

Ali BAGHERI DOLATABADI

Yasouj University, Iran
ORCID: 0000-0002-4584-5870

DOI : 10.14746/ps.2022.1.11

Mohsen SHAFIE SEIFABADI

Ardakan University, Iran
ORCID: 0000-0002-1217-939X

INSECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: WHY DO THE REFORMIST MOVEMENTS CONSTANTLY FAIL? TOWARDS A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the analytical study of revolutions has become a serious concern for philosophers, historians, Socio-political scientists, and a number of books and articles have been written on such a phenomenon. Protest movements have always been exciting for those who are interested in investigating the main social events and explaining the cause of such events. It is noteworthy that after Aristotle – the first philosopher who described the real origins of revolution – later theorists have raised countless questions about the nature of such events, yet they could not provide precise answers. Nevertheless, almost every writer feels that he/she has revealed the root cause or at least one of the fundamental reasons for the rise and expansion of a revolutionary situation. The fact is that prominent theorists of revolution have different opinions even on its nature and, moreover they have no common consensus. These theories become even more inadequate when used to understand the street protests in the Middle East governments. As a matter of fact, in this part of the world such concepts as good governance and democracy are absent from the social and political sphere (Elbadawi and Makdisi, 2011: 313). The Middle East countries are often embroiled in internal political-economic crises and regional conflicts. Thus, in this part of the world there are dysfunctional governments in terms of the governance which do not entirely comply with any of the standards of democracy and human rights. As a result, in these countries from time to time political protests have found ground to rise. However, such protests have been silenced for some time and the protesters return to their homes without achieving any tangible results. The Arab Spring and recent political protests in Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria are such notable examples. Accordingly, the main questions are that “despite the occurrence of political protests in the Middle East, why have not these countries undergone a revolution and why have political protests in these countries failed?” To answer these questions, various factors can be taken into account. Regarding the external dimension, one of the most prominent factors is that the political systems in the region provide support for each other or rely on great powers. Fol-

lowing recent events in the Middle East, if Iran and Russia did not support Syria, and if UAE and Saudi Arabia did not stand up for Bahrain, the regimes' future would have been different. The present article aims at analyzing the internal factors that prevent these protests from reaching the expected results without taking into account the external factors influencing the failure of protest movements in the Middle East. To respond to this argument, various hypotheses have been proposed by thinkers in the political and social science which emphasize the role of such factors as leadership, ideology, political mobilization, etc. (Cohan, 1976). These variables, though part of the answer, are unable to explain why political mobilization cannot be well-formed or does not address the root cause of this failure. The important point is that, with all the above-mentioned factors existing, the political protests sometimes may not be successful or these countries may experience periods of protest (rejection of the Prevailing political system) and silence (retreat). The authors claim that the main cause for the failure of past and present protests in the Middle East is a factor called political fear. Over time this fear created by the government has been institutionalized in the citizens' minds and hearts. Therefore, upon its formation and before reaching its peak, the protest is subsided by the most basic violent actions exerted by the governments, and most of the time the protesters are looking for a more powerful, external factor which can force rulers to retreat. From the masses' perspective, the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia or the Libya regime change could not have been implemented without such external support. Interestingly, this belief has been even institutionalized in the rulers' minds, and the Shah of Iran attributed the victory of the opposition in the 1979 revolution to the betrayal of the leaders of the Western countries at the Guadeloupe Summit (Pahlavi, 1980). In this article, the authors discuss the formation of this fear and its effects on the will of the protesters. The study was based on the explanatory research methodology. Research data are both primary and secondary sources on the subject. The primary data are collected from different records and national reports published by the Middle East countries. The secondary data are collected from the review of available literature like books, articles published in various local, national, and international journals, newspapers and magazines, and also reliable and related websites.

COMMON THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Political thinkers, from Aristotle to Hobbes, have all commented on the cause of revolutions. However, theories of the revolutionary process were first proposed in the first decades of the twentieth century under the general title of "natural history" of the revolution and analyzed the major stages of the great revolutions (Edwards, 1970; Brinton, 1956). These theories were gradually tested and supplemented in the course of time. In the 1970s the process of the revolution was analyzed through the lens of political behavior and the theory of revolutions, in terms of mobilization and political organization and the relationship among the actors of power. Focused on the consequences of revolution under the influence of the expansion of social science interests, these new theories addressed issues of political and economic modernization and development and analyzed the relationship between revolution and political mod-

ernization and economic development (Tilly, 1978; Almond, 1973). In the 1990s, the relationship between revolution and dictatorship as well as revolution and economic growth drew the theorists' attention (Moore, 1993; Skocpol, 2016), and in the twenty-first century, the role of information and communication technologies and their impact on revolutions became the focus of interest (Brescia, 2020). For a better understanding of these theoretical efforts, it is necessary to categorize them into two distinctive groups: political sociology and political psychology:

The political sociology's views fall into five theoretical perspectives from "Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Pareto, and de Tocqueville." While presenting a specific argument about the conditions needed for the emergence of the revolutionary situation, each of these theorists proposed a distinct logic, and a special intellectual tradition in the sociology of revolution to complete the revolutionary conditions.

According to Marx, the revolutionary struggle arises from the structure of social interests and its political consciousness. The Organization, consciousness of common interests, solidarity, and a high degree of internal communication are necessary for revolutionary mobilization. The twentieth-century Marxists have combined elements from other general patterns of revolution with Marx's fundamental ideas. Lenin, for example, believed that economic interests by themselves do not turn into political action. By emphasizing the elements of will and the use of force, he added some factors of political realism to Marx's thought. The idea of leading the proletariats to class consciousness and the necessary existence of revolutionary elites were therefore formed the basis of Lenin's thought. Some European Marxists, such as Lukács and Gramsci, also emphasize the importance of the ideological element in the revolution to such a degree that they described Marxism itself as an ideological system, the ideology of revolutionary mobilization (Marx, 1969).

In many ways and in varying degrees, Marx's logic becomes the opposite of Durkheim's. Central to Durkheim's thought is the concept of social solidarity. To him, social mobilization is possible when the organization, solidarity, collective consciousness, and communication network of society become disintegrated. Accordingly, for him, revolutionary mobilization, in accordance with the common concepts in today's political sociology, occurs more in the context of mass society rather than in the framework of civil society (Tilly, 1978: 14–16).

Neil Joseph Smelser argues that revolution is the result of the modernization of society and the expansion of the division of labor, which disrupts the solidarity of society. Smelser proposes six factors in this respect: structural conduciveness, structural strain, the growth and spread of a generalized belief, precipitating factors, the emergence of charismatic leaders and mobilization for action, and disruption of the repressive apparatus (social control) as the main factors in the emergence of the revolutionary situation. While maintaining Durkheim's core logic, he has brought together some perspectives from Weber, Pareto, and Durkheim (Smelser, 2011).

Despite their differences, Marx and Durkheim's views are both sociological and structural; in contrast, Pareto's view is essentially political. Pareto's realist view underlines the political power and its consolidation and regards the emergence of conditions necessary for the rise of revolution and political mobilization resulting from a debility in the repressive apparatus of government which allows the power-seeking

groups and organizations to benefit from the political dissent which is more or less present in all political regimes and therefore, to politically mobilize the population. From this viewpoint, the role of mass mobilization becomes fundamentally important (Hagopian, 1974: 53).

Compared to Pareto, Max Weber opens up a profound vista on the process of revolutionary mobilization. To him, collective behavior and social mobilization generally arise from the expansion of commitment to a kind of ideological system that provides its followers with a new definition of reality and the world. This is defined as the concept of charisma in history. To understand how the social mobilization situation arises, one must identify the ideological systems that bring about that movement. According to Weber, traditional authority is the basis of a balanced condition, but the two disruptive forces, namely rationality and charisma, may upset such balance (Weber, 1958: 250).

Added to the above-mentioned views are psychological explanations which as a part of the theoretical tradition of the revolution generally follow the non-Marxist line of the inevitability of revolution. Given what has been said, these two perspectives attempt to explain why the masses are prone to revolt against the established or legitimate ruler of society. The first view considers revolution to be probable in a time when people find their conditions so intolerable that it is highly at stake to survive. Consequently, they rise to improve their plight and overthrow the oppressors. The second view holds that certain members of society have some understanding of what they should learn throughout their lives; confronted with a situation in which there is a gap between what they receive and what they believe they need to achieve, they are likely to rise against the system (Cohan, 1976: 27–28).

Another point of view is more specific, indicating that the probability of popular revolutions is at its highest level when, after a period of social and economic development, there are declining setbacks in the process or concerns about the slowing down of steady progress (Gurr, 1968: 252–254).

Another branch of psychological explanation focuses not on the masses but on the leaders of revolutionary movements. The main question, therefore, is: why a person has such a talent to become a revolutionary? What happened in someone's childhood that prepares him/her to be a revolutionary? Is there a major flaw in his/her personality? (Gurr, 2011).

Therefore, we have encountered a wide range of writings and various theories. However, it should be noted these particularly voluminous writings have some drawbacks. None of them explains what causes make the ongoing political protests in the Middle East fail, and despite the repeated protests of the Kurds and the Shiites in Iraq, it was a foreign factor, not a revolution, that eventually overthrew Saddam Hussein. Or in the case of Bahrain, we have been witnessing the Shiite's protest against the Sunni-dominated regime for more than three decades, but so far these protests have not come to a successful outcome. The situation is almost the same in other Middle East countries, and cycles of fruitless political discontent are repeated almost every year. It appears to be another cause or factor beyond the above-mentioned that hinders the success of political movements and protests in the Middle East. This factor is political fear.

POLITICAL FEAR

What is Political Fear?

Emotions are one way to understand the world around us and fear is a strong and fundamental emotion we humans have (Buer, Linton, 2002: 487–490). That is why fear is introduced as our twin human being. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has identified three different types of phobias:

Social phobia: Social phobia is often associated with social anxiety disorder. People are afraid of social situations and isolate themselves.

Agoraphobia: Fear of places or situations one cannot get out of. Affected people avoid being in social situations and gatherings.

Certain phobias (such as insect phobia, fear of animals, height and darkness, phobia of injection Ampoule, etc.) (Cherry, 2020).

Thus, what is meant by the concept of fear is the result of the subject's confrontation with a situation that threatens his/her security and is perceived in the form of a mental or objective event. But what we mean by political fear is different from the fears mentioned earlier. Some of these fears have been associated with humans since childhood and have developed into a mental illness, such as fear of the dark and fear of loneliness in secluded places. Others are the result of training and advice from parents, teachers, etc. to get rid of dangerous situations, such as fear of animals like snakes and some insects. These fears may resolve or diminish over time.

But political fear is the result of the instincts of the political system towards its citizens. This fear is not taught directly, but the citizens themselves, by watching some government propaganda and media programs about the government's intelligence and security achievements in thwarting sabotage or identifying protesters and prosecuting them, come to the conclusion that they should fear the government. The reasons for such fears arise from factors related to society and government, such as tyranny and dictatorship, discriminatory policies, and the lack of a culture of tolerance. The combination of these factors leads to violent behaviors and actions towards people and produces fear and feelings of insecurity (Svendsen, 2008: 124). In a society where violence and coercion are used systematically, widespread fear spreads among citizens, and this feeling of fear itself erodes the ability of the individual and gradually the majority of society to participate effectively in society. This situation, the lack of a sense of security, means the lack of psychological and social comfort and consequently the lack of political health in society.

For this fear, two characteristics can be mentioned: 1. It is used by tyrannical rulers to consolidate authoritarian regimes. (For Example, fear of assassination, exile, imprisonment, and torture). 2. Citizens fears that their social status may be endangered by the government or feel afraid that their welfare and security will be harmed (Robin, 2004: 2). These events deprive the person of peace and freedom of thought. If this kind of fear is exacerbated and spreads from the individual to the majority of society, then "political passivity" occurs and the person avoids anything that leads to a "confrontation" with the regime. The result of this fear among the citizens in the Middle East is

the temporary stability of the political system and the perpetuation of authoritarian regimes. Thus, this kind of fear is created on the one hand by the horrific behaviors of the political regime, and on the other hand, by its internalization in the minds of citizens, and it spreads from city to city and from generation to generation. In other words, by continuing the violent approaches of the leaders and the successful repression of the masses, the citizens are assured that the regime's intelligence agents are everywhere and that their behavior is being monitored.

How Political Fear Is Formed in the Middle East?

In the Middle East, fragmented, hegemonic, and sectarian governments have been formed for a long time. These countries are religiously sectarian, multi-ethnic, and geopolitically fragmented, and their governments have fallen into decline in popular legitimacy in their political geography, a fact that has delayed the formation of nation-states. As a result of their engagement with modernity, these authoritarian governments, in spite of creating modern institutions inside their territories, still have acted based on value-oriented, one-sided, closed-minded, and elitist attitudes. With the help of their military figures, they generated a sense of fear and politically seized power. The government of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran, and Bashar al-Assad in Syria, to name but a few, have been prominent examples of such governments spending most of their revenue on military purchases and intelligence and security services. Such a practice is now being pursued by small Middle East countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar. Suffice it to say, we take a look at the list of military purchases in the Middle East. The prominent buyers of such military equipment are those countries that are considered the weakest in terms of political development (Wezeman et al., 2020: 2). Due to their weak political legitimacy, these countries generally resort to three strategies: first, distribution of rents received from the sale of oil and other natural resources, second, reliance on foreign support, and third, domestic strengthening of military and police capabilities.

As long as oil and gas prices are high and these countries can obtain good sources of revenue, they, by distributing such income among the community, can create relative prosperity and prevent political protests. However, the main problem arises when the economic crises such as those that happened in 1998, 2007, and 2009 occur and consequently, these countries cannot earn the necessary income. In such circumstances, the protesting citizens take to the streets and talk about the political inefficiency of the government. The decline in oil revenues in Saudi Arabia in 2020 is expected to lead to such an event, especially since the government has been forced to increase the value-added tax on goods to 15% to compensate for the budget deficit (Conn and Mahmoud Madbouly, 2020).

The second solution is to rely on foreign support as the political protests begin to rise. Such a solution has always been of interest to the Arab countries in the Middle East. With the rise of a slight protest within the territories of these regimes, they are given political-security support by other regional governments or their trans-regional

allies, which by turning a blind eye to the protests, prevent highlighting the violation of human rights and suppression of the protesters.

The third solution is rather deeper, more profound, and fundamental. In this strategy, these governments domestically take a series of security-military measures and keep the political atmosphere more closed. The aim of the government is 1) to strike fear into the hearts of the protesters, and 2) to disappoint them with the end of the protests.

Striking Fear into the Hearts of the Protesters

In Middle East regimes, although the intelligence and security services need to be highly efficient in stifling any protest or preventing its emergence, the more important issue is that citizens do not think about any sort of protest in the first place. Therefore, the government must institutionalize fear in the minds and hearts of individuals. Citizens must be afraid of their own shadow and not feel safe and secure even in their most secluded, private places, seeing themselves exposed to intelligence and security services. If a political regime can create such an atmosphere of fear, it automatically disarms many of its opponents. In fact, what is happening in the Middle East is the emergence of such fear among the citizens which has been implemented in different ways:

1. *Emergence and formation of complex and parallel security institutions*; the employees of each of these institutions are intimidated that their slightest violation may be identified and reported by a parallel institution. Such an effective strategy took place during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran with the formation of SAVAK, the Second Bureau of Army, the Immortal Guard, and other parallel intelligence agencies that played a decisive role in controlling political protests (Faroughy, 1974: 9–18). Such a security plan was repeated by the Ba’athist regime in Iraq. The formation of the intelligence services, army, reporting agency, telecommunications, and party militias helped the regime suppress the Kurds and the Shiites in the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, a high amount of revenues from oil and gas helped them create a complex security apparatus. As much as 40 percent of oil revenues during Saddam Hussein’s reign was spent on controlling domestic opposition groups, especially the Kurds and the Shiites (Dodge, 2003: 46).
2. *Highlighting the actions of the security apparatus*; Political leaders in the Middle East are constantly boasting about their intelligence and security successes in the media so that protesters feel any protest movement would be identified and suffocated. Needless to say, the prominent instances are the performance of Erdogan’s government following the 2016 coup in Turkey or Bahrain and Saudi Arabia’s performances in the aftermath of the 2011 events. These governments tried to identify and cope with discontents by holding protesters on trial and, by doing so, boastfully displaying their abilities or accomplishments to their nation and the world.
3. *Severe punishments for the individuals and their families*; People in the Middle East who have been exposed to treason receive punishments such as execution and long prison terms, and their families are deprived of government benefits such as

receiving subsidies, access to university, government employment, and so on and their properties and assets may be confiscated. Therefore, they experience unfortunate economic conditions in the future. The fate of Sheikh Issa Qassim in Bahrain or Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr and Jamal Khashoggi in Saudi Arabia, to name but a few, are such examples.

4. *Emphasizing religious, ethnolinguistic interests and human emotions*: Putting emphasis on emotional, religious, ethnolinguistic feelings and interests serves a dual function. These aspects of human life can sometimes accelerate a political movement and the entrance to a revolutionary phase, and sometimes can completely change the course of a protest, leading to failure and defeat. During the Iranian protests against the Shah's regime, the cinema Rex Complex was set on fire in Abadan on August 20, 1978, and the regime was accused of being involved in this human tragedy. Added to this is the September 8, 1978 massacre known as Black Friday in Iranian history. The protests erupted against the Pahlavi regime, culminating in the 1979 Iranian revolution. In both incidents, the protesters pointed the finger at the regime, calling it repressive and brutal. Also, in Egypt, Mubarak supporters' attack on the sit-in protesters with camels in Tahrir Square created a negative image of him and his supporters and paved the way for his overthrow. The opposite instance happened in the street protests in the Shiite cities of Iraq in 2019, when in a heartbreaking incident the protesters, by hanging a young man in a town square, hurt public sentiment.
5. *Fear of failure of protest, the identification of the protesters, and the tolerance of its consequences*; one of the serious concerns of the protesters is the fear of the movement's failure and their consequent arrests. This makes citizens undecided to take part in protests in a desperate, economic and political conditions. People turn to be passive and neutral citizens who wait for a foreign attack on their country to put an end to the established regime and believe that the best way is to not support the political system in times of war. The Iraqis in 2003 and the Libyans in 2011 had experienced such conditions. In Syria, it is as if the extreme violence against the demonstrators in 1980 and the massacre of 5,000 to 25,000 people in Hama in 1982 remained so deeply in the minds of the Syrians that caused a delay in the start of the revolutionary activities in 2011. It was the youth of the city of Daraa who broke down the wall of fear, making the protests reach Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Hama, and the suburbs of Damascus (Radwan, 2013: XI). Government repression and failure of the 2011 Arab Spring are likely to revive such a bitter memory.

DISAPPOINTING THE PROTESTERS WITH THE END OF THE PROTESTS

The second stage shows the intimidation that authoritarian regimes place in the hearts of political opponents after the street protests. At this stage, several important measures need to be taken to silence the political will of the protesters:

1. *Attributing the protesters to foreigners and foreign intelligence services*; by the advent of protest inside the Middle East countries, the state media immediately attribute it to a foreign agent and label the protesters as traitors to the country who

are financially supported by foreigners and work for them. The Shah of Iran called the protesters the Soviet's and Jamal Abdel Nasser's agents, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Bahrain took protesters as puppets of the Shiite government of Iran and Bashar al-Assad called them agents or spies of the United States and Israel (Radwan, 2013: xiii). Such labeling (infiltrator, spy, nark, traitor) has serious consequences for detainees. Therefore, due to the fear and following this media coverage, many people who are hesitant to join the protesters, though being dissatisfied with their living conditions, prefer to stay at home and not support the protesters. As a result, the regime is able to suppress the protesters and terminate the protests within a short period of time by breaking the human chain.

2. *Recalling the past protests and linking them to new ones*; in the second stage, the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East try to insinuate that these protests have the same effect as the previous movements and that the regime is able to identify, arrest and prosecute the protesters in a short period of time, and consequently, restore peace. The government, by uniting the heads of the executive, legislature, and the judiciary on the one hand and political factions and forgetting the past ideological, political, and economic differences, on the other hand, frightens the silent protesters and forces them to remain silent and passive.
3. *Picturing a bleak future of protests and their dire consequences for the country*; in the third stage, authoritarian regimes pretend that these protests are purposeless and lead to grim events such as riots and civil war. At this stage, the government uses the elites or, in Gramsci's words, organic intellectuals against traditional intellectuals (Gottfried, 1989: 114–115) and provides them with the media to explain how the country's condition gets worse after a revolution or the overthrow of the regime. The post-Gaddafi Libya, ISIS-era Syria, Iraq's internal turmoil, and General Sisi's era in Egypt come to be the most palpable options for the Middle East citizens to understand why they need to stay at home. Fear of a gloomy future that is neither economically prosperous nor politically stable and embraces no civil liberties preoccupies the citizens' minds to such an extent that they become deprived of the ability to make accurate decisions.
4. *Using government resources such as jobs and financial and economic assistance to gain the loyalty of various members of society*; the rentier economy of the Middle East states and their unresponsiveness have made them free to distribute wealth and economic opportunities among their supporters (Benli Altunışık, 2014: 85). At stake are those groups that have previously had access to the political and economic rents and now see their future in danger. Therefore, in a highly organized way, all these groups take to the streets and stand against the protesters, or, as the Wahhabi sheiks in Saudi Arabia, consider any voices of dissent against the regime as anti-Islamic (Beck and Hüser, 2012: 10).
5. *Intimidation of the security services*; Authoritarian regimes are not afraid of the image they create in their citizens' minds; the accused is treated harshly and subjected to torture. Occasionally these regimes may even deliberately and informally publish horrific narratives of events inside prisons or during hours of interrogations. One of the purposes of torture, especially in dictatorial regimes, is to create an atmosphere of intimidation which signals that dissenting ideas would be treated in

the same way and the citizens, overshadowed by this terror and fear, do not dare to think about any sort of opposition and even peaceful protest (Rejali, 2007: 22–23).

While all the factors leading to a revolution or social movement may come together in any of the Middle East states, what ultimately causes the protesters' cohesion to fall apart or the movement to decline turns out to be the constant fear that through above methods are instilled by the regime into the social body. If the citizens overcome or succeed to debilitate this weakness, the ground is paved for the rise of successful mass protests against the regime.

Example 1: The 1979 Iran Revolution

The government of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was a clear example of a dictatorial and authoritarian government in the Middle East. The government was founded on force, fear, and militarism due to the decline of the government's legitimacy after the 1953 Iranian coup d'état (Milani, 1994: 96). Exactly three years after the coup, the Shah, with the support of Mossad and the CIA, founded the SAVAK organization. SAVAK was originally a tool to limit and suppress any activity that undermined the foundations of the Shah's power. The members of the SAVAK forces included a total of 5,300 full-time officers.

Apart from SAVAK, there were two other security organizations, namely the Imperial Inspectorate Organization and the Second Bureau of Army. The administration of the Imperial Inspectorate Organization was established by the Shah in 1959, following the failed coup of General Abbas Gharani. The most important functions of this organization were to monitor SAVAK, prevent possible military conspiracies or coups, and provide reports on wealthy households in Iran. Through the effective use of this repressive apparatus the government was increasingly able to act independently and opposition groups were enfeebled and inactivated.

The Second Bureau of Army was another security organization, established in 1963, based on the model of the second department of the French army. As a part of the Armed Forces and in addition to gathering military secret information, it closely monitored the other two organizations, SAVAK and the Imperial Inspectorate (Abrahamian, 1982: 420–424). Another parallel apparatus was the Immortal Guard, which, like SAVAK and other military and paramilitary forces, played a decisive role in suppressing anti-regime movements and personalities and informal social institutions, and as a tool serving the Shah monitored the military and prevented political conspiracies against him (Ward, 2014: 211–241).

In addition to the above-mentioned intelligence and military organizations which were tasked with identifying and suppressing the opposition, the Shah also strengthened the army and military forces which in the last months of the government were compelled to intimidate the people by bringing tanks and soldiers to the streets of Tehran. After 1963, the Shah spent a huge amount of money on the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the army. He increased the number of troops from 200,000 in 1963 to 410,000 in 1977. The military's annual budget increased from \$ 293 million in 1963 to 7.3 billion in 1977, providing Iran with the largest army in the Middle East.

In addition to the army, the Shah, by increasing his personnel from 25,000 to 60,000, strengthened the Gendarmerie which was tasked with providing security inside the cities (Abrahamian, 1982: 435). Although these extensive apparatuses were tasked with maintaining the security of the throne in the shadow of striking fear into the opposition, they practically failed to do so.

During the popular protests against the Shah, while the Shah's strategy was to instill fear in the protesters and keep them away from Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolutionaries focused on standing against the regime and maintaining unity. They first tried to break the SAVAK apparatus formed in the opposition. Till then, SAVAK was a terrible and complex apparatus that successfully carried out its tasks and operations based on the advice and guidance received from Mossad and the CIA. But this false success was shattered by the failures in identifying and countering revolutionary nuclei. The second step taken by the revolutionaries was to show that the Shah's security apparatus was not integrated. Dedicating flowers to soldiers during street protests, encouraging soldiers to flee barracks, and announcing the loyalty of Air force to Ayatollah Khomeini played an important role in encouraging passive people to take to the streets alongside protesters. They were no longer afraid of the tanks in the streets because in the eyes of the revolutionaries those killed were considered martyrs who, according to the Iranians' deep religious beliefs, were rewarded in the afterlife. The third step in overcoming the people's fear was to break the prestige and authority of the Army and Gendarmerie by ignoring the orders of the highest military officials. In an important and influential decree in 1978, Ayatollah Khomeini ordered his supporters to ignore the martial law announced by the government and to take to the streets while chanting slogans. At the time the decree was implemented and distributed among people, the regime was tired, frustrated and in a state of despair. Therefore, for those who had nothing to lose, fear was meaningless, and finally, they won the revolution.

Example 2: The Failure of the Shiite Intifada in Iraq (The 1991 Uprisings in Iraq)

Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq for about three decades. He portrayed one of the most authoritarian political systems in the history of the Middle East, a system that imposed two wars on the Iraqi people and deprived them of their basic rights. Here the question is what was the secret of this long rule? Machiavelli's advice may provide an answer: "Since love and fear can hardly exist together if we must choose between them, it is far safer to be feared than loved" (Machiavelli, 2005: 54–55). Saddam Hussein's government used two repressive apparatuses as well as the ideology of the Ba'ath party to reproduce his power. He propagated his power by establishing repressive institutions such as the army, the Internal Security Organization, intelligence, security and intelligence services, the secret police as well as applying the principles of Ba'athist ideology and institutionalizing it in social institutions such as education, religion, culture, etc.

In the 1960s, the Iraqi army sometimes operated within the framework of its legal duties and sometimes outside of it. However, in the second half of the 1970s, as a tool for implementing Ba'athist policies, it was also transformed into a creation of the

Ba'ath party (Chossudovsky, 2014: 5). Within its structure, the army had another security and intimidating institution called Amn al-Askari (military security), which began to operate in 1992. The task of this apparatus was to identify and fight against anti-government activities, corruption, embezzlement, and internal security in the armed forces. The fear of a coup or an attempt to assassinate Saddam Hussein was the main factor in the formation of this intelligence agency (Cordesman, 2003: 8).

Saddam Hussein also demanded the Iraqi intelligence service – (*al-Estekhbarat al-Askari*) founded in 1932 – which played a similar role to SAVAK in Iran, to conduct covert operations, infiltrate the opposition organizations, and to establish internal security within the entire organization. The assassination of dissidents and covert operations abroad were another part of the organization's activities (Cordesman, 2003: 7).

The next security agency was *the Jihaz Al-Mukhabarat Al-Amma* or the party's intelligence service, which monitored the police network and controlled the activities of the government and its relative agencies such as the army, ministries, and mass organizations (such as the Youth Organization, the Women's Organization, and trade unions) (Aftergood, 1997). Therefore, government officials and agents were almost everywhere (among students, bankers, industry owners, soldiers, employees, pharmacies, journalists, doctors, and even clerics) and potential rioters and anyone else who might disrupt the political calm of the country were severely under control.

The party militia was another Iraqi security institution that obviously embodied the integration of the ideology and repression into the structure and nature of the Ba'ath party. Although the number of party militias was not known, it is estimated to be 400,000 at the time of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein (Sissons, Al-Saiedi, 2013: 6). In addition to monitoring Ba'ath party members, the party militia also closely checked other sections of society. This institution under Ali Hassan al-Majid played a key role in suppressing Kurdish protests from 1987 to 1988 in northern Iraq. It was its internal security institution, *Amn al-Khas (Party Security)* that was responsible for the suppression (Hiro, 2001: 57). All of these various security organizations and institutions were tasked with suppressing tribes, parties, political groups, student movements, and other socio-political forces. In many cases, their assigned missions overlapped, creating negative competition which intensified the wave of repression and torture against the people because any of these institutions which succeeded in having access to valuable information or identifying a secret network was applauded. This rivalry in many cases led to an unprecedented wave of repression and murders based on tortured and false confessions.

Added to the above security services was reporting as one of the most important activities of every member of the Ba'ath party in Iraq. Even the most confidential and private matters a person says to a friend or a colleague must be reported. After being written, these reports were handed over to party officials at all levels. The written reports were highly effective in inciting fear among the Iraqi society and, therefore, people refrained to express what they really thought and believed even to their closest friends.

Due to the totalitarian nature of the government, fear and violence were simultaneously institutionalized among Iraqi citizens. As a result, in an atmosphere of fear and apprehension, they became passive subjects who had no choice rather they were

obliged to be consent and follow the dominant ideology. What further fueled this fear was the intensity of the repression of the Kurds in the Anfal genocide in 1988 and the crackdown on the Shiites in the 1991 uprisings. Saddam Hussein succeeded in instilling such fear in the opponents of the regime that they put any thought of revolt or protest out of mind. Even in 2003, when the United States invaded Iraq and Saddam Hussein's position was shaken more than ever before, the Iraqis did not cooperate with foreign forces for the fear of the attack's failure and its horrible consequences, preferring to be spectators and passive subjects. Before the US invasion, the Kurds were in a rather good condition under the two families of Talabani and Barzani and the Shiites under the two families of Ayatollah Hakim and Ayatollah Sadr: 1) both currents were opposed to Saddam Hussein's government and had a leadership element; 2) both groups had mobilizations and even military forces (the Shiites' Badr Corps and the Kurds' PKK branch); 3) both Adopted the left and Islamic ideologies in some ways; 4) the government was unjust and incompetent in the eyes of the people; 5) the elites hated the government and did not defend it; 6) the international powers also imposed sanctions on Iraq, and in a word, all the conditions, according to Goldstone, necessary for revolution were provided (Goldstone, 2011). However, the fear of the regime prevented connecting the various interests of the rural and urban groups, the middle classes, students, business owners, and various religious and ethnic groups. In fact, neither Barzani, nor Talabani, nor Ayatollah Hakim, nor Ayatollah Sadr's family could play the role Ayatollah Khomeini played in breaking the prestige and authority of the Shah's military-security services and terminating people's fears.

Example 3: Protests from 2011 to 2020

Most Arab leaders in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Syria, have lacked the legitimacy, popular base, and political capital needed to pursue effective policies and have, therefore, failed to maintain and stabilize public order. Their inability or failure to implement beneficial social policies has further reduced their legitimacy, leading them to resort to a strategy of coercion and repression to stay in power. The enervated legitimacy of the ruling elites and the dearth of proper political and social approaches in these societies and, as a result, the increasing problems people faced have led the rulers to employ repressive and restrictive strategies (Ahmed, 2011). The policy in Arab countries can be considered one of the causes of the failure of the Arab Spring movement. In fact, from 2011 to 2020, these countries have been subjected to limited and scattered unrest, riots, and protests that never led to the collapse of the political system. Neither Sheikh Issa Qassim in Bahrain nor Baqir al-Nimr in Saudi Arabia was able to replicate the role played by Ayatollah Khomeini in the Iranian revolution. As symbols of the resistance, they failed to allay the people's fear of the political system or their distrust of a possible future system. In such circumstances, the army, unlike Egypt and Tunisia (Marfleet, 2013: 165), did not side with the protesters, and continued to act as a personal tool for the Saudi and Bahraini rulers. The crackdown on protesters and the killing and wounding of a considerable number of activists on March 11, 2011, and the crackdown on the Arabian Peninsula People's

Union in 1967 are clear Shred of evidence in Saudi Arabia. In Bahrain, another Arab country, the government has tried to curb the Shiite protest movement by sentences of long imprisonment, execution, deportation, and deprivation of citizenship. The movements, limited to a few cities or specific neighborhoods in the city, failed to spread throughout the country and thus these governments succeeded in implementing their strategies. This by no means implies citizen's satisfaction in other cities, but rather widespread fear among potential protesters, fear of repression and its aftermath, and serious concerns about the future political system were deep-seated in the population.

What is now present in the Arab governments of the Middle East is political fear which has led to mistrust and self-control in the social fabric. In other words, distrust and fear have become a cultural component afflicting the people of the Middle East. This distrust can be seen both among the political, ethnic, and religious groups as well as the masses. People would not be able to join the movement until they can overcome their inner fears and anxieties. The few people who took part in the protests have been under arrest and the established system has got more strengthened. In fact, in the Middle East, citizens are trapped in Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory. She claims that humans almost instinctively pay attention to the surrounding ideas as they choose a behavior that is in line with the prevailing, seemingly acceptable tendencies and approaches in society. The closer a person sees his/her thoughts and ideas to the prevailing thoughts and opinions in society, the more he/she expresses his/her views freely and overtly in public. But if public attitudes change, the same person finds that his/her views are no longer desirable to the public, and as a result, is less inclined to express them. As the public opinion and personal views get increasingly distanced, he/she refrains to express his/her views (Neumann, 1991: 256). This refers to the fear of isolation that people naturally feel, and with expressing an opinion they try to align themselves with and follow the opinion of the majority. A notable instance can be seen in the Shiites' Intifada (March 1, 1991) in Iraq. As the army, defeated and replete with hatred and humiliation in the second Gulf War, crossed the city of Basra, a transportation hub of support for the war and a gathering place for potential Shiite protesters, a military officer, angrily addressing the big picture of Saddam Hussein on a wall, fired at it with a light weapon. Such an action no one had dared to do before. Minutes later, it was as if the wall of fear collapsed and the spectators, joined by a large number of soldiers, attacked the party offices and government and security centers in Basra, and after hours of fighting, the city fell. During the days of the popular intifada, without any opposition parties being able to attribute the move to themselves, 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces fell, leaving only the Sunni provinces of Baghdad, Salah al-Din, Al-Anbar and Nineveh under Saddam Hussein's control. As most Iraqis believe, Saddam had only a few days left to rule.

The modern states have four important responsibilities: 1) to establish order and security and maintain national cohesion, 2) to develop socio-economic processes and structures and invest its necessary infrastructures, 3) to provide basic services and

\ Supporting the weak classes in society (the hungry, the disabled, the unemployed, and the vulnerable), and 4) to enforce people's rights. According to global statistics and indicators, many Middle East governments have had little success with regard to second and forth responsibilities. For this reason, the security guards of these states have shifted their attention to the first responsibility and, by implementing a policy of fear, frightened the people from the intelligence services, torture and execution. Notable to mention is that the rulers of the Middle East states have been one of the most important violators of the law in the country, directly ordering repressions and daily violations of the rights of their people. From the very beginning, the rulers have resorted to the tools of political fear instead of the politics of hope in order to ensure the survival of the political system by relying on this human instinct. As a result, the government's functions are limited to the use of force, and the Middle East society, despite its significant human and natural resources, does not enjoy a decent position in the international community. The risk to Protests, unrest and even regime change seems to be likely in the absence of politics of fear. The Middle East states know that as much as the hope of improvement is the driving force behind social activism, the activists' fear of harm inflicted on their lives, the lives of their families and others can act as an effective deterrent. Therefore, during their political life, they do not spare any effort to suppress the protesters and critics in various ways. Part of this policy of organized repression focuses on the spread of fear in its different forms, including intimidation, punishment, and elimination. The government concentrates on undermining the psychological, social, and economic security and physical health of the actors, painting a robust image of itself and the military and security forces. This fear has three messages: 1) any protest movement is severely suppressed, 2) the government has the power to stand against the protesters, and 3) the future after the protests is bleak and worse than the current situation. Therefore, for people it would be better not to risk their lives and families, and be satisfied with what they have. Whenever protesters ignore the threatening messages of the government and take to the streets, the movements and revolutions such as those in Iran, Egypt and Tunisia succeed, and when the ideological apparatus, media, and security institutions persuade people to stay at home and distance themselves from like-minded people on the streets, the movement most likely fails (as in Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, etc.).

REFERENCES

- Abrahamian E. (1982), *Iran between Two Revolutions*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Aftergood S. (1997), *Iraqi Intelligence Service – IIS [Mukhabarat] Department of General Intelligence*, Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/irp/world/iraq/mukhabarat/intro.html> (13 August 2021).
- Ahmed Nafeez Mosaddeq (2011), *The Arab world's triple crisis*, "European Voice", August 8, <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2011/february/the-arab-world-s-triple-crisis/70270.aspx> (A13 August 2021).
- Almond G. A. (1973), *Crisis, Choice, and Change: Historical Studies of Political Development*, Little Brown & Company, New York.

- Beck M., Hüser S. (2102), *Political Change in the Middle East: An Attempt to Analyze the Middle East*, GIGA Working Paper, Vol. 203.
- Benli Altunışık M. (2014), *Rentier State Theory and the Arab Uprisings: An Appraisal*, “Uluslararası İlişkiler”, Vol. 11, No. 42.
- Brescia R. (2020), *The Future of Change: How Technology Shapes Social Revolutions*, Cornell University Press, New York.
- Brinton C. (1956), *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Vintage, London–New York.
- Chossudovsky M. (2014), *The Engineered Destruction and Political Fragmentation of Iraq*, “Global Research”, 14 June, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-destruction-and-political-fragmentation-of-iraq-towards-the-creation-of-a-us-sponsored-islamist-caliphate/5386998> (13 August 2021).
- Cohan Al. S. (1976), *Theories of Revolution: An Introduction*, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., New York.
- Conn B., Mahmoud Madbouly M. (2020), *VAT and Customs Duty Increases in Saudi Arabia – Implications for Investment into the Kingdom*, “The National Law Review”, Vol. X, No. 176.
- Cordesman A. (2003), *Saddam’s Last Circle: The Core Forces Likely to Protect Saddam in the “Battle of Baghdad”*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 18 March, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/iraq_lastcircle.pdf (13 April 2021).
- Dodge T. (2003), *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation-Building and a History Denied*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Edwards L. (1970), *Natural History of Revolution (Heritage of Society)*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Elbadawi I., Makdisi S. (2011), *Democracy in the Arab World: Explaining the Deficit*, Routledge, New York.
- Farouhy A. (1974), *Regression in Iran*, “The Observer”, 26 May.
- Goldstone J. A. (2011), *Understanding the Revolution of 2011*, “Foreign Affairs”, May/June, <http://www.foreignaffair.com/articles/67694/Jack-a-goldstone/understanding-the-revolution-2011> (13 August 2021).
- Gottlieb R. S. (1989), *An Anthology of Western Marxism: From Lukas and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Gurr T. R. (1968), *Psychological Factors in Civil Violence*, “World Politics”, Vol. 2, No. 2.
- Gurr T. R. (2011), *Why Men Rebel*, Paradigm Publishers, London–New York.
- Hagopian M. N. (1974), *The Phenomenon of Revolution*, Harpercollins College Div, New York.
- Hiro D. (2001), *Neighbors, Not Friends, Iraq and Iran after the Gulf Wars*, Routledge, London–New York.
- Huntington S. P. (1958), *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, London–New York.
- Machiavelli N. (2005), *The Prince*, translated by W. K. Marriott, Digireads.com.
- Marfleet P. (2013), *Never One Hand: Egypt: 2011*, in: M. Gonzalez, H. Barekat, *Arms and the People*, Palgrave, New York.
- Marx K. (1969), *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*, in: *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Milani M. M. (1994), *The Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic*, Westview Press, New York.
- Moore B. (1993), *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Beacon Press, Boston.

- Neumann N. E. (1991), *The Theory of Public Opinion: The Concept of the Spiral of Silence*, "Annals of the International Communication Association", Vol. 14, No. 1.
- Pahlavi Mohammad Reza Shah (1980), *Answer to History*, Stein & Day Pub, New York.
- Radwan Z. (2013), *Power and Policy*, in: *Syria: Intelligence Service, Foreign Relations and Democracy in the Modern Middle East*, I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd., London–New York.
- Rejali D. (2007), *Torture and Democracy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Robin C. (2004), *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Sissons M., Al-Saiedi A. (2013), *A Bitter Legacy: Lessons of De-Baathification in Iraq*, International Center for Transitional Justice, March 2013, <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/.../ICTJ-Report-Iraq-De-Baathification-2013-ENG.pdf> (13 August 2021).
- Skocpol T. (2016), *States and Social Revolutions a Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Smelser N. J. (2011), *Theory of Collective Behavior*, Quid Pro, LLC, Louisiana.
- Svendsen L. (2008), *A Philosophy of Fear*, Reaktion Books Publisher, London.
- Tilly C. (1978), *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Addison-Wesley, New York.
- Ward S. R. (2014), *Immortal, Updated Edition: A Military History of Iran and Its Armed Forces*, Georgetown University Press, Georgetown.
- Weber M. (1958), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. by H. Gerth, H. H. Gerth, C. W. Mills, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Wezeman P. D. et al. (2020), *Trends in International Arms Transfer, 2019*, SIPRI, March 2020, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/fs_2003_at_2019_0.pdf (13 August 2021).

ABSTARCT

Over the last three decades, the Middle East countries have frequently witnessed popular protests against the authoritarian regimes. The question is why these protests never come to a desirable end? Regardless of the role played by foreign actors in perpetuating the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East, it seems that what causes the protests not to be pervasive and the political infrastructures not to collapse is that the protests have not been supported by the people's majority. The present article argues that such a dearth of support refers to a fundamental cause that we named the fear cycle. This cycle includes the masses' fear of the regime, fear of the movement's failure and its dire consequences, and fear of the political system that is supposed to come to power after the overthrow of the incumbent government. The governments have an important role in creating and perpetuating this fear and turning it into a panic.

Keywords: The Middle East, Political Protests, Fear, Insecurity, Authoritarian Regimes

BRAK BEZPIECZEŃSTWA NA BLISKIM WSCHODZIE: DLACZEGO RUCHY REFORMATORSKIE STAŁE PONOSZĄ PORAZKĘ? W KIERUNKU NOWYCH RAM TEORETYCZNYCH

STRESZCZENIE

W ciągu ostatnich trzech dekad kraje Bliskiego Wschodu często były świadkami powszechnych protestów przeciwko reżimom autorytarnym. Pytanie brzmi, dlaczego te protesty nigdy

nie przynoszą pożądanego rezultatu? Niezależnie od roli, jaką odgrywają podmioty zagraniczne w utrwalaniu autorytarnych reżimów na Bliskim Wschodzie, wydaje się, że tym, co powoduje, że protesty nie są wszechobecne, a infrastruktury polityczne nie upadają, jest fakt, że protesty nie zostały poparte przez większość narodu. W niniejszym artykule dowodzimy, że taki brak poparcia związany jest z fundamentalną przyczyną, którą nazwaliśmy cyklem strachu. Cykl ten obejmuje strach mas przed reżimem, strach przed porażką ruchu i jej strasznymi konsekwencjami oraz strach przed systemem politycznym, który ma dojść do władzy po obaleniu urzędującego rządu. Ważną rolę w tworzeniu i utrwalaniu tego strachu oraz przekształcaniu go w panikę pełnią rządy.

Słowa kluczowe: Bliski Wschód, protesty polityczne, strach, brak bezpieczeństwa, reżimy autorytarne