

## ARAB SPRING: CHARACTER AND AFTERMATHS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

Viktor Vasilevich Zheltov\*, Maxim Viktorovich Zheltov\* and Sergey Vladimirovich Biriukov\*

---

The article deals with “Arab spring” and the factors and specific traits which predetermined this phenomenon. The authors try to answer the question whether the factors are of revolutionary character and what will be the future perspectives of the countries where “Arab spring” took place. The phenomenon of political Islam and rental state are analyzed as the key points of political transformation in the Arab countries and Arab societies. The driving force of social protest is scrutinized as well as their scale and causes of its involvement into “Arab spring events and their real role in the transformation process. The dynastic gerontocracy is seen by the authors as a key trigger of the described events. The authors see several directions of possible political changes in the Near East triggered by “Arab spring” and weigh the chances for stable and democratic development. They also analyze the main trends for modernization and de-modernization of society, strengthening of authoritarianism, forming of democracy institution, re-Islamisation and secularism, the perspective of political order and political chaos.

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

### INTRODUCTION

“Arab spring” was both a challenge and a chance for many Arab states and societies. It was an indicator to see whether the Arab countries are able to make a democratic breakthrough after years of authoritarian order and social and political stagnation. Researching of “Arab spring” phenomenon, its causes, its evolving and results let touch on a more fundamental problem of the Arab societies` ability to modernization, the presence and absence the necessary resources for such processes.

### TECHNIQUE

Studying “Arab spring” as a specific form of political transition demands applying such methods like comparative, socio-economic and socio-cultural analysis. Neo-constitutional approach takes into consideration the existing formal institutions in Near East and inseparable informal institutions and political practices. It is the methodological basis for such studying. Besides, the authors applied structural and functional methods for studying of deep transformation of political and socio-economic systems in the Near East societies which was one of the Arab spring results. Such approach lets forecast further directions of post-revolutionary processes in Near East.

In the contemporary epoch traditional and “modernized” types of authoritarianism face a deep crisis and are less and less apt to cope with new

---

\* Kemerovo State University, Russia, 650043, r. Kemerovo, Krasnaya str., 6

challenges within the public space. “Immovability” of authoritarian order is an illusion. Although the ability of authoritarianism to adopt different institutional forms and partially modernize the society and transforming its social basis give it extra chances for survival. But modernization is like a trap for such regimes because the social basis changes cause insurmountable high scale challenges. One of such challenges was the events called now “Arab spring”. Arab spring was a revolutionary wave of demonstration and protests in the Arab world that began on 18 Dec. 2010. The revolutions took place in Tunisia and Egypt; a civil war in Libya cause the toppling of the ruling regime; civil uprisings in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen; mass protests in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Oman; less significant protests in Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Western Sahara. The clashes on the Israeli border in May 2011 also were caused by the local “Arab spring”.

The phenomenon of “Arab spring” itself started 17 Dec. 2010 when a young 26 year old Tunisian vegetable trader in Sidi Bouzid in Sothern Tunisia set himself to fire protesting against his living conditions [Filiu,2011,pp,32-35]. His tragic death shocked the city and was the beginning of the revolution which toppled the ruling political regime in Tunisia.

The protest of M. Bouazizi was continued by thousands of young people in Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Jordan that is to say in the majority of Northern Africa and Near East countries. As was shown by 2011-2012 events, this self-immolation kindled unprecedented political processes in the history of the Arab world named “Arab spring”.

In the modern theory of authoritarian regime a street as a place of politics plays only a secondary role. Without a mass mobilizing ideology an authoritarian system takes as an advantage political apathy and “depoliticized” society [Linz, 2000, S. 138f]. As H. Chehabi says the actions done by a mature authoritarian regime are of only ritual character [Chehabi, 2011, S. 33-52]. But after events of 2011 we cannot say about “depoliticized society” unable to self-mobilization and uprisings.

It is necessary to remind that the Arab spring expressed itself in national revolutions in the Northern Africa and Near East countries and meant awakening of peoples and their liberation.

From the outset the mass style riot in the Arabic countries was spontaneous. Its participants including the politically organized groups could not foresee the changes it would bring. *It was clear that such massive protest expressed itself politically for the first time in the Arabic society after the national movement for independency in Asia and Africa after WWII.*

The Arabic revolutions toppled corrupted dictatorships in several countries of Northern Africa and Near East (see it below). It was the result of the people’s

movement unprecedented in the Arabic world in which youth, students and people of different social walks took part and among them *women*. In the previous years there were no such examples.

Arab spring is conceived by the Western countries with romanticism like the mass movements in Europe and America in the end of the 1960s. Then morality, mores, ideas and revolutionary practices itself were changed with the expectations of social liberation.

The metaphor “Arab spring” is equal to the metaphor “Peoples` spring” of 1848. The European continent was shocked then by a powerful social and political protest. Its results were not unique: the protesters had success in Paris, for example, but lost in Warsaw. None the less, Peoples` spring of XIX century had a great impact on the history of different countries and brought serious political aftermaths.

It is obvious that Peoples` spring in the European countries changed the face of the Old world and Arab spring like the events of 1848 took place geographically in the countries of Northern Africa and Near East. It is hard to overestimate its influence on the development of the Arabic world.

Analytics say that Arab spring contains ideals of liberalism which change political regimes and its control over the society. Needless to say that Arab spring expressed the clear desire of people in different Muslim countries to bring positive changes in their life. But we see that the countries affected by revolutionary update encounter big difficulties in the way of democracy and their future is uncertain to great extent [Cf. Aoun Sami, 2013, pp. 11-13].

Applying the term “Arab spring” one should take into consideration the national character of the event and its results that`s why some authors of works focused on the revolutions in the Arab world prefer to use this term in a plural form – “Arab springs”.

In other words, the general term “Arab spring” implies national and state approach. One should remember that the revolutionary events in 2010-2012 happened not in all Arabic countries [Nabli, 2013]. The countries of the tropic savannah Sahel and among them such poorest countries like Niger, Chad, Mali were not the scene of revolutions. The same about Iran which a year before the Arab revolutions went through its own and not bloodless “spring 2009”. But during 2010-2012 Iran was beyond the Arab spring events. The exceptions just confirmed the general regularity: mass riots caused deep social and political transformations in the region and their results are neither obvious nor unique.

### **Was it a revolution?**

No sense to talk about inability of political transformations in the Muslim countries and submissiveness of the Arabs under their authorities. In May, 2015 an Algerian writer Camel Daud definitely expressed himself about it (note 1): “After the Tunisian spring 2011 a revolutionist means an Arab”.

Rehearsal analysis of Arab spring was started in the Arabic and Western countries after the mass riots. Not only theologians and political scientists make their tribute to it but those who are attentive and competent observers of social and political development of the Arabic countries.

As it was said above Arab spring started spontaneously. It was a sudden move both for security services of the Arabic countries and for protesters themselves who were not united before the revolution by any ideology or political power.

In the scientific literature in our country and abroad there were put forth several approaches of conceptual understanding of Arab spring. The majority of the researchers are prone to view the antigovernment protests in the Northern Africa and Near East countries as revolutions with specific peculiarities.

One of the well-known specialists on theory of revolutions D. Goldstone (note 2) gives the following definition of revolution applying it to the realities of the XXI century. In the article "Towards a fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory" (2001) he stated: "A revolution is an attempt to transform political institutions and legitimate political power accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized activity weakening the government" [Goldstone, 2001, p. 141].

Another author already mentioned by us Sayah gives the following definition of a revolution taking into consideration the revolutionary practices in Tunisia: revolution as itself "is an uprising against the old order. It is often seen as a doctrine of immanency and liberation because of its emancipation impetus (note3). After demolition of those what it wanted to demolish to survive it tries to stigmatize the authorities and a revolution has to attack if it wants to win" [Sayah, 2013, p. 30].

Do such definitions meet the understanding of the Arab spring phenomenon? It's possible to apply them to some concrete countries but Arab spring is a row of revolutions. Its peculiarity is a wave-like evolving.

By the way, in the end of the previous century the term "wave of revolutions" was coined after M. Katz by J. Goldstone [Katz, 1997; Goldstone, pp. 139-187].

Not all researchers share the view of Arab spring as a revolution. E.g., prof. Asef Bayat (Illinois university) suggests that it is impossible to define the events in Egypt only as a revolution or only as reforms. He offered a new term "refolution" – an amalgam of revolutionary actions and state reforms. [Bayat, 2011, pp. 50 – 54].

On this background the opinion of a German researcher W. Ruf sounds paradoxically: Arab spring was a part of a reactionary plan realized by despotic monarchies of the Persian Gulf. According to W. Ruf, the war against Assad was a part of counterrevolutionary strategy of the Persian Gulf despots who goal to topple the secular regime in the region as they successfully did in Libya and Yemen and attempt to do in Tunisia. The final goal is to stabilize their regimes through the Arabic revolutions. The brutal oppression of the protests in Bahrain by Saudi tanks

led to the same goal. According to Ruf, Syria has even more importance than why the Saudis and their allies support jihadist groups like affiliated to Al Qaida Al-Nusra and ISIS since 2013 [Ruf, 2015, S. 32].

According to a German researcher O. Schluemberger the term “Arab spring” is controversial enough and the researchers shouldn’t misuse it [Schluemberger, 2012, S. 70-71]. If strictly using the term “revolution” the fact of mass uprising in Egypt, for example, is dubious and we cannot talk about “a revolution”. Some of the old regime main traits are still preserved and the power is concentrated in High Military Council. From the position of transitological paradigm there are no system changes although the transformation of political landscape took place. The revolution in Tunisia is also questionable. The toppling of Gaddafi’s regime in Libya may be seen as a revolution to some extent but with unclear reasons. The same about Syria: as Schluemberger says in Syria we can say about the similar scenario actively supported from abroad.

There can be defined several possible directions of transformation in the Near East countries caused by Arab spring:

- 1) revolutions which were restricted geographically and by their political results (Iran, Algeria);
- 2) protests which made the authorities to do cosmetic reforms without drastic changes of political system (Morocco);
- 3) Arab spring crashed the ruling regime and the statehood itself (Libya and Syria to some extent);
- 4) Arab spring temporarily brought Islamists to power which was then grasped by the military (Egypt);
- 5) the protests were oppressed and the ruling regime preserved (Bahrain);
- 6) Arab spring toppled the ruling regime, provoked a full scale civil war with foreign intervention (Yemen);
- 7) Arab spring brought a shaky balance of secular reformists and supporters of political Islam what was expressed in the constitutional changes (Tunisia);
- 8) preserving of traditional absolutism regime without any reforms (the Persian Gulf monarchies);

The range of expected development directions in the Near East after Arab spring is as follows:

- 1) open or isolated military regime;
- 2) monarchies adopted to modern development process;
- 3) parliamentary regime;
- 4) “Islamic democracy” where radical Islam will be rather an exception;

- 5) the traditional tribe dominance forms which emerge after the collapse of national states and sliding into a chaos of a civil war. [Krämer & Kleinwächter, 2011, S. 7-16.].

To opinion of some researchers there is an unstable situation in many countries of the Near East and northern Africa. It doesn't let to hope for quick restoration of stability and makes controversial the theoretical discussions about "democratization of the Near East" [Schluemberger, 2012, S. 70]. It will much depend on the opportunities to realize social and economic modernization foundation of political institutions to alleviate the existing political order. Of importance is also the presence of social and political actors who are able to build up such an order and maintain it. In this aspect it's worth scrutinizing the main factors which generated the social protests evolved then into Arab spring.

### **THE PROTESTS MOVEMENT DRIVERS**

#### **Absolute disappointments as a cause of protest**

Arab spring was perceived by Western observers through the prism of politics and ideology. As the toppling of the ruling regimes in Tunisia and Egypt showed that mass disappointment by social realities played a key role as both at the beginning of the revolution and later. It was reflected by the results of voting by population of several Arabic countries.

Two or three Arab generations were doomed to follow their fathers' destiny having no opportunity for a social lift. Here we should emphasize that the youth in the Arab countries didn't famish because they spent all the time to get extra money to maintain their families. The overwhelming majority of them were devoid of opportunities to get education or a prestigious profession, many of them hadn't worthy life and recreation conditions.

To this cheerless picture of individual destinies should be added a number of deep social problems piled in the majority of the Arabic countries. Among them there are:

- state and local authorities incompetence;
- lack of dwelling;
- "worn out" transport means;
- underdeveloped medicine;
- unsatisfactory conditions of school system in the country and so on;

These and other aspects of everyday life provoked (they couldn't not to do it) social dissatisfaction. In the 2000s the economic situation aggravated in the majority of the Arabic countries. Within three years before the revolutions GDP was diminishing in the majority of the Arabic countries. According to World Bank, in Bahrain GDP diminished from 8.3% to 4.5%, in Egypt – from 7,1% to 5,1%, in

UAE – from 3,3% to 1,4%, in Jordan – from 8,2% to 2,3%, in Libya – from 6% to 2,1%, in Syria – from 5,7% to 3,2%, in Tunisia – from 6% to 3% [Encel, 2014, pp. 75-76.].

### **Relative disappointment**

Social disappointment in the Arabic countries touches also the ruling elites who had access to country's wealth although to different extents. Under the previous regime in Tunisia 25% of the population lived under the poverty level (note 4). This unbearable life of the majority of the Tunisians contrasted with life conditions of Trabelsi family (the spouse of the president Ben Ali) and the family of Ben Ali himself [Chrouda, 2011]. The best colleges, schools, university faculties and the best and lucrative offices in economics were preserved for the clan's children. They also had the possibility to get the best dwelling and access to the best clinics (mostly in Europe).

In Egypt Hosni Mubarak's family possessed huge wealth. It grasped incomes from everywhere including the tariffs for ships to go through the Suez Canal, etc. No doubts that the huge wealth of Mubarak's family was the result of robbing the Egyptians who faced economic difficulties. Here is the confirmation: 40% of Egyptians are poor; 32% are illiterate (48% among women) [Daoud, 2015, p. 298].

Notwithstanding the harsh economic difficulties the Egyptians preserved sense of humor during the period since Egypt's independence. The following joke was popular there: "Those who weren't in prison under Nasser will never be there. Those who didn't strike a fortune under Sadat will never strike it. Those who don't live as a beggar under Mubarak will never be a beggar" [Ibid].

To be poor in the countries with low income like Tunisia or Yemen is not the same as to be poor in the countries with relatively high income like in Libya or Algeria. Under Gaddafi in Libya were extracted about 2% of oil in the world and about 0,5% of gas in the world and there were possibilities to smooth many social problems. But the restricted modernization abilities of the most developed Near East countries (cultural revolution, industrialization, new agriculture technologies) caused the basis for mass social discontent among those who supported the reforms and among the conservative groups. It predetermined the toppling of such regimes.

### **Crisis of "rental state" model**

Many of the researchers of the events in Near East applied to them also the model of rental state. In political science the negative aftermaths of oil boom were reflected in the conception of rental state. This model is applied for analyzing social and economic development of the Near East countries.

The main idea of the "rental state" model is that the ruling regimes are able to keep the population under control due to raw material export income which is viewed as export rent. Creating a repressive state such regimes may "buy" the

support of the main social groups. But rental states have almost no possibilities to create an effective governing system for realization of social interests. The main social and economic problem is a weak control over raw material export income.

Rental state theory stalwarts emphasize the negative aftermaths it brings for the exporter country and consider the oil income as the premise for authoritarian regime, conflicts and rampant corruption and forming rent-seeking mentality of the populace. [Schmitt, 2014, S. 46].

As ethnologists affirm a rent state does not change the inner structure and relations shaped long before oil boom [Pross, 2001, p. 325-361].

Other researchers underline that the elites of the states with ample raw materials encounter many challenges. Political and social reaction to raw material excavation increase depends on social context. [Heinrich & Pleines, 2014, S. 29].

On the macroeconomic level the main negative effect induced by raw material wealth is inadequate diversification of economic structure and its exposure to crisis.

The economics of rental states depends on mining sector. High raw material export income strengthens national currency, lowers competitiveness of national industry and agriculture while population gets advantage of relatively cheap import. The aftermaths will be inevitable deindustrialization and refusal to reshape economic structure. Raw material wealth turns into raw material dependence with crisis exposure and fragility of rent-seeking economics. The main export items depend on volatile world prices. The economic rates are getting worse than in the industrial countries. [Peters, 2014, S. 62].

As a result a rent state has restricted administrative potential and its stability is under threat because of regular oscillation of the world market.

Thus, raw material oriented vector has a negative impact on the social, economic and political development of state.

Usually there are emphasized several groups of crisis faced by a rental state. Among them:

- government control over raw materials;
- problems with regulations of raw material excavation process;
- necessity to form the appropriate infrastructure;
- problems with export management;
- problems of industrial politics and diversification of economics [Heinrich & Pleines, n. d., S. 30].

Politically rental states are stable authoritarian regimes or countries with high risks of conflicts. But it is possible to evade both scenarios

For democracy it is valid the rule “No taxation without representation” and for rental authoritarianism is valid the rule “No taxation, no representation.

Under such circumstances the ruling regimes have to redistribute resource rent in favor of the poorest to guarantee the regime’s popularity and loyalty. Such approach is the source of populism and ineffective economics. It is hard to satisfy



the requirements of all walks of society and it provokes social tension and conflicts for the access to rent redistribution process. [Peters, n. d., S. 64].

The key social aftermath here is the emergence of patronage and clientele system, rampant corruption and mentality of a rentier. Redistribution of resource rent in accordance with political criteria enables to create a neopatrimonial system to guarantee the loyalty of population and stability of political order. Redistribution of source rent in despite of economic criteria gives birth to such phenomena as high public expenditure, monopoly, subvention or redistribution of deficit goods by government. Among other negative effects are non-transparent public expenditure, corruption and weak connection between labor and income. [Peters, n. d., S. 65].

A rental state inevitably encounters the following political problems:

1. The probability of a civil war to control the raw resources;
2. The problem of state governing under the competitiveness predetermined by raw resource incomes;
3. The phenomenon of “resource nationalism”;
4. The model of resource politics which does not guarantee well-being of citizens and honest redistribution of social boons but gives birth to full scale social inequity; [Heinrich& Pleines, n. d., S. 32].

In the Near East case a rental state came to a modernization deadlock being unable to satisfy the rising social requirements of the populace. The social and political phenomena brought by such type of state (bureaucratic bourgeoisie, corruption, clans, authoritarianism, extensive type of economics provoked mass riots against such order. Rental patrimonialism could not compete with the Western type of a social state.

## **THE PROTEST POLITICAL DRIVERS**

### **Disappointment with dynastic gerontocracy**

In the majority of the Arabic countries in the second half of the last century (this tradition was continued in the beginning of XXI century) the high officers were brought to power as the results of coups. Then these officers pursue harsh and absolutistic policy. It was cruel and corrupted gerontocracy. Scrutinizing the transformational process of regimes in Near East and Northern Africa at the verge of XX and XXI centuries H. Albrecht and O. Schlumberger in 2003 stated: “A specific type of undemocratic dominance prevailing in the Arabic world is a neopatrimonialism where political power is based on the principle of cooptation”. [Albrecht & Schlumberger, 2003, p. 4]

To be just we should emphasize that formally there was no monarchy in such countries as Egypt, Yemen, Libya or Syria although power of rulers in these and other countries was not less than that of a monarch.

It is notable that in the Arabic world high military ranks were most often brought to power. IN 1989 in Tunisia as a result of Jasmine revolution 7, Nov., 1987 a cadre military officer Ben Ali grasped the power toppling H. Bourguoiba who was the president from 1957 till 1987. By the moment of toppling Bourguoiba was 84 years old.

In 2011 as a result of revolutionary explosion 75 years old Ben Ali was forced to leave Tunisia. His regime lasted a quarter of the century.

More than half of a century high political rulers of Egypt were the representatives of the military. As the result of revolution in July 1952 the officers grabbed the power and colonel G. A. Naser quickly was promoted to the president office. He ruled the country till 1970. In 1970 he was changed by Anwar Sadat, also from military ranks. Sadat's policy was accepted by the Egyptians in different ways. In autumn 1981 united terroristic groups of Islam fundamentalists "Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya" and "Egyptian Islam jihad" assassinated the president wreaking revenge on him for his attempts to cooperate with Israel and thwart the Islamisation of the Egyptian society.

Again marshal Sadat was substituted by general Moubarak, another representative of the military. At the beginning of Arab spring he was 83 years old and was ruling the country during 30 years! The tradition was broken by the elections of 2012 when M. Morsi was elected. But he ruled not long. In a year (3, July, 2013) people's protests brought a new leader – a field marshal el-Sisi (we talk about it later).

In 2011 a Libyan colonel Gaddafi was 69 years old. It seemed not that much for a leader. But he ruled longer than any other in the Arabic world. In 1969 he toppled king Idris I (note 5). Thus, Gaddafi was ruling Libya during 42 years.

A Yemen general Abdullah Saleh (note 6) also was a long-living leader. First he ruled Northern Yemen, then in 1990 became the leader of united Yemen (North and South). General Saleh was the president of Yemen Arab republic from 1978 till 1990 that is he was at the first political ranks like Gaddafi more than 40 years.

A little bit separately among the military leaders of the Arab countries there stands the president of Syria Bashar Assad (note 7) who got in Great Britain the qualification of ophthalmologist. But it is symbolic that he inherited the presidency from his father gen. Hafez Assad (note 8) who ruled the country from 1970 till 2000.

As T. Ben Jelloun justly says , "in the Arab world presidents behave themselves as absolute monarchs and keep the power by means of force, corruption, lie and blackmail...They install "formal democracy" not to irritate the Western countries. But this "formal democracy" is a camouflage. In reality all the power is kept by the presidents and they put up neither with protests nor with opposition. Their country is to the their disposal, they have huge profits, make transactions, get wealthy and keep their wealth in Swiss, American or European banks" [Jelloun, n. d., p. 32].

Algeria, Morocco, Sudan and Mauritania evaded Arab spring but the political ruling in these countries does not differ much from that in the countries affected by revolutions.

This situation fomented disappointment and decisive protests against the regimes where dynasty of generals lasted two, three or even more decades. The system of personal ruling in Northern Africa and Near East countries was gradually destroying their social basis. Patrimonial social institutions could not appease either reform – seeking layers or traditionalists. The causes of modernization misfortunes are social resistance, deficit of cultural and economic capital. The personal ruling system was here no compensation. The autocracy regimes which attempted to shape “a hybrid society” by creating “extraordinary” type of personalized power with no further modernization worsened the crisis. They narrowed space for political maneuver and became the main object of social discontent resulted in Arab spring.

### **Political Islam as a factor and an actor of Arab spring**

One of the political results of Arab spring was triumph of conservative trends and Islamism. The latter was the result of a complicated long term political process.

Historically it is used to find the sources of political Islam in the reference to Muslim Brotherhood movement. The movement was founded in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna. The upheaval of Islamism was instigated by political, ideological and social- economic processes in the 1960s. The defeat of the Arab countries in The Seven-Day war against Israel meant the sunset of Arab nationalism, the end of al-Naser era and strengthening of Salafistic Saudi Arabia [Seidensticker, 2014, S. 73-74]. The 1970s were the period of economic liberalization: less state meddling, less economic expenditures, delegation of these functions to private bodies including Muslim mutual aid networks. Rising oil prices in the 1970s strengthened the authoritarian regimes in the Persian Gulf which sponsored Islamists. The same reason hindered the democratic activities in the region. Nowadays two monarchy families rival for dominance in the region: Qatar and Saudi Arabia. While Qatar supported Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia invested in the Salafists. The Islamic revolution victory in Iran in 1979 inspired the Muslims and showed the opportunities of political Islam. In turn, informational revolution (Internet, satellite TV) tribute to popularization of radical Islam. The outstanding example is open support for Muslim Brotherhood by a Qatar TV channel “Al-Jazeera” [Iqbal, 2015, S. 55].

Political Islam in the Near East countries is a new phenomenon. Since the 1980s moderate Islamist parties developed their activities as a response to the rental secular-nationalistic regimes. Several decades of resistance to corrupted regimes gradually increased political potential of “Muslim order” ideas supporters. They joined these ideas with principles of social justice and struggle against any form of exploitation. As a result mass protests in Tunisia during the last 5 years instigated uprisings and revolution in the whole Arab world. So were legitimized the stalwarts

of political Islam and gave them access to political scene. As experts affirm “business people of the Gulf” were the main sponsors of the radical Islamic groups. Mostly from Qatar, Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia. In the case of Qatar it goes not about secularism victory but about the triumph of political party Islam. The “Muslim Brotherhood” case shows us how regional actors like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey used political Islam to broaden their political influence and reaching their political goals [Leukefeld, 2015, S. 22-24].

The success of the Islamist parties after 2011 like “Muslim Brotherhood” in Egypt, “Ennahda” in Tunisia, Justice and Development Party in Morocco [Seidensticker, n. d., S. 78-86] showed the determination of Islamists not only be present in the state power bodies but their claims to participate in reconfiguration of the social-political order on the basis of participant democracy (instead of the representative one) and neo-keynesianism (instead of traditional patrimonialism and liberalism).

Islamists exploit the following myths to attract young and socially active Muslims:

1. Myth about the past “golden century”
2. Myth about purity and purification (of Muslim societies – the translator’s note)
3. Myth about unity and about community (ummah)
4. Myth about oppression of the Muslims (in the contemporary world – the authors’ note)
5. Myths about martyrs (jihad’s warriors – the authors’ note) as the symbol of unity of Muslim military groups [Iqbal, 2015, S. 57-58].

During four years since Arab spring (Arabellion) Tunisia managed to go aside when counterrevolution and Islamization were at full speed. The elected government being formed in 2014 encountered with serious challenges, first of all, economic ones.

The political Islam stalwarts gained more success in Egypt where M. Moursi, a representative of “Muslim Brotherhood” was elected as president. But the military being supported by Saudi Arabia toppled Moursi and made “Muslim Brotherhood” go underground. However Libya, Yemen and Syria were turned by jihdist into failed states although earlier there were secular regimes. More or less despotic monarchies including Jordan and Morocco managed to form a stable majority in Arab League. The League pushed Un Security Council to adopt resolution 1973 to legitimize the war against Libya. The same resolution favored later the war against Yemen [Ruf, 2015, S. 12], which turned into a full scale bloodshed and active foreign involvement.

What are the perspectives of political Islam in Near East and northern Africa? As German researchers U. Dihstelhoff and R. Quaiassa affirm, the repercussions of

the 2011 event in Near East continue to reshape the region. The key role here played political Islam. But the role of its representatives is rather dual. On one hand, they acted as the participants of reshaping process. From the other, they simultaneously were a tool for potential regional powers. The authors suppose that in future political Islam will be a stabilizing factor for the region [Dihstelhoff and Quaissa, 2015, S. 27].

As a German researcher Leukelfeld presumes, political Islam was used and supported by its sponsors to beat their political rivals, in this case, the Syrian government and Iran. Syria is the last secular state in Near East where different religious and ethnic groups peacefully coexisted during decades. Religion i.e. different interpretation of Quran by the Sunnis and Shiites were used to split the society, oppose people to each other and reach own political and economic goals [Leukefeld, n. d., S. 26]. ISIS was of importance here. To Leukefeld's opinion it goes here not about religion but about the rivalry of the Gulf monarchies with Ira, competition for arms, money and oil [Leukefeld, 2015, S. 100-103]. It can fully destabilize the region.

Another question which worries researchers: is it possible to push political Islam on a constructive way neutralizing its negative traits? As a Tunisian researcher Iqbal supposes, here religion and politics should be divided and simultaneously prove that secularism does not mean the animosity towards Islam. Secularism means refusal from autocracy and theocracy in the Muslim world. It helps to pay attention to other aspects of Islam like rational theology of Mu'tazila school and traditional Muslim philosophy concerning the Quran texts analysis, Sufism and Islamic mystics. [Iqbal, 2015, S. 58].

It is hard for moderate and tolerant version of Islam to formulate an appropriate alternative for political Islam if both left and liberal modernization projects lose the ideological battle. Especially in the situation when world economic, social and ideological crisis increase the number of supporters of political Islam. Establishing of any version of "Islamic order" (conditionally democratic or authoritarian version) inevitably encounter the resistance either inside the Arab societies or in the West. Some expert rely on "democratic potential of political Islam" to find a way out from the post-revolution situation [Hafez, 2012, S. 74-83]. However, to answer the question about the reality of such appeasing variant the experts should answer the question about inner ability of "Islamic democracy" as a political model as well as about the factors of its consolidation and political-administrative capacity and its acceptability for heterogeneous Muslim communities and its compatibility with modernizing strategies.

## **RESULTS**

Thus, as the result of the applied analysis the authors see "Arab spring" as a complex and contradictory phenomenon. This phenomenon was caused by political and

socio-economic problems in Near East states. “Arab spring” can’t be viewed as a gradual revolutionary process although it contains the signs of revolution and “development crisis” of the Arab societies. It can bring both to authoritarian conservatism and triumph of fundamentalist opposing further changes. The authors acknowledge political Islam as a catalyst of these events but are prone to overestimate its abilities for establishing a new type of political order based on the traditional Muslim values.

The authors presume that restoration of authoritarian regimes in the countries which came through “Arab spring” is barely possible. There are not enough premises for institutionalized democracy. There are possible different variants of transitional regimes and their perspectives depends on their abilities to settle the accumulated socio-economic problems.

### **CONCLUSION**

“Arab spring” events put forth a row of conceptual and methodological questions for specialists on Near East countries development. It takes time to provide a detailed analysis of the causes and long-term aftermaths of changes in 2011.

Is the potential of “authoritarian modernization” in Near East and “the Third world” absolutely exhausted if taking into account globalization effects and the factors of informational network society?

Do the mentioned revolutions make premises for stable and institutionalized democracy in “the Third world”? If not, what type of political order is the most probable after the collapse of authoritarian regimes?

The events were so dynamic that the region came through the changes unseen during the last 50 years. “Arab spring” articulated empirical and conceptual problems which contemporary political science should find answers to. Among them there were the questions about the limits of Near East societies modernization and westernization, balance between religion and politics, variety of political transition vectors, abilities of alternative version of democracy, different variants of Islamic order.

Is the world community ready to take responsibility for the results of revolutions in Northern Africa and Near East “post-authoritarian” societies? Is it ready to offer them a modernization project of new quality and support a certain version of post-authoritarian development? Will “authoritarian modernization” be substituted by complex and consistent modernization of all North African and Near East continent? Or is this region doomed to side down into archaic forms with unforeseen aftermaths? It is worth thinking over. Otherwise the zone of “political vacuum” threatens to turn into the source of instability and serious problems for EU with new hot points of political tensions and political splitting.

Thus, today we can speak only about intermediate results of Arab spring. Needless to say that Arab spring became the benchmark for Near East countries

development after which there is no chance for Arab societies to return into the previous inertial state. At the same time the transformation processes did not rail the countries to stable trajectory of democratic balance but reduced some of them almost to collapse; others – to the possibility of Islamists in power; the third – to military regimes; the fourth – to a kind of intermediate variants. Coming through a certain double-way point the countries affected by revolutions did not build a certain model of political order. The transformation process is still underway and here oddly change themselves the aspirations to modernization and de-modernization, strengthening of authoritarianism and forming democratic institutions, re-Islamization and secularism, co-existing of chaos and political order elements. The ratio of these trends differs from country t country. Researching of political way and experience of Near East countries makes it necessary to improve methodology of comparative analysis and elaboration of break-through methods for political process studying.

### *Notes*

- Note 1. Daoud Kamel (born 1970) – an Algerian writer and journalist. May, 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 was granted the prestigious Gauncours award in France in the nomination “The first novel” for his book “Meursault. Counter-investigation” published in Algeria in 2014.
- Note 2. Goldstone, Jack (born 1953) – an American sociologist and political scientist, professor on public politics George Mason university, director of Laboratory of political demography and micro-sociological dynamics in the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.
- Note 3. Immanent peculiarity – integral and inherent trait of an object
- Note 4. For international comparison the World Bank determined the poverty level as the size of income starting with \$2 but not less than \$4 per person in a day (\$120 per month). Thus, squalor is the income less than \$2 per person in a day (less than \$60 per month)
- Note 5. **Idris I** (1890 – 1983) – full name Mouhammed Idris al-Mahdi as-Senussi, the first king of the United Kingdom of Libya. He was toppled in Sept., 1969 by a coup and found an asylum in Egypt.
- Note 6. **Ali Abdullah Saleh** [born 1946 (or 1942)] – an ex-president of Yemen Republic, ruled from 1994 till 2012. Before that in 1990-1994 he headed the Presidential Transition Council. In 1978 – 1990 was the president of Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen)
- Note 7. **Bashar Hafez al-Assad** (born 1965) – a Syrian politician, president of Syria (since July, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000), supreme commander of the Syrian army and the secretary of a regional branch of Ba’ath party. (since June, 24<sup>th</sup>). A son of the ex-president Hafez Asad. On June, 3d 2014 he was reelected for the third term with official result of 88.7% of votes. The election was held during the civil war and the voting results were not accepted by the countries supporting the opposition.
- Note 8. **Hafez al-Asad** (1930 – 2000) – a Syrian military and political personality, minister of defense of Syria (1966-1972) , prime-minister of Syria (1970-1971), president of Syria (1971 – 2000), a general.

### *References*

- Albrecht, H. & Schlumberger O. (2003, 19-23 March). Waiting for Godot'. Regime Change without Democratization in the Middle East. *Paper prepared for the Fourth Mediterranean Social and Political Research* (p. 4). – Florence.
- Jelloun, B. T. *L'étincelle. Révoltes dans les pays arabes*, 32.
- Bayat, A (2011, 2 May). New Arab Street in Post-Islamist Times. In L. Al-Zubaidi (Ed.). *Perspectives: People's Power: the Arab World in Revolt* (pp. 50 – 54). Beirut.
- Cf. Filiu, J.-P. (2011). La Révolution arabe. Dix leçons sur le soulèvement démocratique (pp. 34 – 35). P..
- Cf. Katz, M. (1997). *Revolutions and Revolutionary Waves*. New York.
- Cf. Goldstone J. (2001). Towards a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4, 141.
- Chehabi, Í. Á. (2011). Das Politische System der Islamischen Republik Iran. In Zamirirad A. (Hrsg.) *Das politische System Irans. WeltTrends e.V.*, 33-52.
- Cf. Aoun, Sami. (2013). Le printemps arabe mirage ou virage? Entretien avec Stéphane Bürgi (pp. 11-13). Montréal.
- Cf. Encel, F. (2014). *Géopolitique du Printemps arabe*. Paris.
- Cf. Chrouda, L. B. (2011). Dans l'ombre de la reine. Par le majordome des Ben Ali. Neuilly-sur-Seine.
- Daoud, Z. (2015). La Révolution arabe. Espoir ou Illusion? 1798 – 2014 (p. 298). P.
- Hafez, K. (2012). Islam und Demokratie? *WeltTrends*, 83, 74-83.
- Heinrich, A. & Pleines H. (2014, Julia/August). Herausforderung statt Fluch. *Welt Trends*, 97, 29, 30-32.
- Iqbal, Ch. (2015, November). Man muss Religion und Politik trennen! *Welt Trends*, 109, 55, 57-58.
- Krämer, R & Kleinwächter, L. (2011. März/April). Der Aufstand des Jahres 1432. Aktuelle Umbrüche im Nahen Osten und die Weltpolitik. *Welttrends*, 77, 7-16.
- Linz, H. (2000). *Totalitäre und autoritäre Regime*, Potsdamer Textbücher, Bd. 4, S. 138f. Berliner Debatte Wissenschaftsverlag, Berlin.
- Leukefeld, K. (2015, Oktober). Wie der Politische Islam den Arabischen Frühling zerstört. *WeltTrends*, 108, 22-24.
- Nabli, B (2013). *Comprendre le monde arabe*. P.
- Pross, M. (2001, April). Does Oil Hinder Democracy? *World Politics*, 53, 325-361.
- Peters, S. (2014, Julia/August). Rente und Politik. *WeltTrends*, 97, 62, 64, 65.
- Ruf, W. (2015, Oktober). Der Islamische Staat – eine Schoepfung der USA? *WeltTrends*, 108, 32.
- Sayah, J. (2013). La revolution tunisienne: la part du droit (p. 30). P.: L'Harmattan.
- Schlumberger, O. (2012). Nach dem arabischen Frühling. *WeltTrends*, 82, 70-71.
- Schmitt, J. (2014, Julia/August). Erdöl und Macht in Niger. *WeltTrends*, 97, 46.
- Seidensticker, T. (2014). *Islamismus: Geschichte, Vordenker, Organisationen* (S. 73-74, 78-86). – München: C. H. Beck.