

## The Reasons and Outcome of the Arab Uprisings<sup>12</sup>

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The conflicts and the discontents in the Middle East are primarily known for the Suez Crisis, the Arab-Israeli Wars, the Gulf Wars and the Islamic revolution.<sup>4</sup> In this book, however, a recent period of uprisings in three countries of the Arab region from December 2010 to 2014 is analysed as part of a research project.<sup>5</sup> As the title suggests, the countries under examination are Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. This study concentrates on the political, economic and social foundations of the uprisings, and how they changed, and it provides an in-depth outlining of the historical context of the uprisings as well as of their reasons and their aftermath.

This research has been carried out by three authors: Andrea Teti, Ph.D.,<sup>6</sup> Professor Pamela Abbott,<sup>7</sup> a sociologist, and Francesco Cavatorta.<sup>8</sup> Teti and Abbott work at the University of Aberdeen, in the United Kingdom and Cavatorta at the Laval University in Québec, Canada. They raise the following questions about the reasons of the rebellions: what kind of factors lead to the changes, how they were realized and whether they lead to democracy or authoritarianism, while making comparisons of the post-uprising situations. At this point, the research relies on several surveys.<sup>9</sup>

Each six chapter opens with an abstract containing background information on the events and outlines the objectives of the discussion. The first chapter gives a detailed description of the background of the rebellions as well as of the methodology of the investigation. Furthermore, a brief definition of the Arab Uprisings is also provided to clarify for the readers what they were about: “*The Arab Uprisings represented a series of events of rare intensity in the history of the Middle East, as mass, popular and largely non-violent revolts took place, starting in December 2010*”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59569/jceas.2023.3.2.170>

<sup>2</sup> Andrea Teti, Pamela Abbott and Francesco Cavatorta: *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia: Social, Political and Economic Transformations*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017. ISBN 978-3-319-69044-5 pp. 153.

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<sup>4</sup> Suez Crisis: 1956; Arab-Israeli Wars: 1948, 1956, 1967, 1974; Gulf Wars: 1990-1991; Islamic Revolution: 1978-1979.

<sup>5</sup> This book was written as a part of the *Reform and Transition in the Mediterranean Series*, which provides studies of countries that has common roots. It addresses the structure of reform and tradition, the connection between politics, history and culture, and finally the strategic importance of the Mediterranean.

<sup>6</sup> For more information and publication list of Andrea Teti, see: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andrea-Teti>

<sup>7</sup> For more information and publication list of Pamela Abbott, see: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/people/p.abbott/>

<sup>8</sup> For more information and publication list of Francesco Cavatorta, see: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francesco-Cavatorta>

<sup>9</sup> Arab Barometer, AfroBarometer (only Egypt and Tunisia), World Values Survey and Gallup World Poll are being used.

<sup>10</sup> Teti, A., Abbott, P. and Cavatorta, F. (2017) *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. Social, Political and Economic Transformations*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.



The next five chapters evaluate the uprisings. In the second one, the authors discuss the challenges<sup>11</sup> and the original causes of the rebellions, focusing on the social and economic circumstances of the population. These notions are also compared in the three given countries with a focus on corruption and internal security, and shows to what extent they affect and developed in the given country. The third chapter focuses on the political expectations and changes after the uprisings,<sup>12</sup> more exactly, on the commitment of certain citizens to democracy, on profound political changes, and on the attempt to find a connection between political expectations and religion.

The fourth chapter discusses the economic changes taking place between 2010 and 2014, the question of security, and the frustration of the population originating from the disappointment of the population. The fifth chapter sums up the problematics of employment, corruption, trust in the public institutions as well as and gender equality, including the empowerment of women.<sup>13</sup> The sixth one restates the main points of the previous chapters, relying both on empirical data and on results of surveys along with the authors' own viewpoint recapturing the problem of employment, governing service, corruption, earning the trust of the population and gender equality. The last section in this chapter presents international responses, which involve the problematic support of the EU and the US, and the badly implemented policies of the autocratic regimes.

The main strength of the research reveals itself in the conclusion chapter, which confirms the most important reasons of the uprisings as a complexity of multi-dimensional dissatisfaction in the countries under examination. The results of surveys are represented in several figures, which helps the reader achieve a better understanding of the analysis. The examination of women's situation was supported by data from OECD's Social Institutions, Gender Index, and by the volume<sup>14</sup> of Ronald Inglehart,<sup>15</sup> and the book<sup>16</sup> of Valentine Moghadam,<sup>17</sup> which helped the authors to compare the equality and economic situation of women and men between Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. The authors of this book called *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia* used graphs and charts displaying challenge levels and the current conditions of the three

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<sup>11</sup> On the 44<sup>th</sup> page a useful chart shows the challenge rates in, certain countries.

<sup>12</sup> The authors also state in the Introduction of the third chapter that many scholars of the Middle East studies could not foresee the forthcoming of the Uprisings, because they focused too much on the developing of the authoritarian systems.

<sup>13</sup> The protection against violence against women and equality attempts are also mentioned in this section.

<sup>14</sup> Inglehart, R. (2017) 'Changing Values in the Islamic World and the West,' in Moaddel, M. and Gelfand, M. J. (eds.) *Values, Political Action, and Change in the Middle East and the Arab Spring*. New York: Oxford Academic, pp. 3-24. ISBN 9780190269098

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Inglehart, Professor Emeritus, was a politologist at the University of Michigan.

<sup>16</sup> Moghadam, V. (2014) 'Modernising Women and Democratisation After the Arab Spring,' *The Journal of North African Studies*, 19(2), p. 137-142.

<sup>17</sup> Valentine Moghadam is a Professor of Sociology and International Affairs at Northeastern University, Boston:

Northeastern University (n. d.) *Valentine M. Moghadam*. Available at:

<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/faculty/valentine-moghadam/> (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

countries, relying on the work<sup>18</sup> of Yuwa Hedrick-Wong<sup>19</sup> and Yasar Jarrar;<sup>20</sup> as well as the concern about threats to security including civil war and terrorism.

A brief information provided on the three countries<sup>21</sup> in the first chapter can also be regarded as useful for the readers. Furthermore, the authors cleverly compare the different opinions presented in the applied literature, such as Professor Mary Kaldor,<sup>22</sup> who holds the opinion that the uprisings can be looked upon as movement against the liberal democratic reforms and are similar to the anti-communist ones of in 1989. This is compared with the idea of Koenraad Bogaert,<sup>23</sup> who thinks that the protesters wanted to achieve liberal democracy but rejected the neoliberalism that is more depends on the state.

The second and sixth chapter discuss whether the citizens were aware of their real aims, along the cooperation with their political leaders at improving the living situation. More broadly, the goal to maintain the equilibrium in order to prevent the uprisings to be start again is also clarified. In the conclusion, the writers suggest that the concept of democracy and authoritarian rule should be redefined since the uprisings and their aftermath prove that it is not sufficient to view those systems in the usual way. In addition, other concepts like development and rebellion also need to be reconsidered, given the contradictions of democracy from the eighties and the connection between the lack of coherence and the inability of leaderships.

The only drawback of this volume is that in some places, for example, in the first two and the sixth chapters, certain sections are rather repetitive. Furthermore, in the sixth chapter, the international responses are not explained thoroughly enough while it also discusses the domestic issues. To sum up, the reader easily forgive these minor flaws, when getting to the conclusion which, once more, clarifies important notions that need redefining, such as democracy and authority. The Arab Uprisings are emerged from simultaneous economic, political and social problems, which caused discontent among the population.

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<sup>18</sup> Hedrick-Wong, Y., & Jarrar, Y. (2015) *Inclusive Growth in the Middle East and Africa: The Challenge of Transforming Burden to Dividends*. MasterCard, pp. 1-34. Available at: <https://transformativesa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MasterCard-Inclusive-Growth-Report-2015.pdf> (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

<sup>19</sup> Yuwa Hedrick-Wong works as a chief economist at Harvard University: Harvard University (n. d.) *Yuwa Hedrick-Wong*. Available at: <https://inclusive.growthlab.cid.harvard.edu/people/yuwa-hedrick-wong> (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

<sup>20</sup> Yasar Jarrar, Ph.D. is an economist and senior advisor at Negotiations Initiative, Harvard University: Jarrar, Y. (2012) *Yasar Jarrar, PhD*. Available at: <http://yasarjarrar.com/> (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

<sup>21</sup> Egypt is one of the most strategically and culturally significant Arab country, Jordan is also strategically important and although Tunis is not so major regarding its size and strategical terms, the reforms and development makes it worth mentioning.

<sup>22</sup> Professor Mary Kaldor works as a Director of the Conflict Research Programme at the London School of Economics and Political Science: London School of Economics and Political Science (2024) *Professor Mary Kaldor*. Available at: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/people/mary-kaldor> (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

<sup>23</sup> Koenraad Bogaert is a lecturer at Ghent University, in the Department of Conflict and Development Studies (Belgium), and a member of the Middle East and North Africa Research Group (MENARG): University of Ghent (2024) *Koenraad Boegart*. Available at: <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Author/3161> (Accessed: 19 January 2024)



The consequences of the rebellion as well as the attempt of the leaderships of the countries to find solution to it are presented in detail, therefore helping the reader to understand the causes of the uprisings and the functioning of the Arab World better. The comprehensive explanations, the historical and socio-economic problems make this book an intriguing and highly recommended manual for both scholars and general readers who wish learn more about the Arab Uprisings and its aftermath. This study also includes enough information to discuss the years following 2014.