arab Spring, Libya remains weak and vulnerable to exploitation. The US government considers Libya a terrorist safe-haven. The rise of ISIS, principally in Sirte, gave significant cause for concern both in and outside of Libya. By late 2016 though, a variety of Libyan forces (secretly supported by outside actors) had succeeded in mostly ousting ISIS from its strongholds. The US, the French and the Russians are among a number of stakeholding countries engaged in Libya's security situation.

Libya's oil plays a significant part in post-Arab Spring calculations and stability. Control of this resource has proven to be an instrument of war rather than peace. Nevertheless, the UN has given the GNA the right to export oil and use its vital revenues to combat the economic crisis that grips the country. Since 2014, the national oil company has resumed production and oil export routes have reopened. The fragile political structure and chaos of Libya, as armed elements engage in civil war-like practices, have, however, threatened the flow of oil.

The future for Libya in the wake of the Arab Spring is uncertain. The ruling bargain – mediated by the UN – struck between Libya's diverse representatives has failed to gain significant traction on the ground.



Case study

Egypt – children of the revolution

The Egyptian revolution began with the outbreak of protest on 25 January 2011. The revolution was mainly non-violent with protest consisting of demonstrations, marches, strikes and myriad acts of civil disobedience. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians united in a common call to overthrow the thirty-year-old regime of ruling autocrat President Hosni Mubarak. Protests took place all over Egypt but spectacularly in the occupation of Cairo's Tahrir (liberation) Square. The protestors waved placards declaring that it was 'game over' for Mubarak and his regime. His days looked numbered as, over the succeeding period, more and more people responded to social media exhortations to leave their homes and join the thousands of others in protest at Tahrir Square. In the Square, protestors significantly outnumbered state forces, such as riot police, who had been dispatched to break up the protest. Demonstrations that were incipient with calls for some reforms quickly transformed into a large-scale revolutionary uprising against the entire Mubarak regime.

For decades, President Mubarak concentrated power into his own hands. He appointed and sacked his Prime Minister and government, could dissolve the legislature, apply a veto to any legislation and ignore parliament by putting his proposals to the public directly through gerrymandered referenda. The ruling party – the National Democratic Party – anointed by Mubarak was permitted to enjoy a monopoly of power at his command. Like other rulers in the region, Mubarak also deployed security measures under the guise of emergency laws to give the state in effect a range of tools to repress and control its activist or opposition citizens. The state prevented free association, engaged in censorship of the media, banned most trade union organizations and used legislation to keep wages low.

President Mubarak had hoped to use these coercive tools of power to quash the uprisings. At first, his security forces, in particular the police and state-militarised ' thugs', complied and attacked protestors. Yet when the Egyptian military appeared to side with protestors, the tide turned against Mubarak and he was forced from power. Interim arrangements in post-revolutionary Egypt kept the military at the centre of power. The Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) would govern through the post-revolutionary period. SCAF, in fact, became pivotal to the escalating tensions that unfolded between civil and military actors. While the military had long enjoyed autonomy and power, it clearly had an important political role (bolstered by popular support) in the transition. This inevitably led to clashes with civilian power-holders, especially when President Morsi attempted to rescind SCAF's political powers. Nevertheless, the military remained Egypt's most powerful institution and it was thus no surprise that General el-Sisi led the charge against the elected and ruling Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. A report posted

by WikiLeaks highlighted 'the main priority of the military throughout the 2011 and 2012 elections was to ensure the election of a Parliament and executive who would uphold the military-industrial complex' (Bassoumi, 2016).

The Islamists also originally emerged to play a pivotal role in the transition. In effect, they had both the most to gain from the revolution and, ultimately, it would prove, the most to lose. As noted earlier, the Islamists did not initiate the revolution. Nor did they lead the broad coalition of social forces calling for Mubarak to go. The Muslim Brotherhood leadership was, instead, cautious. Yet, when the transition offered opportunities for elected power, not only were Islamists the best organized but they were ready to contend for power through opportunities offered at the ballot box.

There were always suspicions, however, that the Islamists would use power to institute their own form of authoritarian rule. The fact that President Morsi set about using power to shape Egypt's political landscape as it evolved post-revolution did not augur well. President Morsi gave himself far-reaching powers of governance while attempting to disarm the military politically at the same time. After the emergence of a popular backlash, he quickly rescinded his self-empowering decrees. Commentators wondered aloud whether post-Mubarak Egypt would simply be a reactive artifice of power dictated to by the power of popular opinion. Morsi had promised to lead the country in forms of democratic governance but he was constantly challenged by the power of the military and became increasingly embroiled in the 'unwinnable' fight with this deeply embedded state institution. Furthermore, the Brotherhood were ill equipped to govern a country – especially one where the institutions of state were tilted against them and had almost permanently excluded them. The impatience of the people with the Brotherhood grew as it clearly struggled to rise to the challenge of economic recovery. Again, these were challenges that did not play well to the skills of the Brotherhood. In their wake, the government of President el-Sisi, as was discussed in chapter 3, has also struggled to get the Egyptian economy back on its feet. In 2016 and 2017, sugar and bread riots broke out once again in Egypt and the President embroiled himself in domestic political controversy.

Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood were pushed from power in the summer of 2013 and since that time they have been charged and tried in the Egyptian courts. President el-Sisi is considered to be a leader whom the administration of President Donald Trump can deal with. El-Sisi had joined in the regional reactionary steps of Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE in demolishing the mobilizing power of political Islam in the guise of the Brotherhood. By 2017, the Arab Spring had clearly failed in the Egyptian context; even former President Mubarak had been released from jail. Yet the underlying causes of revolt remained, and were, in some cases, exacerbated. The authoritarian state was back in business – literally. The youth who had made the uprising possible couldn't organize themselves sufficiently to translate this into political power. The Egyptian military has evidently been

contemptuous of democracy promotion, and state security forces have played their role alongside other actors in manufacturing insecurity and, in turn, creating a yearning for the stability inherent in repressive authoritarian rule. The Islamists were not truly prepared for power. It proved to be the case that they were ill equipped, beyond their slogans of 'Islam is the solution', to effect the sufficient internal organizational change necessary to engage in effective governance.

Case study

Yemen from hope to war

For the first-time student of the politics of the contemporary Middle East, Yemen can be a daunting topic. The politics of Yemen is defined by a complex convergence of highly competitive and fractious tribal elements, Islamist actors (including al-Qaeda), a history of secession and political reunification (North Yemen and South Yemen were reunified in 1990), as well as smaller religious factions, including the Houthi sect. The country has a strategic foothold on the tip of the Gulf peninsula.

Yemen has a political system vulnerable to the competing forces of tribal powers and violent extremism. Essentially, President Ali Abdullah Saleh had presided over a weak state for more than thirty years. Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) has also exploited this weakness and lack of central government control to establish itself in Yemen. AQAP was a threat to regional security and of considerable concern to the USA. This explains why the USA was committed to supporting President Saleh's authoritarian regime. From its base in Yemen, AQAP had repeatedly attacked American, Saudi and British targets, and highlighted the extent to which absence of government control could be exploited in Yemen. Over the years, AQAP has, despite US drone strikes and counter-terrorist operations, continued to anchor itself in Yemen.

Hence, the Arab Spring revolt in Yemen was of great importance due to the country's vulnerability as the poorest state in the Middle East and as a base for AQAP. Popular protest broke out in early 2011 and persisted throughout the year. Yemenis, like their counterparts elsewhere in the region, were demanding freedom, democracy and better living conditions. President Saleh thought that, with minor concessions (and US backing), he could hang on to power, but this was proven not to be the case. In Yemen, tribal politics also played a role in hastening transition as powerful clan leaders swung behind the urban protests in Sana'a. Remarkably, Yemen is the only example of a negotiated Arab Spring transition. On 23 November 2011, President Saleh finally relinquished power to his Vice-President and, in early 2012, went into exile in neighbouring Saudi Arabia. In February 2012, Abd Rabbuh Mansour al-Hadi was inaugurated as President Saleh and his General People's Congress (GPC) had been overturned. Yet, as Durac contends, the popular

protest 'was quickly overtaken and marginalized both by the established parties of opposition and by tribal actors. While Saleh's exit from office represents a major rupture in Yemeni political life', in the wake of the Arab Spring the deep state and forms of authoritarian power were reasserted (2012, p.161).

The transition phase did not lead to the establishment of national dialogue, unity and power-sharing. Instead, the country inched inexorably closer and closer to civil war. The transitional government of President al-Hadi failed to begin to reform the political institutions of the Yemeni state, to begin even the most incipient forms of effective economic reform needed to meet the challenges of rampant poverty, or to begin to tackle the endemic corruption that was the hallmark of President Saleh's rule. President Saleh remained an increasingly effective spoiler of the transition. Saleh has effectively sabotaged the transition, formed an alliance with the Houthi rebels and demonstrated the power of the deep state in the contemporary politics of the Middle East.

The international community failed to understand the fragility of the transition and to support the national government adequately. Moreover, for countries like the USA, the Yemeni imperative has been AQAP and the fight against it. The transitional government tried to join the anti-AQAP fray but, given other strains in Sana'a, were unable to strike against it effectively.

Houthis had long been on the margins of Yemeni society and had fallen foul of President Saleh's regime. Houthis are from the Zaidi Imamate of north Yemen that had enjoyed power until the revolution of 1962 (Boucek, 2010). Yet, as Baron noted, 'It is a testament to the faults of Yemen's transitional government that even many Yemenis with deep aversion to the Houthis initially welcomed their takeover of Sana'a in September 21st of last year' (Baron, 2015).

Since 2014, when Houthi rebels took control of the Yemeni capital Sana'a, the country has been embroiled in conflict. This in turn has drawn powerful regional actors into a proxy war (a pro-Hadi Saudi-led alliance against Iranian-supported Houthi rebels). By September 2014, the Houthi leaders had effectively forced President al-Hadi from power. He turned to Saudi Arabia to intervene. Since then, Saudi Arabia has led a regional military alliance that has targeted the Houthis with the aim of returning President al-Hadi to power. Houthi power was consolidated in early 2015 when they assumed full control over Yemen's governing institutions and moved against other political groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Milton-Edwards, 2016a). Regional and security actors condemned the moves. The UN, for example, affirmed support for President al-Hadi and called for a full reconciliation and dialogue effort mediated by their special envoy. The Houthi rebels averred and instead entered into dialogue and agreement with the government of Iran.

By March 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the formation of a coalition of GCC member states, as well as Jordan and Morocco, to launch Operation 'Decisive Storm', against Houthi forces and bases (Mazzei and Kirkpatrick,

2015). Yemen's tribal groupings also joined the confrontation against the Houthis.

With the onset of civil conflict and military strikes by outside regional and international actors, Yemen's Arab Spring transition has come to a shuddering and irrevocable halt. In 2017, as the conflict in Yemen came to the end of its second year, official UN agencies reported on the mounting human toll. The situation was described as one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The acceleration of conflict had intensified an already existing long-drawn-out human catastrophe, characterized by endemic poverty, weak governance and almost non-existent rule of law. Tribal power was now holding more sway and influence in Yemen than both its elected representatives and the government of President al-Hadi.

Yemen has imploded further as the Saudi-led coalition has fought the Houthi rebels. This form of external influencing by outside Gulf actors has exacerbated conflict in a state that even before the Arab Spring had struggled to hold the national fabric together under decades of authoritarian rule. Its Arab Spring moment had promised change until authoritarian forces reasserted themselves and the power vacuums were exploited. The principal victims of the conflict in Yemen are not armed forces on either side but ordinary people. These people are also mostly unable to meet their basic needs and attain fundamental rights. Indeed, by 2017, as many as 3.5 million Yemenis were homeless, either internally displaced or refugees who had fled to other countries because of the conflict. Worse was to come when a cholera epidemic was declared by international health organizations.

International attempts to manage and negotiate an end to the conflict had largely failed. Yemenis have also contended with a humanitarian resource crisis. Moreover, international organizations and regional states were also subject to repeated criticism from organizations like Human Rights Watch for inaction and silence over the Yemen crisis, as well as coalition abuses. Houthi rebels drew censure for dragging child soldiers into the conflict.

Regional interference has thus exacerbated the transition. In essence, since the Arab Spring Yemen has become a theatre of the Saudi-Iranian 'cold war'. As Salisbury notes,

Box 10.3 Unlikely allies

At first sight, Yemen appears likely to be another country where Saudi-Iranian tensions further complicate existing home-grown rivalries. At root, however, the latter are local disputes, far more than they are a proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Houthis' recent expansion is partly a reflection of a newfound alliance with an unlikely bedfellow: former president Saleh is at heart a nationalist secularist – and historically an enemy of the group – but is for now an ally against their common rivals.

Saudi Arabia, along with some of its allies in the USA, is concerned at Iranian regional expansionism in the Gulf and other parts of the Middle East such as the Levant (Syria and Lebanon). Iran has supported the Houthi militarily and financially with respect to their ambitions to achieve functioning governance and the provision of basic services to the country's population.

Events since 2014, including the civil war, the continued presence of AQAP, tribal strengthening and the slide into humanitarian crisis, have reversed the gains of the Arab Spring. In Yemen, as in other countries in the region, the Arab Spring has highlighted that contemporary politics in the Middle East remains a contest for power between state rulers and their subject populations. The global importance of the politics of the region should never be underestimated.

Questions for discussion

- Popular movements overthrew dictators, but did they overthrow authoritarianism in the Middle East? Discuss with reference to Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya or Syria.
- What does the Arab Spring tell us about the future for Islamist groups in the region?
- If socio-economic indicators have not improved since 2011, does this mean that another Arab uprising is inevitable?

Recommended reading

- Books and publications that came out initially, in the immediate wake of the Arab Spring, were more likely to provide snapshot analyses and indications of events than measured analysis. For example, Filhi's (2012) and Gelvin's (2012) books fall into this category, but they are still good as scene-setters and indications of the energy and new horizons initially indicated by the events of 2010–12. Owen (2012) frames the debate about the Arab Spring through a strong analysis of the Arab state.
- In the years that followed, this changed. In the works of authors such as Gerjets (2015), Dabashi (2012), Noueihed and Warren (2012), Sadiki (2015) and the edited work of Agathangelou and Newzat (2013), we see the provision of good insight and framing of the Arab Spring to help make sense of the phenomenon and responses to it.
- Haas and Lesch (2017), along with McMurray and Uihel-Somers (2013), offer insights in edited collections that look at the challenges for democracy and popular resistance offered by the Arab Spring.
- The significant role played by Arab youth in igniting and leading the uprisings is accounted for in the work of authors like Floris (2012), the edited text by Schaffer (2015), and Khalil (2016), who also adds an important

gender perspective. The edited text by Sayre and Yousef (2016) demonstrates the extant factors that affected Arab youth and motivated them to action. The UN Human Rights video on youth bloggers and the Arab Spring (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElpGfC5Vo_0) and the Al Jazeera programme which follows the 'April 6th' youth who were key in the Egyptian revolution (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BS27Ln5KzRU>) are worth watching for the insights they bring.

- The Middle East in the wake of the Arab Spring and counter-response by authoritarian states is analysed in Kamwara (2016), Brownlee (2015) and Haseeb's (2014) edited collection. Lynch (2017) explores the dangerous and violent disintegration of the Arab Spring into the conflicts of the present day. In doing so he critically examines the role of external actors as well.
- Fraihat (2016) offers a strong account of the effects of the Arab uprisings in Yemen, Libya and Tunisia that contextualize civil mobilization and state resilience.
- On Libya, it is worth reading works that address the country under Gaddafi's rule, such as Pargeter (2012) and Wright (2012). The text from Engelbrekt and Mohlin (2015) focuses on regime change and international involvement in Libya since the Arab Spring, including the American-led NATO alliance. Erdag's book (2017) examines the post-Arab Spring disintegration of the Libyan state and the ensuing civil conflict. Sensini (2016) similarly addresses the nature of interventionism in Libya.
- On Egypt, there are all sorts of accounts of the Arab Spring, including one so-called comic account from Egypt's equivalent of John Stewart Bassem Yousef. If you like expletives, this is the recommended 'study' for you! Powerful academic analysis is offered by Ketchley (2017) and the edited text of Korany and El-Mahdi (2014) in terms of the revolution, social movement theory and contentious politics. Lacroix and Rouquier (2016) also have an edited collection that incorporates these themes alongside chapters on religion and the revolution. By extension, Pargeter's 2016 contribution on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (and Ennahda in Tunisia) is worthy of consideration.
- Yemen, as recognized earlier in this chapter, is a challenge for any student of the topic. To this end, a good route into the topic is Clark's excellent book from 2010. Although it was written and published before the outbreak of the Arab Spring, it still allows the reader to have an insight into the complex political structures of this often overlooked country. Fraihat (2016) and Lackner (2014) draw on dimensions of change in Yemen since 2011. Brandt (2017) and Hill (2017) reflect analysis that addresses important internal dimensions, such as tribal power and the Houthi rebellion, alongside the impact of Saudi (and other external) interventionism.