

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY: COMPLICATED DIALECTICS

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Abstract: The authors touch upon the impact of democratization tendencies on the Muslim world development process. The research conception is based on formulation and analysis of Islamic political platform. The authors explain how democratization processes tribute to shaping of new political realities in the Arab world. At the same time the authors disclose the problem of tensions rising between the West and the East. The article reviews social and political effects of adapted and transformed democratic values promotion in the Muslim world.

Keywords: Arab spring, protest movement, revolution, Islam, Islamism.

INTRODUCTION

To explain the transformation of democracy values and modernization of the Arab world nations the causes of social upheaval and revolutions are to be researched as well as such phenomenon like the Islamic State. The changes of social and political context of West-East relations make it necessary to comprehend and analyze democratization tendencies in the Muslim world.

RESEARCH METHODS

To study the impact of democratization tendencies and development processes in the Muslim world it is necessary to apply such methods like comparative, socio-economic and socio-cultural analysis. Under the new institutional approach the existing formal democratic institutions in the Near East are taken into consideration in relation to the non-democratic informal institutions and political practices. It serves as the methodological basis for such studying. Besides, the authors applied structural and functional methods for studying of deep transformation of political and socioeconomic systems in the Near East societies in relation to the democratic prospects of these countries and societies. Such approach lets forecast further directions of the current political processes in the Near East.

INITIAL SITUATION

Global dominance of democracy as a political model and a vector of political development is more often now called into question by different researchers. German democracy researcher Hans Vorländer says that in the era of globalization, prospects of democracy are not clear despite its seeming triumph in the 1990s

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(Vorlaender 2003). According to Vorländer one of the main problem of democracy is its traditional ties with the institutions responsible for territorial aspects of people representation. However democracy goes over the state borders and it washes out its basis.

In Vorländer's opinion the global prospects of democracy are related to the following three governance models (none of them is acceptable for Muslim values fans as well as the model based on these values):

1. Global governance model with ideology of mondialism and world government as the background;
2. Global democracy model based on transnational movements and unions expansion influencing the world agenda;
3. Cosmopolitan democracy model with global state and its democratic institutions and governing structures (Vorlaender 2003).

Are such models compatible with the interests of Muslim society and above all with religious peculiarities of Islam? This question is to be scrutinized without numerous mass media cliché (Vorlaender 2003).

The peculiarities of Islam are its clearly seen political yearnings in comparison with Christianity (yearnings to build up an ideal society – community based on principles of justice and fraternity, moral exoneration of violence for reaching high goals (revenge killing, the concept of sacred war – Djihad, etc.), authoritarianism cult as the guarantee of order, state or community interests priority to disadvantage of personality interests, restrictions for women's social life (although it should not be exaggerated while Quran clearly regulates the women's rights in family), etc. Simultaneously the addiction of Muslims to war should not be exaggerated because Islam puts war into obvious restrictions (Fight in the way of Allah but do not transgress. Indeed Allah does not like transgressors) admonishing to accept peace on decent conditions. Neither should be exaggerated the animosity of Muslims towards Christianity because Quran calls to respect it ("It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)". The popularity of Islam and solidity of its position is preconditioned by the fact that Islam is seen by its believers not only as a religion but also a law system (Sharia) and way of life. That is why in the Middle Asian Soviet republics the sketchy triumph of the Communist ideology was swept away by Islamic renaissance in the 1990s. The political model of Islam in XX century is compatible with democracy. But there is a kind of uncertainty. The main problem is that Quran and Sunnah almost do not touch upon state governing regulations. The word "state" is not mentioned there. That is why the only support for Muslim legislators is the persuasion that supreme authority is fulfilled by Prophet and righteous caliphs who succeeded Him. The main peculiarities of the Muslim state and law doctrine are as follows:

1. Caliphate is the key category seen from two viewpoints: as spiritual and moral functions of Muslim authorities (“governing by prayer”) and as a real governing mode; (the Shiites consider Imamate to be the direct inheritance of Prophet Ali’s mission);
2. Caliphate’s function is to govern and protect faith;
3. It presumes the caliph surveillance over observations of Muslim religious duties and Islamic law as a whole;
4. The Supreme source of sovereignty in Caliphate is Allah and a Muslim state is based on commandments given by Allah;
5. The community is granted by Allah a secular sovereignty represented in its right to elect a governor (a caliph) who governs on behalf of the community;
6. The community has the right to legislate on the topics not stipulated by Quran or Sunnah and the caliph can govern strictly according to Muslim law;
7. The caliph bears the responsibility for methods of governing and has the right to take actions to secure community’s interests provided that the Muslim laws are observed;
8. In theory the community has the right to expect full responsibility of the caliph for his actions but in reality only Mujtahids may measure his behavior because Mujtahids represent community and protect its interests in dialogue with the authorities;

From Muslim legislators’ standpoint the model of caliphate was ideal because the caliph was restricted in his actions by Islamic law, interests of his subjects and the necessity to discuss his most important decisions. But in reality caliphs and his advisors (Mujtahids) could take an arbitrary decision. The latter could manipulate with the Muslim law according to their class or corporate interests.

Thus the following peculiarities of political basis of Islam can be pinpointed:

1. In Islam there is no clear contradiction between direct democracy and representative democracy because Islam contains both;
2. A specific republicanism, in interpretation of which Muslim community (Ummah) is its core element and not an abstract people;
3. There is no menace to abuse people’s sovereignty because only Allah is the real Sovereign and a state is founded by people on His behalf;
4. Formally there exists the mechanism of restrictions and counterbalance like Mujtahids between the caliph and the community;
5. However the infusion of legislative and representative power can provoke abuse of power;

6. The attempts to integrate into the system of Islamic state some institutions from other political systems (first of all, parliament institutions) were not successful and did not result in balanced administrative system.

New approach of modern leaders of Islamic states towards the political development policy is an unsolved problem for democracy fans in the Arab world. According to Mathieu Guidère, democracy is not a type of faith but synthesis of governing principles (Note 1). It means not Islam should be infused by democracy but Muslims should accept democracy that is to acknowledge Constitution as the source of law and basis for constitutional state (Guidère 2013).

In the majority of the Arab countries there are certain obstacles for accepting democracy as the political basis. First of all, the notion “democracy” itself was misused by previous dictators to justify their violent or sometimes even tyrannical regimes. It means that another *political reality* should be counterposed to ideology of such regimes. This new political reality could be named “*real democracy*”.

Secondly, according to historically preconditioned demands of the Islamists, public and private life should be based on the Sharia law. It excludes the possibility of creation a Europe-style legislative state. Enough to mention the examples like Iran, Saudi Arabia and a short period of Taliban dominance in Afghanistan.

Finally, social and political development and economic characteristics of Muslim societies during their history hardly favoured for democracy as a governing system. Such political phenomena in Muslim societies like warlordism, paternalism, patrimonialism, social populism, mobilization statism obviously did not contribute to triumph of democracy (El-Azzazi 2004). In turn, the colonial political and administrative heritage together with traditional paternalist mechanism is a weak soil for democracy.

Also some national and anticolonialist movements of a populist nature resulted in autocracy concentrating the resources for building up a nation and its statehood. Mobilization regimes based on a rent distribution economy model are inapt to evolve into democracy

Thus, the Muslim world community lagged behind in social and economic development and its problems within Arab socialism and nationalism as well as within shared forms of (quasi)liberal models. The Arab spring that we witnessed freed not only resources for modernism and reformism but also for traditionalism which expansion undermined democratic basis in the majority of the Arab countries.

Alongside there exists a tendency of deterioration of Muslim-Christians relationships. It is known that the religious leader of Iran Ayatollah called to wage a sacred war against West: “Struggle against Western aggression, greed and policy is a jihad and everyone who dies in this war will be a martyr”. It let a renowned American political scientist Samuel Huntington (the author of “clash of civilizations

conception”) came to the conclusion that “the syndrome of brotherly nations” in the Islamic world will make this civilization a West’s dangerous enemy in the forthcoming millennium” (Huntington 1993). Hence it is explicable why notorious Osama Bin Laden organized “United front against Jews and Crusaders” and called on jihad against the USA and their anti-Muslim coalition allies as well as discussing by political scientists about “the Arc of Instability” from Xinjiang to Kosovo, that is the regions where there are armed clashed between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The Gulf war (1991) of the multinational coalition headed by the USA against Iraq for Kuwait independence restoration was a kind of Arabic nationalism funerals. And in the 1980s Iraq was “a buffer” against Iranian Islamic revolution expansion. One can remember here the sanguinary war between Iraq and Iran in 1980-1988 with neither the winner nor the loser. The rise of mass Islamism was preconditioned by this war.

The events of the current century in the Arab countries showed that the rise of mass Islamism went in two directions. Firstly, the inner resistance to authoritarian and tyrannical regime rose in the Arab countries. It was accompanied by strengthening of Islamic parties, first of all “Muslim Brotherhood”. Secondly, the third power’s influence like al., Qaida or jihadist tendencies in the social sphere were also notable acting against Western nations.

It is to be found out what was the reason of well-timed activation of the Muslim community and conflict risks between the Muslim world and the West:

1. The preserved social and economic gap between the Muslim countries and the West;
2. Disappointment of the Muslims with the Left wing ideology and the social and economic model they hoped to finish with the gap;
3. The destruction by the Western (americanized) culture expansion over Muslim way of life and traditional values;
4. The limits for modernization and westernization of the Muslim community.

The failure of so called “White revolution” or a Western like reforming in Iran initiated by the shah Reza Pahlavi and supported by the USA was an example of this limit. These reforms were provided in authoritarian style and caused any problems like social stratification, discontent of traditionally thinking people (clergy and peasantry). Shah’s image also suffered. This discontent ended with so called “Islamic revolution” on the 11th February, 1979 driven not only by Muslim clergymen but also by a considerable part of the of youth and intelligentsia with opposite views. This revolution toppled the secular regime and resulted in creation of an Islamic state (the Islamic Republic of Iran) headed by imam (ayatollah), a continuator of the Prophet Mohammed’s mission. It also was the impetus for emerging of a political regime where signs of authoritarianism were fused with representative democracy (Chehabi 2011).

Even in Turkey, the most Westernized Muslim country, there were seen the limits of westernization. The reforms provided by Kemal *Atatürk* (the 1920s), *the founder of the modern Turkish state*, meant for the Turks a breakup with their national tradition: annihilation of caliphate (the traditional form of the Turkish statehood), severe religious prohibitions, substitution of Islamism with conception of a secular statehood and Panturkism. Meanwhile in Turkey there are Islamists' organizations supported by 20% of the population. In 1995 a fundamentalist Welfare Party headed by N. Erbakan won the election. The party called on Islamisation of the Turkish society and was banned in 1997. In 2002 the pro-Islamist Justice Party of R.T. Erdogan won the election. The subsequent events such as "soft Islamisation", discontinuation of Kemal's principles as well as the strengthening of Erdogan's individual power apparently show the non-democratic vector in Turkey's policy (Vatandas 2013).

The Muslim communities and nations did not avoid the authoritarian syndrome arisen on the verge of XX and XXI centuries. A German researcher Raimund Kraemer sees authoritarianism as a complex phenomenon taking place in XXI century simultaneously with erosion of democratic mechanisms and procedures. He distinguished several main causes resulted in triumph of authoritarianism in the Muslim communities and nations:

1. Authoritarianism as a political answer to religious aspirations. Political systems where existing political institutions like a parliament or a court are restricted by religious leaders diminish the need of society in such institutions. Such regimes are not numerous (Iran) but there is a tendency on the sub-national level either in northern part of Nigeria or in some Malaysian provinces.
2. Authoritarianism as a political reaction of traditional regimes with rent-oriented economy. Traditional political regimes (monarchy, emirates) and the regimes based on rent-oriented economy receiving high income from oil export. Here we see a dynamic turn to the parliamentary system with establishing of parliaments, political parties and voting rights when political freedom and political rights belong to a limited part of population (men, proprietors). The examples are the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Saudi Arabia (Kraemer 2012).

Israeli researcher Amichai Magen in his turn underlines that there are certain religious, cultural and economical characteristics in the Middle East which "let us accept the Arabic exclusiveness as "the absence of democracy".

1. Cultural views of the Arabs on legitimate political order are a deplorable example. According to the data of a sociological service "Arab barometer" in 2003-2006, 56% agreed that "religious leaders should influence political decisions" and a half of the respondents agreed that "governing model should correspond with Sharia laws".

2. Economic structure in the majority of the North Africa and Middle East countries are unfavorable for democracy. Rent-oriented economy is the basis for economic existence of 16 Arab nations, 70% of their budget is filled due to oil and gas export incomes. It holds back the development of other economic fields, contributes to corruption and supports the machinery of repression with huge resources.
3. Apparent lack of security and legitimacy make the Arab nations fragile and foster disintegration tendencies. There emerge ungovernable or improperly ruled spaces filled with pre-modern and neo-medieval phenomena, sets of non-state actors like tribes, warlords, territorial nets. These facts altogether do not let create a well functioning statehood in the Arab world.
4. Emergence of failed state in the Arab world is always accompanied by numerous ethnic, religious, tribal or other forms of civil conflicts. Such countries like Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and others are shattered by ethnic wars.
5. The Arab spring underlined the lack of legitimacy and state consistency in the Arab world.
6. The Arab world communities are ancient in historical context but as political formations they are “situational structures” with no long history.
7. In the Arab world there are no stable political identities except Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and the Persian Gulf oil monarchies (Magen A., 2012. S.33-35).

The Israeli researcher estimates the prospects of democracy in the Arab world rather skeptically. But it concerns the rooted political and social statehood examples. Is there a chance for renovation and democratization of new social and radically oriented movements?

ISLAMISM AS A CHANCE FOR DEMOCRACY?

Certain hope about promotion of transformed democratic values in the Muslim worlds was laid upon “political Islam”. Islamist ideologists could not miss this topic and inevitably touched upon it in their programs. Their attitude towards democracy as a phenomenon was ambiguous.

Salih Sirriya, one of the Islamism ideologists, is a resolute adversary of democracy as “the way of life contradictory to the way of Islam. Democracy empowers people to issue laws, forbid or allow what they want, while Islam does not allow us decide what is “halal” (allowed by Allah) and “haram” (forbidden by Allah) even if they are unanimous about some questions. To combine Islam with democracy is the same as to combine Judaism and Islam; as a person cannot be in the same time Judaist and Muslim the person cannot be in the same time a democrat and Muslim” (Mirskiy, 2003).

These words are not merely declarative. Islamists always acted against democracy because they presumed that power (*hukm*) and sovereignty (*hâkimiyya*) belong to the God and not to the people. But after the Arab spring such views were left in the past for majority of the countries. Now Islamists acknowledge that “God’s will” (*al-irâda al-ilâhiyya*) can be expressed through the people.

To some extent such approach explains why voters in different countries voted en masse for Islamists: Lord wanted it and He sanctified it. The inveterate Islamists are sure that the results of the voting express the God sovereignty (*hâkimiyya*).

But history is going on and the political Islam theorists needed to justify to new political changes and demands of the Muslim communities. In the second half of the XX century inside Sunni Islam there were elaborated theories of Islamic state foundations. For example, one of the renowned Sunni ideologists An-Nabahani saw democracy as a system imposed upon Muslim countries by colonialists (Note 2). Accepting democratic institutions as enemy for Islam, his stance towards them was negative.

More balanced views about reforming Muslim communities and statehood in the Arab world were expressed by a Pakistani Abul A`la Maududi (Note 3). He in particular sees the prospects of an Islamic statehood with modernized the state authorities system fulfilled by means of democratic elections. For that there should exist the upper class devoted to Islam.

In the mid of the 1950-1960s the theoretical ideas in the field of political Islam were getting more popular. It was preconditioned by the emergence of “Muslim Brotherhood”. The radical Islamists declared their goals as the continuation of Maududi approach. The leading Islamist ideologists then were Hassan al-Banna and Sajjid Kutb (Note 4). They paid much attention to the methods of organized struggle to create an Islamic state.

Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949) during the short period of life in Egypt founded a massive movement “Muslim Brotherhood”. The movement spread its influence all over the Muslim world. In his religious messages, fatwas and articles al-Banna clearly described his political ideal. According to al-Banna, an ideal Muslim state should be ruled by a consultative council (Shura). He spoke about hereditary monarchy but about an Islamic republic. Political parties should be abrogated. The consultative bodies should serve for caliph as consultants and consist of representatives of all social walks and communities including Muslim law professionals. Although the thinker supported also Sharia law he clearly understood the variety and flexibility of the Muslim laws. Al-Banna thought the state should support certain social and economic order but he did not go into details here.

An Egyptian Sajjid Kutb (1906-1965) was one of the prominent Islamism ideologists of the XX century, a thinker and a theorist of Islamic state. For his participation in “Muslim Brotherhood” activities he was sentenced to death by the

president Naser. To S. Kutb's mind, the existing communities in the Arab world are not Islamist. They are *jahiliya* (barbarity, heathenry, savagery and infidelity) and "divine program" as the only means cannot settle this problem. S. Kutb affirmed that the whole world was in *jahiliya*, not only the countries where "materialistic communism" or "lewd capitalism" rules but the Muslim countries as well. As S. Kutb stated, in the Muslim countries principles of faith were subjected to distortion during a long period of time.

In the Muslim states *hakimiya* (empowered ruling of Allah) was substituted by *hakimiya* of people and that resulted in flourishing of the social life system "based on domination of certain people and serving to them" (Kutb 2003).

As S. Kutb said, an Islamic state should be based on examples of the four righteous caliphs ruling and not only those about searching flexible compromises on disputable questions but also the precedents of violent oppressing by caliph the opposite opinions. The consultative principles (Shura) was seen by S. Kutb as protection against autocracy. Shura was seen by S. Kutb not only as the representative body of all social groups but also as the representative of all people interests. Muslim ruler's right to say the last word was also provided.

At the same time a global jihad was seen as a temporary political prospect for Muslim states. The final goal of such jihad is the Muslim dominance in the world and without that it is impossible to destroy the world system of exploitation and injustice. Thus, "Islam applied the matter qualities to use the conception of jihad to destruct the kingdom of ignoramus as the basis of *jahiliya* and political regime based on *jahiliya* because they both resist mores improvement and human faith as a whole" (Kutb 2003).

Sudan theologian Hassan at-Turabi (1932-2016), Muslim legislator, politician and publicist, Islamic Charter Front founder who actively worked in favor of democratization of Sudan, was the initiator of rather ambiguous "Islamic experiment" providing political changes in Sudan and "Revolution of National Salvation" ideologist in 1989, a stalwart of deep step by step Islamisation of society.

On doctrine level at-Turabi expressed rather moderate political views. His approach to Islamic state theory distinguished itself not by referencing to "roots of Islam" but by idea of reconstruction according to Sudan's realities that meant the realization of religious activity. Understanding religious and ideological variety of Sudan's spiritual life at-Turabi and his supporters meant to consolidate not only like-minded persons but ideological partners as well. It inevitably resulted in weakening of doctrine radicalism.

In particular at-Turabi presumed that jihad is not a duty of Muslims and prophecy tradition cannot always shape the contemporary epoch. Notwithstanding the differences between Western democracy and Muslim consultative conception (Shura) with its clearly parliamentary traits at-Turabi himself was an adherent

of democratic vector and opposed theocracy and dictatorship. In his book “The Renewal of Islamic Thought” (1987) he applying of Islamic law should depend on conditions of place and time. New norms of Islamic law should lay on democratic basis and not be the privilege of Ulamas. The situation with democracy in leading Islamist parties programs is even more complicated.

For example, Freedom and Justice Party won the parliamentary election in 2011 in Egypt (the party’s candidate M. Morsi won the presidential election in 2012 and was then toppled by the military) included in its program the idea of turning Sharia law into “the main source” of legislation. This point was included by the Islamists to a new Constitution project adopted in December 2012 (supported by 64%). It caused the mass upheaval and resulted into overthrowing of M. Morsi.

The leader of a Tunisian party Ennahdha (Awakening) Rached Ghannouchi who found it in 1970 had to leave Tunisia and is famous in the West as a stalwart of democracy and party pluralism being simultaneously an opponent of aggressive and non-humane behavior of the Western countries on the international scene. In his opinion, in the Muslim world democracy is possible only on the faith basis. According to Ghannouchi, democracy is an instrument to reach Islam goals and Islamic state political structures – Shura – should act in compliance with Muslim values. Not denying certain respect for people’s sovereignty he acknowledged that voters had the right to reject unacceptable Sharia’s norms by democratic actions as well as choose democratic constitution.

It was not accidentally that in March 2012 Ghannouchi declared that Sharia could not be the only source of legislation. He also said there was no need to turn Tunisia into an Islamic state.

Finally, a Turkish Justice and Development Party of the incumbent president R. T. Erdogan reached a success in the parliamentary elections in 2002, 2007 and 2011 theoretically acknowledging democracy, multiparty system and the republican values but taking course towards gradual Islamization of society. The party promotes certain Muslim rules like restriction against alcohol trade, gender separation in swimming pools and students’ hostels but without declaring Turkey to be an Islamic state. Justice and Development Party determined itself as “post-Islamic” or “Islamodemocratic” (Seidensticker, 2014).

Thus the question of democracy role in the context of “the new political Muslim order” in the works of Islam ideologists of the XX century is obscure. Certain hope was laid upon the Arab spring but the hope went down the drain.

THE ARAB SPRING AND DEMOCRACY

The Arab spring was commenced by self-immolation of a Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, 26 years old in Sidi Bouzid in the south of Tunisia. It was an

act of disappointment and protest against the life conditions and regular bribes for police (Filiu 2011).

M. Bouazizi passed away two weeks later absolutely ignorant that his tragic death shook the town and provoked a revolution resulted in toppling of the political regime in Tunisia.

Bouazizi's protest was massively supported by ten thousands of young people in Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, Libya, Jordan or in a word in the majority of North African and Middle Eastern countries. The events 2011-2012 caused unprecedented political processes in the Arab world ticked in the modern political vocabulary as the Arab spring.

As a German expert T. Hasche says, in 2011 in Europe there ruled enthusiasm concerning the Arab spring but in several years it disappeared. T. Hasche thinks that such transnational political phenomenon as the Arab spring should be explained in detail. Already in the 2000s social protests were a norm in the region. During so called the Damascus spring 2000-2001 Syrian citizens demanded Bashar al-Asad's resignation and more political freedom. At the beginning of the world financial crisis of 2008 massive protests of starving people took place in many countries of the North Africa and Middle East. Even in Iran in summer 2009 there occurred mass demonstrations evolved into suppressed Green revolution after the presidential elections won by M. Ahmadinejad. Politically weak legitimate governing systems in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen faced in 2010-2011 mass protests supported by social media. Only Bashar al-Asad could keep the power in his hand by means of violence and Shiite Iran's support. In Libya M. Gaddafi was overthrown by the military intervention and slaughtered by the rebels. Then a parliamentary election took place in this country (Hasche Th., 2016.)

RESULTS

The crash of autocracy and dictator political regimes was the most apparent result of the Arab spring. But as many researchers say the Arab revolutions are of conservative character. The crash of the political regimes in the Arab world did not result in any notable changes in population mentality or anthropological structures of society in the majority of the countries. Historically determined social structures were left unchanged and tribal values are respected so far. We can add that there was no cultural revolution in the Arab world (Guidère 2012.).

It is confirmed by voting results in the Arab countries where Islamists won the elections and represented themselves as a new influential political power. This power hardly can be labeled as democratic one especially taking into consideration its political position.

Thus in Yemen after a year of massive protest and even armed clashes with the governing regime voters were called on to vote for the only candidate (Note 5) that is for the ex-vice-president in former dictator Saleh's government (Note 6).

In Tunisia as the place where the victory march of the Arab revolutions began from the pro-Islamist movement Ennahdha (Note 7) got 40% of votes and the general secretary of the movement was promoted to prime-minister after 16 years in prison.

In Algeria the authorities foresaw danger of a would-be revolutionary upheaval and proposed free and transparent elections which Islamists were supposed to win due to strict and biased surveillance over the voting by the military.

In Libya after the destruction of Gaddafi's dictatorship by means of NATO support for anti-Gaddafi rebels Islamists grasped the ruling position in Tripoli and some provinces.

In Egypt Islamists got about 70% of the votes. Even Salafis among members and adherents of Al-Nour party (Note 8) got up to 25% of votes in many voting districts. The fact that Islamists are an influential power was confirmed by president elections won by M. Morsi (Note 9).

In a word, Islamists grasped power in the majority of the North African and Middle Eastern countries. Under the pressure of people's movement and international society predominantly of the Western countries the Islamists had to resort not only to democratic rhetoric but also some commitments to realize the actions referred to democratic type of rule.

The time passed from the beginning of the Arab spring but the Arab countries continue to surprise us and sometimes cause anxiety. That is due to the fact that all political powers in this region have no clear idea about the core of the democratic reforms.

In above mentioned German expert T. Hasche's opinion "democratic prepaid hopes" about the Arab spring failed. For example, political protests in Syria were violently oppressed by the military. In Bahrain mass upheaval was stopped by military intervention of the Persian Gulf states headed by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia strengthened its position as the key conservative and counterrevolution power. Its ultimate goal was to topple the Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi. It meant that authoritarian military structures and secret services as the main support for the toppled regimes managed to reform their activity and restore the control over the political events. It was clearly shown in Egypt where the new president el-Sisi after the period of interim Muslim Brotherhood rule acted as stabilizer and orchestrated the appeasing of the country.

The protests socially split the region into competing ethnic groups, confessions, tribes and sects. The most destructive for democratic prospects of the region there was the conflict between Sunni Turkey and Wahhabi monarchy of Saudi Arabia

from one hand and Shiite Iran from the other hand. The beneficiaries of this conflict were all types of Jihadists' groups. Despite drastic military actions against Islamic State and its territorial losses in Syria and Iraq the Jihadists see Libya as a target for further expansion.

A German researcher Werner Ruf is even explicit in his opinion. He supposes that the Arab spring was not a democratic movement from beneath but a conspiracy of conservative monarchies in the Persian Gulf (first of all Saudi Arabia and Qatar) against undesirable secular authoritarian regimes with left ideology in the Arab world (Libya and Syria). The other goal was to weaken the so called Shiite axis (Iran – Syria – the Shiites in Lebanon and Hezbollah movement) to prevent any alternative political projects in the region (Ruf 2015).

The emergence of ISIL is the repercussion of the unsuccessful previous political projects in the Arab world as well as exhaustion of political opportunities for traditional nations in the global world.

Thus, as the result of the applied analysis the authors appreciate the prospects for democratization in the Near East as limited. This problem was caused by the lag in the socio-economic and political development of the Near East states. The Arab spring at the same time strengthened the democratic and non-democratic trends in the Near East societies. It can bring both to authoritarian conservatism and triumph of fundamentalist opposing further changes. The authors acknowledge political Islam as an important catalyst of these events but are not prone to overestimate its abilities for establishing a democratic type of political order in the modern sense. The authors presume that restoration of authoritarian political order in the countries which came through the Arab spring is barely possible. There are not enough premises for institutionalized democracy.

CONCLUSION

Thus the question about democracy prospects in the Arab world is open so far. The absence of necessary prerequisites for democratic power transition creates the odious vicious circle in the majority of the Arab nations. People's will and struggle against tyranny are not synonyms of democratization. To our mind the current ambiguous and critical situation in the Muslim or more narrow the Arab world demands not new simulacrum of democratization and creation of "democracy oasis" in the desert of traditionalism and fundamentalism. Preservation of the interim condition of Muslim and Arab countries is also of no advantage for the international society as it menaces Europe and the West as a whole with hectic migration and terroristic threats. We presume that only a full scale project of social, economic and political modernization of the Arab societies and countries could result in a really qualitative reforming of them. The commonwealth of Western and non-Western nations should play here the leading and coordinating role. Such deep evolutionary changes adapted

to the peculiarities of the Muslim societies could provide necessary conditions for democratization and not as a target or thing-in-itself but as effective means for solving the current problems.

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