

# Radicalization, Terrorism, and Conflict



# Radicalization, Terrorism, and Conflict

Edited by

Tali K. Walters, Rachel Monaghan  
and J. Martín Ramírez

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**  

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-4617-1, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4617-2

To my husband, Peter, for his love and patience.

To my boys, Jacques and Julien.

To my wife, Tina, for her support.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are extremely grateful to those individuals who took time out of their busy academic and professional schedules to contribute to this book, and for their patience in dealing with our e-mails seeking clarification, exact page numbers and/or higher resolutions of images. This book would not have been possible without you!

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation of those individuals who have supported and continue to support the Society for Terrorism Research by their membership in the organization, their involvement with the Society's Advisory Board and Governing Board, their attendance at conferences, their contribution of articles for consideration to the Society's journal *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism & Political Aggression*, their membership on the Editorial Board, and their peer reviewing of submissions.

Finally, we are also grateful to Carol Koulikourdi at Cambridge Scholars Publishing for seeing merit in our project and for working with us on it.

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# INTRODUCTION

The events of September 11, 2001, with the terrorist attack on New York City, Washington DC, and the hijacking attempt on a fourth aircraft that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, brought into sharp focus a danger that had heretofore been relegated to the third rung of investigation, law enforcement, and academic research. It wasn't that world leadership was not aware of terrorism as a potential source of risk to their citizenry. Rather, the manifestation of this phenomenon seemed to be rare and circumscribed. When terrorist events occurred, if they received much media attention it was because they had unusual characteristics - a large number of deaths (i.e., the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building) or an uncharacteristic perpetrator (such as Harvard educated Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber).

The extremity of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States (USA), followed by equally devastating attacks in Bali, Madrid, and London (among other locations that suffered such attacks), brought into strong relief the importance of developing a clear understanding of this phenomenon. More recent events such as the right wing lone wolf attacks by Anders Breivik in Norway in July 2011, the killing of a prison guard on his way to work by dissident republicans in Northern Ireland in November 2012 and the January 2013 attack on the In Amenas refinery in Algeria orchestrated by Islamist militia leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar emphasize the continued diverse nature of the phenomenon. What we have learned in the past 12 years is that terrorism is a complex subject that requires multiple disciplinary and cultural perspectives to unravel.

In 2006, the Society for Terrorism Research (STR) emerged from the recognition of the need for global, interdisciplinary approaches to solving the intensifying risk posed by terrorist actors. This international, nonprofit, nonpartisan, multidisciplinary organization was created to bring together researchers, thought leaders, and practitioners who recognize that, in order to thoroughly understand the concept of terrorism, to lessen its occurrence, and to prevent the devastation that accompanies it, understanding and intervention will occur on the boundaries of disciplines and cultural borders. STR set out to create opportunities for the connections, collisions, and collaborations between those who are trying to solve the global

problem of terrorism. The collection found in these pages represents one manifestation of those efforts.

*Radicalization, Terrorism, and Conflict* (RTC) reflects the goals that STR set out to achieve. Represented in the pages of this book are research, theory, and analysis from authors from eight countries (Australia, USA, Northern Ireland, England, Greece, Iran, Spain, and China) that represent 10 different disciplines (political science, law, psychology, criminology, international studies, sociology, journalism, geography, engineering, and computer technology) and several different specializations within and across the disciplines (i.e., terrorism/security, aggression, peace, crime and intelligence analysis, and intercultural relations).

The title accounts for the process of becoming involved in, the engagement in, and the understanding of the devastating violence that is the result of terrorist action. Because these elements represent an ongoing, evolving process, any effort to capture a static understanding is impossible. The reader of this book will find that events have occurred since the submission of the manuscript's chapters that make some of the information presented obsolete. That is the nature of this phenomenon.

## Overview of the Volume

*Radicalization, Terrorism, and Conflict* (RTC) looks at the process of terrorism on the boundaries between disciplines and national lines, addressing current, rapidly evolving global issues and events. The volume is divided into three main sections that correspond to the key words in the title. Within each of these sections, expert contributors offer discussions on issues or topics related to the section.

First, RTC looks at aspects of the process by which individuals choose to become actors in the terrorist theater. Saideh Lotfian provides a broad overview of the economic, social, and political culture of Middle East and North African (MENA) countries, suggesting these elements contributed to the recent outbreak of dissent and violence throughout the MENA. Emmanuel Karagiannis interviewed European converts to Islam as the basis of his qualitative study to develop hypotheses regarding the radicalization of individuals who choose Islam as their religion. Using the case of Anders Breivik who, in 2011, killed 77 adolescents and adults in Norway, Lyndsey Harris and Rachel Monaghan address the role of right wing movements as a source of inspiration and support for individuals who choose terroristic violence to press their political agendas. Vivian Salama provides the reader with a window into the Internet's role in the

recruitment and development of terrorist actors and the spread of terroristic activity.

In the second section of RTC, authors approach terrorism from the legal side, across international jurisdictions, as well as through critiques of counter-terrorism efforts, with suggestions for moving forward. Pilar Otero explores the complicated issues related to legal definitions and prosecution of terrorism both within Spain and in the European Union. Jessie Blackbourn analyzes the UK's response to terrorism, assessing the development of related laws. Counter-terrorism efforts must be conducted within the laws of the responding jurisdiction. Mark Cochrane tackles an assessment of those counter-terrorism efforts as they are conducted by the UK and the USA post-9/11. Peter Eachus and Ben Short present a Decision Support System, proposing its use in intelligence analysis.

Finally, RTC presents the results of three significant research efforts that move forward our understanding of conflict as it relates to terrorism and the impact of terrorist activity. Shannon Callahan and Alison Ledgerwood present research findings that elucidate the symbolic importance of group property and how it may contribute to the motivations behind conflict and terrorist acts. Violet Cheung-Blunden and Bill Blunden present the results of their research on the psychological impact of fear of cyber-terrorism, offering an analysis of the effectiveness of US alert policy. Debbie Wang and F. Dan Richard look at cross-cultural approaches to managing contradiction related to conflict resolution and revenge seeking.

We invite the reader, independent of your discipline or nationality, to join the global effort to find solutions to terrorism. Consider collaborating with a colleague from a different department, or from a university across the world. The Society for Terrorism Research can be a conduit for your efforts to start the process ([www.SocietyforTerrorismResearch.org](http://www.SocietyforTerrorismResearch.org)). Consider participation through membership in STR.

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**PART 1:**

**RADICALIZATION**

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE LEADING CAUSES AND REGIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARAB AWAKENING

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### **Abstract**

In 2011, the Arab world witnessed unprecedented and dramatic political events. First, the successful revolt of Tunisian citizens culminated in the ousting of Zein al-Abidine Ben Ali's autocratic regime. Similarly, the pro-democracy Egyptians forced Hosni Mubarak to reluctantly end his 30 year-old presidency. Libya's anti-government forces, with the help of NATO military intervention, ousted Colonel Qaddafi, who had seized power after the 1969 anti-monarchy *coup*. In Yemen, public dissatisfaction with President Ali Abdullah Saleh led to widespread street demonstrations and external pressures which finally forced him to leave office after 33 years in power. Given the refusal of these leaders and elites to voluntarily hand over power, the Arab masses had no option but to revolt against their dictatorial rulers. Since then, there have been high expectations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that the democratization of the traditional regimes is an end in sight. Meanwhile, anti-government protests erupted in Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other parts of the oil-rich region. Full scale civil war wages in Syria at the time of this writing. The failure of development policies and the rampant repression exerted by government forces have finally led to social and political rebellion of the citizens who have been excluded from the patronage system of the dominant political groups. In the minds of many people, the Middle Eastern dictators could not have endured for so long without a certain degree of foreign support from the expansionist major powers.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of how a combination of internal and external factors such as resource curse, tribalism, social inequality, prolonged existence of oppressive hereditary regimes, militarization, corruption, and the great powers' rivalries leading to support for MENA's autocratic regimes, have exposed Arab societies to violent conflict and extremism. It concludes that the use of force and military interventions are not adequate policies to address the issue of the region's new security challenges; and it is advisable and more effective to act before the outbreak of widespread political violence. The revolution in the Arab world continues and the threat of more armed conflict persists, unless priority is given to policies that foster economic growth, equitable distribution of wealth, social justice and guaranteed political reforms.

**Keywords:** Arab world, MENA, awakening, revolution, citizen revolts, uprising, security, autocracy, democracy, political reforms

The security environment of the Middle East and North Africa (referred to hereafter as MENA) is changing drastically as a result of the revolutionary wave of protests which led to the removal of four undemocratic leaders (Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, and Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen). The contemporary Arab rulers, whatever their titles (e.g., king, sheik, emir, prince, president, prime minister, general) have been accumulating wealth for themselves and their families by means of plundering, bribery, embezzlement, and other questionable practices at the expense of the welfare of their own people for decades. It should not have come as a surprise that MENA people have poured into the streets to protest against their corrupt elites, demanding their fair share of national income. Popular unrest continues in Arab countries with autocratic governments by the people who are tired of living under their rules.

The Qatari and Saudi role with respect to Bahrain, Libya and Syria has been an active one, providing the evidence of the anxiety of MENA conservative monarchies. Saudi Arabia has zealously been helping to suppress revolutionary actions in the Arab world, and has provided economic and military aid to a number of Arab regimes threatened by popular uprising (Kamrava, 2012; Jones, 2011(b); Cafiero, 2012). To a lesser degree, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have assumed a similar role in the region. The rise of world oil prices have provided the oil-rich states with additional revenues to finance overt or covert destabilization efforts in the territories of their regional rivals and enemies. The Saudi and Emirati support for Sheikh Hamad of Bahrain have

included the supply of military equipment and military personnel who are fighting in the streets of Manama. The ruling elites are concerned that the anti-government movements and uprising in Tunisia and Egypt, which ended the political life of powerful autocrats, would become examples for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) citizens to follow (Kamrava, 2012).

Arab autocracies are determined to suppress the citizen revolts as shown by the regimes' violent responses to the widespread antigovernment protests in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen. The critics of governments are arrested, detained, tried without charge, imprisoned and even tortured and executed to dissuade others from opposing the ruling political elites. With their colossal wealth or the generous foreign aid extended by their equally autocratic regional allies, they have easily acquired the means of social control and violence. They still have enough power and authority to organize pro-government demonstrations and momentarily stabilize their undemocratic political systems (Al-Rasheed, 2011).

Until recently, compliance and apparent passivity of Arab people regarding their autocratic rulers was based on one or more of the following assumptions: (a) there is no significant differences between the political leaders; (b) the outcome of the elections are determined before the voting begins; (c) some marginalized groups (e.g., women in Saudi Arabia) do not have the right to participate, and most people have no choice in voting for their preferred candidates from the banned political parties (e.g., the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt pre-2011 or the reformists in Tunisia); and (d) the despotic political leaders are invulnerable to domestic pressures from below because they are protected by powerful external forces.

It was difficult for Arab citizens to ignore the myth of the invincibility of the authoritarian regimes. The citizens of Arab states with a presidential system knew that their electoral systems were associated with high levels of corruption; otherwise it would have been difficult for many contemporary Arab leaders to win the consecutive presidential elections until forcefully removed from office. Broadly speaking, major obstacles to political participation in Arab pseudo-democracies include the lack of perceived differences between the political leaders, lack of political knowledge, and the lack of trust in fairness of elections. The lack of democratic processes of political decision making had intensified the Arab people's apathy over the years. The Arab citizens of MENA's eight absolute monarchies have been given little opportunity to enjoy political liberties. Evidently, these citizens, who are not permitted to freely criticize the rulers, do not have the capacity to hold them accountable by voting, civil society activism, or any other means to influence the elite-controlled political institutions. In the next section of this chapter, several important

questions will be answered, including the following: What are the causes of Arab citizen revolts? What is the impact of the rise in income and wealth inequality on authoritarianism? What kind of changes might be expected inside the region as a result of the Arab awakening? What steps should be taken to encourage the democratization trends in the region?

## Some Terminological Considerations

Before discussing the reasons for the growing unrest in Arab MENA, it is worth saying something about the Arab scholars' preference for the use of the terms "Arab revolution" or "Arab uprising," over the most frequently used idea of an "Arab Spring." As a Lebanese scholar Rami Khouri noted, the use of the Arab Spring term denotes "some subtle Orientalism at work," by speaking of Arab people as if they "all think and behave the same way."<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that the revolutionary process is still in progress in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, the people's 2010-2011 "rebellions" or "uprisings" are called Tunisia's "Jasmine Revolution" after its national flower, Egypt's "Nile Revolution," and the Libyan "Revolution of 2011." Moreover, it has been asserted that these citizen revolts are "Anger Revolutions" against the political systems of Arab countries (Kazamias, 2011, p. 144). This explains the preference for the use of Arab awakening in the title of this chapter.

## Reviewing the Causes of Arab Citizen Revolts

First, the reasons for the growing unrest in Arab MENA will be examined. Some researchers have argued that globalization has led to the reawakening of Arab citizens (Tagma, 2011; Posusney, 2003). Other people have focused solely on the domestic economic and social factors, including rising levels of relative inequality within Arab societies, corruption, favoritism, crony capitalism<sup>2</sup> and economic mismanagement (Dahl, 2012; Campante & Chor, 2012; Springborg, 2011; Brownlee, 2011; Meguid et. al., 2011). Another group of scholars have focused instead on the political forces within these societies, which have led to the restricted

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<sup>1</sup> Arab citizens themselves have a preference for the use of the following terms: "Revolution" (or *thawra*, in Arabic), "uprising" (*intifada*), "awakening" (*sahwa*), "renaissance" (*nahda*), and "citizen revolt" (Khouri, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> In this kind of capitalism, economic power is concentrated in a few networks close to the ruler or his family involved in systematic plundering, as in Egypt under Mubarak, and Tunisia under Ben Ali (Droz-Vincent, 2011, p. 10).

political participation, the restraints on citizen civil liberties, militarization, and in general the absence of a viable civil society (Dupont & Passy, 2012; Dalacoura, 2012; Lutterbeck, 2013; Alimi & Meyer, 2011).

The Arab League population in 2011 was about 365 million from 22 different countries, most of them with large urban populations, which make up over 70% of their total population, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (see Table 1.1)

The changes in the urban-rural population ratios, as a result of increased human migration from villages to the largest cities, have created economic and security challenges for Arab governments, which are now more susceptible to destabilizing urban riots. Of about 365 million people living in the 22 Arab League members, 83.43 million (or 23%) of the people of Arab MENA still live under traditional monarchical systems. The remaining 282 million live in countries with a presidential system. Egypt alone makes up almost one-fourth of the population of the Arab world. Four Arab states (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, and Sudan) account for half of the Arab population of the MENA. Whereas the population of the six member states of the GCC is about 44.83 million (or only 12% of Arab MENA population).

For security reasons, the GCC governments have been secretive about their small native population, and are believed to overestimate their national population. Qatar's native population numbers only 200,000 (or 12.5% of the total population of about 1.6 million); and thus the Qataris are a minority in their own country. Similarly, the UAE population is made up of less than 12% citizens and over 88% non-native temporary residents, or guest workers. The foreigners outnumber the Emirati citizens. There are inconsistent statistics on the population of the UAE. According to the *World Factbook*, the population of the country was estimated at 5,314,317 in July 2012 ("The World Factbook 2011," 2012). Whereas another official source reported that the population of the small Persian Gulf country was 8.9 million in 2009 ("Background note," 2011). According to the UAE's National Bureau of Statistics, the country's total native population was 947,997, or about 11.4% of its total population of 8.264 million in mid-2010 ("UAE population," 2012).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There are conflicting statistics for the UAE population because it is a matter of national security to hide the fact that the natives are so few in numbers. Sometimes, the size of its population is lower than the previous years, because of the departure of the expats from the UAE ("UAE population," 2012).

**Table 1.1: Comparing 2011 Population, GDP per Capita, Human Development Index (HDI), and Gender Inequality Index (GNI) for the 22 Arab League Members**

Country	Population (in millions)*	Population Rank**	GDP per Capita <sup>#</sup>	GDP per Capita Rank <sup>##</sup>	HDI <sup>†</sup>	HDI Rank <sup>††</sup>	GNI <sup>‡</sup>
Algeria	35.98	3	7,421	10	0.698	11 (96)	0.412
Bahrain	1.32	20	32,233	4	0.806	3 (42)	0.288
Comoros	0.75	22	1,074	19	-	-	-
Djibouti	0.90	21	2,106	18	-	-	-
Egypt	82.54	1	5,151	11	0.644	12 (113)	0.599
Iraq	32.66	4	3,222	16	0.573	15 (132)	0.579
Jordan	6.33	13	5,082	12	0.698	10 (95)	0.456
Kuwait	2.82	18	45,539	3	0.760	5 (63)	0.229
Lebanon	4.26	14	11,868	8	0.739	7 (71)	0.440
Libya	6.42	12	14,985	7	0.760	6 (64)	0.314
Mauritania	3.54	16	1,751	19	-	-	0.605
Morocco	32.27	5	4,081	14	0.582	14 (130)	0.510
Oman	2.85	17	23,333	5	0.705	8 (89)	0.309
Palestinian Territory	4.15	15	2,656	17	-	-	-
Qatar	1.87	19	82,978	1	0.831	2 (37)	0.549
Saudi Arabia	28.08	6	21,321	6	0.770	4 (56)	0.646
Somalia	9.56	10	-	-	-	-	-
Sudan *	44.63	2	2,007	18	0.408	17 (169)	0.611
Syria	20.76	8	4,295	13	0.632	13 (119)	0.474
Tunisia	10.59	9	7,512	9	0.698	9 (94)	0.293
United Arab Emirates	7.89	11	52,435	2	0.846	1 (30)	0.234
Yemen **	24.80	7	2,243	17	0.462	16 (154)	0.769

- Denotes unavailable data.

\* ("Human Development Report," 2011).

- \* This figure includes the population of the South Sudan which gained independence in July 2011. The 2012 World Bank data puts Sudan population at 34.32 millions (World Bank, 2012).
- \*\* The rank order of the 22 members of the Arab League based on their 2011 total population in millions from the most to the least populated states (1 is most and 22 is least populated).
- \*\* The largest percentages of total population living in urban areas are seen in the six southern Persian Gulf Arab monarchies of Kuwait (98.4%), Qatar (95.9%), Bahrain (88.7%), UAE (84.4%), Saudi Arabia (82.3%), and Oman (73.3%). Yemen has one of the lowest percentages of urban population with only 32.4% of the Yemenis residing in cities.
- # Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) and constant 2005 international U.S. dollars (World Bank, 2011).
- ### The rank order of the 22 Arab League members based on their 2011 GDP per capita in U.S. dollars from the highest-income to lowest-income states (1 is the highest income state).
- † Human Development Index (HDI) is a useful indicator of the level of national development and well-being of the Arab citizens (“Human Development Report,” 2011).
- †† The rank order of the key Arab states based on the latest HDI, followed by their rank among 187 countries in parentheses and in *italic* (“Human Development Report,” 2011).
- ± Gender Inequality Index (GNI) measures inequality between women and men (“Human Development Report,” 2011).

Despite the absence of reliable and unbiased statistics, these population data are significant for at least two reasons: 1) It shows that unlike the rest of Arab MENA, the citizens are a minority or a small majority in most GCC states. Expatriates are not likely to start a revolution, and are more controllable; and 2) Despite an unequal income distribution, the enormous national resources of Qatar, UAE and Kuwait have enabled the rulers to maintain a high standard of living for the large majority of the natives. It is worth noting that even the most affluent Arab regimes have come under increasing pressures to provide opportunities for political participation through free and fair elections, to permit the creation of political parties, and work toward higher degrees of economic and political equality.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Recently, the Emirates Center for Human Rights in London revealed that Sheik Sultan al-Qasimi from Ras al-Khaimah, which is one of the seven emirates making up the UAE, was under detention. He is a member of the ruling family and is the head of an Islamist reformist group, called *al-Islah* (Reform) which has criticized the ruling regime (Murphy, 2012).



Similarly, one cannot compare the extent of income inequalities within Arab countries, because there is a dearth of reliable and consistent data. In fact, national statistics have been scarce and largely unreliable for many Arab states. Many scholars have mentioned the importance of the availability of consistent time series data for policymaking and policy evaluation, which are accessible in the public domain. For instance, Mackey (1987) writing about Saudi Arabia's development plans, pointed out that "much of the data on which the Third Plan was built, as with the Second, was conjecture on the part of Westerners trying to plan for the Saudis" (p. 54).

In general, economic data are more available than the complex political data on human rights violations, political prisoners, press freedom restrictions, and other instances of disrespect for civil liberties. However, for most Arab states social and economic data are also scarce, particularly measures indicating the extent of poverty, inequality and corruption. As a first step in producing a reliable data source and filling the gaps, the first Human Development Report on the Arab World was released in 2002, and presented data on the status of such development indicators as literacy, life expectancy, and poverty ("Arab Human Development Report 2002," 2002). The 2011 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (in constant 2005 purchasing power parity dollars) of Arab states was \$8,554, and much lower than the world GNI per capita of \$10,082, or the value of \$33,352 GNI per capita reported for the very high human development countries ("Human Development Report 2011," 2011).

The number of poor Arab citizens has grown, and the gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen in most Arab societies. The unemployment and underemployment rates in Arab MENA have been high.<sup>5</sup> Many Arab citizens are struggling with low incomes that force them either to live in poverty, or barely above the national and international poverty lines. In 2009, 22% of Egyptians,<sup>6</sup> about 35% of Yemenis, over 13% of all Jordanians, 3.8% of Tunisians, 9% of Moroccans, and about 23% of Iraqis lived below their national poverty line. More than 11 million people in Yemen, about 4.5 million people in Egypt, 3.2 million people in

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<sup>5</sup> Morocco has the highest rate of employed men (47%) and women (65%) in vulnerable jobs, which may not provide safety nets to protect them against economic crisis (World Bank, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> A report by the Egyptian Council of Ministries put the number of people living below the national poverty line at 22% in 2010, compared to 17% in 2000. There is also an unequal geographical distribution of the poverty, indicated by the fact that 20% of the poor live in cities, and 80% of them are residing in the rural areas. For a discussion of Egypt's economic woes, see Meguid, et al. (2011, p. 12).

Morocco, 1 million people in Syria and many thousands in other Arab societies were in multidimensional poverty.<sup>7</sup> Appallingly, 65.6% of people in Somalia and over one-third of the population of Yemen are in severe poverty (“Human Development Report 2011,” 2011). These cross-national data reported for the Arab world reveal the urgency of addressing the problems of inequality and poverty, which have led to social discrimination and political exclusion.

The available data show that Arab governments must redistribute more and with no further delays. Arab political elites have largely ignored the impact of economic underdevelopment and political instability; otherwise they would have provided more resources for economic development. Economic growth and prosperity vary considerably across Arab countries, which are at different stages of political development. The rich-poor divide in the Arab world is growing. In 2011, Qatar had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita equal to \$82,978, while the per capita income of Sudan was \$2,007 (See Table 1.1). Some MENA states are in possession of considerable resource wealth. Whereas the nature has been cruel to some of the regional states that have to struggle with resource scarcity of even fresh water.

The Human Development Index (HDI)<sup>8</sup> of Arab states for 2011 was 0.641, which was lower than the world’s HDI of 0.682. The UNDP (2011) reported that between 1980 and 2011, the HDI of Arab countries increased from 0.444 to 0.641, while that of the world changed from 0.558 to 0.682 (See Table 1.1). It is important to note that when the 2011 HDI of Arab states are adjusted to inequality in the three basic dimensions of human development (i.e., education, health, income), the Arab inequality-adjusted HDI declined significantly to 0.472. While it is impossible to measure the precise effects of per capita income, HDI and any other indicator of the quality of standards of living on political unrest, economic explanations of the uprising in the Arab world has sparked a great deal of interest in the academic and political circles. The economic approach ignores the fact

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<sup>7</sup> Multiple indicators should be used to measure health, education, and other dimensions of poverty, because no income-base indicator can adequately measure the standard of living in any given country. For a discussion of multidimensionality of poverty, see Ravallion (2011) and Ferreira (2011).

<sup>8</sup> HDI was developed for the first UNDP Human Development Report in 1990, and is a composite index of human development using indicators of income, knowledge and health. HDI has a minimum value of zero and a maximum value of one. In 2011, Norway with an HDI of 0.943 and Congo with an HDI of 0.286 had the highest and the lowest HDI among 187 countries, respectively (“Human Development Index,” n.d.).

that there is no clear relationship between economic prosperity and political instability in some societies, suggesting that many other explanatory variables are at play.

The ageing leaders at the helm of the authoritarian Arab regimes have been out of touch with the younger generations who are demanding a more equitable socio-economic order. The Arab youth will no longer tolerate a life characterized by relative deprivation, poverty and unemployment. As evidenced by the uprising in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen, the political and business elites closely aligned with the unpopular ruling families aggressively resist pro-reform movements. The revolutionary clashes are inevitable in a situation in which the privileged elites are reluctant to accept a meaningful redistribution of national wealth and income, and the underprivileged lower and middle classes are determined to compel the rulers to change. However, Arab revolts could not be explained solely by the failures of the policy elites to fulfill the basic economic needs and expectations of the non-elites. Many protesters are angry at their leaders for their opposition to meaningful political reforms aimed at democratization and the rule of law.

## **Human Rights Violations in Arab MENA**

According to Amnesty International's *Annual Report 2011* (n.d.), most MENA governments maintain strict restrictions on freedom of expression. Journalists and human rights activists frequently face criminal charges for criticizing state officials or institutions, including the monarchy. In some cases, freedom of assembly or the formation of political parties are forbidden by law. In many societies, discrimination against women is widespread. Only 26% of women in Arab states participated in the labor force in 2009, compared to 77.1% of men. The female labor force participation rate in these societies was much lower than the world average of 51.5%.

The Gender Inequality Index (GNI)<sup>9</sup> of Arab countries for 2011 was reportedly 0.563, compared to the 0.224 index calculated for the states with very high human development, and the world average of 0.492 (United Nations Development Program, 2011). The most recent GNI shows that the degree of inequality between men and women ranges from

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<sup>9</sup> The Gender Inequality Index is a composite measure of inequality between men and women in three dimensions: empowerment, the labor market, and reproductive health. Its lowest score is zero reflecting equality between women and men; and its highest score is one showing maximum gender inequality.

0.769 in Yemen (highest gender inequality in the Arab League) to 0.229 in Kuwait (lowest gender inequality) (United Nations Development Program, 2011). The unemployment levels among women in most Arab countries today are above the average international levels.

Saudi Arabia's GNI of 0.646 denotes that a larger percentage of women in the conservative Arab kingdom experience discrimination in education, health and the job market. The Basic Law of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia discriminates against women, treating them as inferiors who need male guardianship. In fact, "gender inequality is built into Saudi Arabia's governmental and social structures" (Doumato, 2010, p. 425). Saudi Arabia is the only Arab country which has a driving ban for women, and does not grant them the right to vote. According to the "Women2Drive Campaign," several Saudi women were arrested for disobeying the official ban on driving ("Saudi woman to face lashings," 2011; Campaign for Women's Leadership, n.d.). On the seven-point scale for the civil liberties index calculated by Freedom House, Saudi Arabia scored 7 (7 is the worst case) as reported in the 2012 *Freedom in the World* report. No improvement to its freedom status of "Not Free" was registered. Moreover, this kingdom of the southern Persian Gulf is one of the least free Arab states, as demonstrated by its political rights score of 7 (out of 7, and the lowest rank).<sup>10</sup>

Why does the Arab world lag behind when it comes to women's participation in the labor force and in decision making? A frequently-cited reason is the predominance of Islamic law and practice in Arab societies. Dominant social and legal practices exclude many Arab women from a range of places and practices that most others in the Muslim societies enjoy. A more likely reason is that the patriarchal nature of Arab social systems has matched the rulers' preferences for the inequitable structure and organization of political and social life. Women continue to be defiantly discriminated against in a full range of areas including freedom of movement, political participation, and access to education and job opportunities. Much of what has been announced in the way of reform to reduce gender inequalities in Arab countries has been inadequate. This policy failure suggests that revolutionary changes in attitudes and policies are necessary.

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<sup>10</sup> Only five member states of the Arab League (Comoros, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia) are ranked as "partly free", and the remaining members (Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, UAE, Yemen) are identified as "not free" societies. No data on political freedom is provided for the Palestinian territory (Freedom House, 2012).

The Western powers have been accused of ignoring the existence of the highly restrictive laws preventing the average Arab citizens to enjoy even the most basic political rights and freedom, and the blatant discrimination against women and ethnic minorities by their regional allies. A European scholar who examines several initiatives including the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), points out that “while declaring its commitment to promoting human rights and democracy, by its actions the European Union (EU) has favored regimes and practices that ultimately proved intolerable to a broad stratum of Arab society” (Hollis, 2012, p. 81). Jordanian monarchs King Hussein and King Abdullah, and the Egyptian presidents Sadat and Mubarak were showered with the United States foreign aid to assist economic recovery. Yemen’s President Saleh was viewed as a partner in the fight against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Human rights abuses of King Hamad are tolerated because the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet is located in Bahrain. American human rights advocates have called on the Obama Administration to end the U.S. reliance on the naval base in Bahrain, and “match up American values to interests in the Persian Gulf,” by supporting the people of Bahrain, rather than their autocratic rulers (Jones, 2011(a)). Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch mentions five core reasons why Western countries have supported the autocratic monarchs and presidents-for-life in the MENA. These autocrats were viewed as more reliable allies and partners in order to: a) contain political Islam, b) combat the threat of terrorism, c) resolve Arab-Israeli conflict, d) maintain the uninterrupted flow of oil, and e) curtail migration (Roth, 2012, p. 3-6). In Arab autocracies with their elite-centric and externally-dependent political systems, the pressures exerted by foreign powers on their regional patrons and partners through informal and formal channels could be effective democracy promotion instruments.

### **Corruption in Arab Monarchies and Kleptocracies**

Some scholars have warned against the negative implications of widespread corruption on economic development. Like many advocates of democratization, the political economists have long recognized that high levels of corruption are associated with increases in income inequality and poverty (Gupta, Davoodi, & Alonso-Terme, 2002, p. 23-45). An outcome of the prolonged existence of the autocratic rulers has been the emergence of government-business corruption networks in which some political elites, in alliance with corrupt business leaders and occasionally even organized crime groups, have been able to accumulate huge amounts of wealth.

Looking at the Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index, it is revealed that among the 183 countries and territories surveyed, all Arab governments (with the exception of the UAE with a score of 6.8) had a score below 6 on a scale of 1 (highest level of corruption) to 10 (lowest level of corruption) as of November 2011.<sup>11</sup> It is no secret that the level of corruption in the MENA is high mostly due to the secrecy of defense contracts, and unchecked budgetary decision-making. The concentration of the bulk of national wealth in the hands of a minority, resource curse, the weakness of legal systems and governance issues are blamed for spreading corruption, including fraudulent kickbacks in public transactions with foreign corporations and business partners.

There are no laws to punish corrupt practices by the ruling elites. This was demonstrated by the high-profile case of the Al-Yamamah arms deals involving British Aerospace Company (BAe) and prominent Saudi officials representing the royal family.<sup>12</sup> In Saudi Arabia, where stealing and theft are punishable by Islamic laws, it is ironic that political corruption is prevalent among the elites. Looking at the major corruption scandals, it is clear that bribery has been often associated with defense contracts, arm deals and foreign aid.

Many Arab government officials do not seem to view bribery as ethically problematic and morally indefensible; consequently Arab citizens have become accustomed to paying bribes for the provision of public services. Three thousand business executives worldwide surveyed for the 2011 Bribe Payers Index (BPI) were asked to evaluate the degree of bribery in companies from 28 of the largest economies in their international business transactions. A country in which its companies never engage in bribery when doing business abroad has a BPI of 10. The minimum score of BPI is 0, and is assigned to the most extreme situation in which all companies from a country always engage in notorious transnational bribery. No country is actually bribe-free. The Netherlands with a score of 8.8 was less likely to engage in bribery, followed by

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<sup>11</sup> The respondents were asked questions about their views on the level of corruption in public institutions, and on the effectiveness of the government in the fight against corruption (Transparency International, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> The BAe has been accused of paying more than £1bn to the Saudi Prince Bandar as secret commissions for the Al Yamamah arms agreement for the purchase of Tornado aircrafts and other military equipment. The secret payments continued "for at least 10 years and beyond 2002, when Britain outlawed corrupt payments to overseas officials." Prince Bandar, who is now the secretary general of the Saudi National Security Council, was at that time the country's ambassador to Washington (Leigh & Evans, 2007).