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International Impact***

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Middle East Middle Powers: Regional Role, International Impact

Anoushiravan EHTESHAMI*

ABSTRACT

The Middle East is a highly dynamic and unstructured regional system in which power relations are fluid and order is in short supply. Inevitably, the fluidity of power and the absence of a regional hegemonic power have invited external intervention. Furthermore, the region's dynamism not only has exacerbated the subsystem's fragmentation into sub-regions but also has afforded opportunities for the better-endowed small Arab states to play in the greater game of regional power politics. Yet, if one takes the long view, it is clear that only a handful of states have directly impacted the region's power relations, and today only four of these countries – Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel – meet the minimum requirements of middle power status in the MENA regional system. Their position in this fragmented and strategically-placed subsystem will be discussed in some detail.

Keywords: Middle Powers, Anarchical System, Balance of Power, Regional Rivalry, Arab Cold War, Penetrated Regional System.

Ortadoğu'nun Orta Büyüklükteki Güçleri: Bölgesel Rol, Uluslararası Etki

ÖZET

Ortadoğu'nun son derece dinamik ve yapılandırılmamış bölgesel sisteminde güç ilişkileri akışkandır ve düzene ender rastlanır. Kaçınılmaz olarak gücün akışkanlığı ve bölgesel hegemonik güçlerin yokluğu dış müdahaleye açık davetiye çıkarmaktadır. Bunun ötesinde, bölgenin dinamizmi bu altsistemin yeniden alt bölgelere ayrılmasına neden olmakta ve küçük ama zengin Arap ülkelerinin bölgesel güç dengesinde daha etkili bir rol oynayabilmeleri için fırsatlar yaratmaktadır. Yine de geniş bir bakış açısından yaklaşıldığında bölgedeki güç ilişkilerini direkt olarak etkileyen sadece bir avuç ülkeden bahsedilebilir ve bugün bunlardan sadece dört tanesi – İran, Suudi Arabistan, Türkiye ve İsrail – Ortadoğu bölgesel sisteminde orta büyüklükteki devlet statüsünün asgari kriterlerini sağlayabilmektedir. Makalede bu ülkelerin bölünmüş ve stratejik olarak önemli bu altsistemdeki durumları detaylarıyla tartışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Büyüklükteki Güçler, Anarşik Sistem, Güç Dengesi, Bölgesel Rekabet, Arap Soğuk Savaşı.

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Introduction

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region¹ forms one of the most dynamic and conflict-ridden parts of the international system. Resource-rich, with a total population of over 400 million people, comprising some 24 countries, the region straddles three continents, and is made up of a complex mix of ethnicities, religions, sects and regime types. This is a region steeped in history and, as a strategic crossroad of the world, shaped by global forces for millennia. Developments originated in this region, moreover, have often gone on to make a much greater global impact.

As a dynamic and penetrated regional system the Middle East's fate is also heavily intertwined with that of the broader currents sweeping across the international system, be these political, economic or linked to security.² Indeed, the region's very state forms and structures were arguably shaped by the dialectical struggles of colonial (outside) powers with each other and a drawn out "cycle of domination resistance" at the national level.³ Though notionally an autonomous regional system, the Middle East is in fact highly dependent on the rest of the international system for its motion. It thus interacts frequently, often violently, with global powers and the bodies at the organizational and executive helm of the international community. One could go so far as to claim that indeed since the emergence of the state system in the post-War period crises have been a permanent feature of the region's dialogue with the international system.

Despite being penetrated, indeed perhaps because of the presence of great and major powers, the region has, over time, spawned a great number of powerful actors in response, which have emerged to play their part on the canvass of the MENA subsystem. Power, and with it polarity, are the characteristics of the subsystem. A subsystem which is, according to al-Alkim, "a cauldron of discontent".⁴

An Anarchic Regional System

The Middle East has suffered many wars and these conflicts, inter-state and national, have arguably scarred the psyche of the region's elites. The impact that warfare and conflict have had on regional relations should not be underestimated, for intensive violence – within and across state boundaries – in the region has acted as a major deterrent to regional institution building.⁵ In the words of Kodmani, in the Middle East, the "culture of hard security built around concepts of containment, deterrence, counterterrorism, and political

1 Middle East for short.

2 Bassam Tibi, *Conflict and War in the Middle East: From Interstate War to New Security*, London, Macmillan, 1998.

3 Adham Saouli, *The Arab State: Dilemmas of Late Formation*, London, Routledge, 2012.

4 Hassan Hamdan al-Alkim, *Dynamics of Arab Foreign-Making in the Twenty-First Century: Domestic Constraints and External Challenges*, London, Saqi Books, 2011, p.127.

5 Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003.

violence continues to prevail,” which has led the regional states “to focus on the military balance of forces, the regional arms race, nuclear capabilities, and protecting the physical security of their national territory.”⁶ Conflict has spawned a hard-realist perception of the life of states and has, as a consequence, hardened the shell of Middle East elites and states. It has also helped shape the elites’ perception of the region as an anarchic and disorderly subsystem bereft of any shared or accepted “rules of the game”.

The truth of the matter is that the MENA region is an unreformed and largely dysfunctional regional system in which power and relationships are mediated through a complex set of lenses which includes contested identities (national, sub-national, ethnic and confessional), competing ideologies and nation-building narratives, legacy of state formation itself, the growing voice of well-endowed but small “family-state” regimes of the GCC, uneven power relations, and, last but not least, the lasting geopolitical legacy of colonialism. This negative process has been reinforced by the intrusive role of outside powers, as the legacy of regime change in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly demonstrate.

The absence of effective and binding institutional frameworks highlights the problem. Though many informal networks pepper the Middle East these tend to complicate and confuse relationships rather than clarify them, or instigate order. To be expected, states are the critical actors in the region’s structure, but it would be wrong to assume that they do have a monopoly on action. States may wish to be the only sources of authority, but the multiplicities of identity and their cross-border, transnational, nature has ensured that the legitimacy that would underscore authority is often contested, thus rubbing state actors of the tools they would require for providing indisputable leadership.⁷ Any such mission is further hampered by the absence of “Middle East great powers” which elsewhere have forged and imposed strong security structures.⁸ Contemporary thrust of the region seems to be in the opposite direction in fact; bandwagoning with outside powers, presence of non-state actors as power players, and the rise to positions of regional influence of small, vulnerable and commodity-dependent states. Historical record shows that none of these developments bode well for future regional governance in the Middle East and North Africa subsystem.

A Fragmented Regional System

Stresses that power politics have put on the regional system have placed immense pressures on its integrity, causing the regional system’s fragmentation and sub-regionalization. The Arab fabric of the regional system, variously seen as providing the glue for binding

6 Basma Kodmani, “The Imported, Supported, and Homegrown Security of the Arab World”, Chester A. Crocker, *et. Al.* (eds.), *Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World*, Washington, DC, USIP Press, 2011, p.226-7.

7 Anoushiravan Ehteshami, “MENA Region: Security and Regional Governance”, Shaun Breslin and Stuart Croft (eds.), *Comparative Regional Security Governance*, New York, NY, Routledge, 2012, p.131-54.

8 Ian S. Lustick, “The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political ‘Backwardness’ in Historical Perspective”, *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 4, Autumn 1997, p.653-683.

the destinies, if not policies, of 21 states of the region,⁹ became stretched at the seams soon after the emergence of the nation-state here. The tensions, arising from the artificiality of the many land borders between Arab communities, the absence of legitimizing ideologies, and a radicalizing of the middle classes (notably the officer corps in several key Arab countries), degenerated by the beginnings of the 1950s into transnational disputes which became to be known as a unique “Arab Cold War”.¹⁰ The Arab Cold War dominated inter-Arab relations from the early 1950s to the early 1970s during which different poles were formed and Arab states found themselves (largely) either in the gravitational pool of the radical-nationalist camp headed by Nasser’s Egypt, or conservative-moderate camp championed by Saudi Arabia. A republican-monarchical divide was born, and ideological battle lines were also drawn to shape the geographical spaces of these two dominant Arab poles. But each camp also harbored its own problems: Iraq-Egypt disputes on one side in the 1960s and Saudi-Jordanian suspicions in the so-called moderate camp from the mid-1950s. And spheres of contestation in the 1960s were in such weak zones as the Yemen, Sudan, Lebanon, and parts of North Africa (Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia). Strains were showing in the 1960s at the very heart of these alliances as even these did not survive the decade, most notable of which was the tripartite coalition between Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

This Arab Cold War-created bipolar Arab order began to come undone more fully, however, after Egypt’s unilateral peace treaty with Israel in 1979 and following Iraq’s two wars in a decade (198-88 and 1990-91). The former event is said to have “split the Arab system into several blocs”.¹¹ The “rejectionists” (so-called for their opposition to the Camp David Accords) grouped around Syria and a resurgent Iraq under its new president, Saddam Hussein, and the “moderates” joined a Saudi-led camp. But in 1980 all bets were off again as Iraq forced a new reordering of the Arab system by its invasion of Iran, for which it secured political and military support from outcast Egypt, as well as from such pro-Western countries as Jordan and Saudi Arabia (and also the other GCC countries). Its *Ba’athist* counterpart (Syria), radical in Arab terms, stood with Iran – the only Arab country to do so openly and unreservedly. Iraq’s war and Syria’s orientation towards Iran effectively split the Arab order into a multi-centered structure bereft of a core and increasingly sub-regionally focused.

Thus, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the short-lived Arab Cooperation Council (1989-90) sub-regional entities were born between 1980 and 1990. The ACC, which comprised the non-contiguous states of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and South Yemen, collapsed when Iraq invaded Kuwait and Egypt stood with the anti-Iraq regional and international coalition. The AMU was considerably weakened in the 1990s as the pressure of sanctions on Libya grew and as Algeria descended into a violent civil war. The AMU is now reeling under pressure from the Arab spring.

9 Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 1998.

10 Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abd al-Nasser and His Rivals, 1958-1967*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1971.

11 Alan R. Taylor, *The Arab Balance of Power*, Syracuse, NY, Syracuse University Press, 1982, p.73.

As a consequence, of the three organizations only one, namely the GCC, has survived, and thanks to substantial hydrocarbons-related income and open economic systems its six members have prospered and in the process also grown the GCC institutionally.

The final nail in the coffin of an Arab order, then, was put in by the Iraqis when they invaded and occupied neighboring Kuwait in August 1990. This single act of violence dissolved any remaining residue of Arab cohesion and thus left the region wide open to the pressures of such non-Arab states as Iran and Israel, and such non-state actors as al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas and others. In sum, the semi-rigid structure of the Arab Cold War, which followed the establishment of modern states, was never able to impose new norms for inter-state relations. The Cold War structure, under competing pressures, weakened and crumpled. Fragmentation set in, with Egypt's unilateral decision to pursue peace with Israel barely a decade later. Egypt was the great Arab regional actor of the day –the anchor– whose leadership enjoyed mass support across the Arab world, so what Egypt did had an impact on the rest of the region. As Egypt's unilateral act of diplomacy coincided with the region's first mass revolution –in Iran– the subsystem inevitably polarized and fractured further. Subsequent acts of violence by Iraq led to the deepening of centrifugal forces in the subsystem and the intensification of regional rivalries. This state of affairs can usefully be defined as the condition of 'fragmented anarchy,' which has prevailed in the region since the early 1990s. Regional powers and those with the aspiration to become regional powerbrokers have taken advantage of fragmented anarchy to advance their own (narrow) interests. The fabric of the state has been the battleground of these rivalries though some states – Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and now Syria – have suffered more than most. The emergence of a myriad of powerful non-Arab players on the canvass of the Arab world since the early 1980s and more emphatically since the 2003 Iraq war created its own (in)security dynamics which is akin to the dawn of a new Middle East Cold War in which Iran and Israel take centre stage and, compounded by the frictions arising from domestic and regional Arab spring-instigated tensions, where intra-Muslim frictions substitute for intra-Arab ones.¹²

Middle East Middle Powers

Power is not a fixed attribute and middle power status shifts in this region more frequently than perhaps anywhere else in the world. Thus, we have seen the rise and dramatic decline of regional powers with a great degree of frequency. By way of examples, Egypt rose in the 1950s and sixties but to decline to that of a marginal actor in the lifetime of the Mubarak presidency (1980-2013); Iraq rose to relative pre-eminence in the 1980s but was to lose virtually all its influence from the 1990s onwards. Syria became the master of geopolitics, which it used as an inexhaustible source of its regional status

12 See for example Morten Valbjørn and André Bank, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shi'i Divide", *Middle East Report*, No. 242, spring 2007, p.6-11; Roxane Farmanfarmanian, "Redrawing the Middle East Map: Iran, Syria and the New Cold War", <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/11/2012111311424048459.html>.

from the 1950s through the mid-2000s to see it become the source of the country's grave weakness in the 2010s. Indeed, in the wake of its own uprising in 2011 the regime has been exposed to immense internal and external pressures, which are proving to be well beyond its ability to control. Syria is in the 2010s characterized by civil strife and a fracturing of its body politic into competing (often armed) ideological, ethnic and religious groups, acting as a new vortex for regional competition and power rivalries. It is very doubtful if the regime that President Hafez al-Assad so painstakingly crafted in the 1970s and 1980s will survive his son's rule and with him will end Syria's status as an influential regional actor. And finally, in the context of changing power fortunes, we have seen Libya losing its great missionary zeal and influence in the Maghreb and sub-Sahara Africa purveyed by Muammar Qaddafi to a weak and vulnerable state with porous borders and no effective central authority.

Political turmoil has clearly taken its toll in these countries and they will, eventually, recover from the bleak conditions now prevailing. Indeed, they may even recover as strong civic-led countries with moral authority, but their place as players on the power grid of the region may take generations to recover, if at all.

Power is often associated with the ability to exercise it – otherwise how does one recognize the powerful? As already noted, the foundations of power are also defined on the basis of population and geographic size, economic and military prowess, geopolitical weight, ability to project power, etc. Being innovative and dynamic are additional attributes, which have come to matter even more in a globalized world. Added to such a list should also be political leadership – legitimate political leadership to be precise. From this attribute follows soft power and also moral authority, which has been deployed to great effect by both the major democracies and the zealous revolutionary regimes.

The foundations noted above, however, are different from the residuals of power and factors which sustain it. To have reserves of power is not the same as being able to project it and it is at the latter level that true middle powers can show themselves. In the Middle East, it is a combination of brute force and money that help the projection of power and those states with the greatest military machines and resources have shown the greatest potential to sustain them, often then managing to set the tone for regional interactions as well.

Where do Middle East middle powers come from, and who are they? As noted above, normally a country's power is measured not only in terms of its military prowess but also in its economic strength and dynamism: its ability to innovate and, through this, project. Such characteristics are rarely found in one place – in one country. Where they have been, they have come to set that country apart: Britain under the Victorians for example. Today, it is the United States which stands apart as the only global superpower and, despite its economic problems, is clearly more capable than any combination of the other "major" powers to project its will and interests onto the world stage. Focus on the apparent US economic weakness in this regard has, in my view, been at the expense of

belittling the tremendous residuals of power that the United States still possesses and will use in the international arena. Unlike the other major powers the United States remains master of all the key ingredients for superpower status, which in the 2010s also includes access to abundant sources of energy for its reindustrialization and regeneration. Unlike some of the other major powers (China, Japan, the European Union), America's growing energy independence will lower the cost of economic activity on its soil and thus literally help fuel its dynamism. Whereas Russia is energy abundant it is not sufficiently economically dynamic to compete with the United States at the global level. Being a superpower, however, does not make the United States invulnerable, impermeable, or immune from global traumas. Nor can it be said that the United States is in control of the global agendas! Its power does not give it limitless influence, and as we have seen it increasingly has to balance its policies against those of its foes and often in coordination with its allies. The United States is being challenged in every regional setting precisely because it is perceived to be losing its global power position. Thus, regional powers, pro or anti, quickly interpret "leading from behind" as meaning "losing ground" and thus adjust their policies and behavior accordingly.

But in the Middle East, few are able to show case their status as middle powers beyond the application of military might or geopolitical advantage. They cannot therefore be hegemonic powers in the Gramscian sense – to impose their will on others and to persuade others to instigate policies consistent with the interests of the hegemon. The MENA states then fail to meet the established criteria for middle power status. Yet, power is being exercised, peddled and protected, and there exists in the Middle East the footprints of regional big powers.

Furthermore, while it is not too difficult to identify the most prominent MENA middle powers – the "regional powers" or "middle powers" – in terms of their presence and role, these do not necessarily meet the typical criteria for middle power status which would "have large populations, considerable national wealth and substantial armed forces – possibly with a small nuclear component. They have interests in many parts of the world and are therefore widely represented by their diplomatic services."¹³ The MENA "middle powers" identified here meet some of these criteria but they all fail to meet at least one element of the requirements for middle power recognition.

To make matters even more complicated, as power is fluid in this subsystem at critical times those not conventionally seen as regional powers rise to play in the role of such powers. Thus, it is much harder to *measure* the growing influence that small MENA states are increasingly having on the region. Emerging partly because of the fragmentation and sub-regionalization of the regional system, such states as Qatar, the UAE and Kuwait (with a total population of around five million) have become very effective in using a combination of considerable disposable wealth and Western alliance structures to project influence, soft power, across the region. Indeed, in the case of Qatar and the UAE,

13 G. R. Berridge, *International Politics: States, Power and Conflict since 1945*, Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997, p.17.

they have exercised hard power tools too in trying to navigate and shape the post-2010 Arab region.¹⁴ Both have been active in the Arab Spring since its inception, both played important roles in the Libyan uprising, and have continued to exercise influence in post-Mubarak Egypt and in turbulent Syria. Yet, these countries cannot shape things in the ways that the great regional powers can try and do.

Also, the exercise of soft power is not the exclusive domain of the small Middle East states. Iran's president has understood this well, in saying: "Our strength does not come from military weapons or an economic capability. Our power comes from our capability to influence the hearts and souls of people, and this scares them [the West]. That's why they are using psychological warfare and impose sanctions [against us]."¹⁵ The question begs itself: is the source of Iran's "capability" religion, which from its leadership's perspective helps it reach the "hearts and souls" of other people? Is this a sufficient attribute for the sustenance of a middle power?

Post-Mubarak Egypt presents another example. While still in power, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood-dominated political elite was increasingly using its pan-Arab network to grow its presence across the region, despite being hugely vulnerable economically at home and despite suffering from national insecurity. Since the 2011 revolution Egypt also has been adapting to using moral power as a new tool in its foreign policy box. Thus, in the exercise of influence identity has played its part in determining the conduct of Middle East powers, not just in terms of their regional behavior but more fundamentally in terms of their role conception. Turkey is seen as a key Sunni state, though non-Arab; Iran is seen as a dominant *Shia* state, though non-Arab; and Israel is as the *Zionist* state in quarrel with all of its neighbors. Identity in this regard has helped define, as much as shape inter-state relations. Moreover, identity is a critical component of power projection as it can usefully also come to represent "moral cohesion" of a self-declared important, nay "missionary state". Wight has rightly characterized "moral cohesion" as one of the less tangible, but essential, features of state power.¹⁶ In identity serving moral cohesion in the Middle East, it not only becomes a plank of power, but also a launch pad for its projection.

But, for all intents and purposes, there are today four countries which stand out as being anywhere near the great regional power status. These states, "middle powers", project influence, exert pressure and try and drive agendas which are of direct interest to them. Some work together, some times, but they did not have any meaningful strategic partnerships with each other. Indeed, some – Iran and Israel, and Iran and Saudi Arabia – are regional rivals, and all with a degree of bad blood between them.

14 Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *Small States with a Big Role: Qatar and the UAE in the Wake of the Arab Spring* Durham, UK, al-Sabah Paper No. 3, October 2012.

15 *International Herald Tribune*, 2 February 2007.

16 Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, Hamondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1986.

Table 1: MENA Middle Powers

Country	Population (mn)	GDP (\$bn)	Military Budget (\$bn)	Armed Forces (000s)
Iran	78.9	480	24	523
Israel	7.6	901	60	177
KSA	29.0	660	49	234
Turkey	79.8	785	31	511

Sources: IISS, World Bank database.

Table 1 is indicative of the conventional measures of power, though I have not noted geographical size in this matrix, which is only a weakness in the case of Israel. Indeed, Israel is truly vulnerable geopolitically and has built the country's strategic doctrine on the principle "peripheral partnerships". Israel suffers from strategic depth and exposure to irredentist forces, some of which its own policies encourages, based on its doorstep. As it cannot countenance war being conducted on its own small territory it therefore has built an impressive military machine capable of taking the fighting to the enemy's territory.

We also see from the two tables that while all four countries are militarily robust, nevertheless even this most basic attribute of power is highly unevenly distributed. Numbers are not to be confused with actual capability and indeed the ability to wage war. As such, the general defense figures disguise qualitative differences in training, operability and effectiveness of these powers' most valued asset – their armed forces. Military data is not representative of true power projectability; nor do such data ever capture the soft power reach of regional actors. Furthermore, they cannot take account of the multiplier effect of security partnerships of the type that Israel, Turkey and Saudi Arabia enjoy with the West. A closer scrutiny of Iran's military hardware, for instance, will show that it is having to rely on old (Western-supplied) equipment for frontline service, and where it is deploying new hardware these are being imported from Russia, China and North Korea and in several categories inferior to those deployed by its neighbours, let alone Israel.

Table 2: Military Capabilities of MENA Middle Powers

Country	Airpower	MBTs	SSMs	Artillery	Ships	Subs
Iran	334	1,663	Yes	8,800	69	29
Israel	441	480	Yes	530	59	10
KSA	296	600	Yes	909	99	0
Turkey	354	2,494	Yes	7,807	60	14

Source: IISS, *The Military Balance 2013* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Turkey

The first middle (regional) power to consider is Turkey. It is clear that Turkey, since the end of the Cold War and the undisguised hostility from some European Union members (notably France and Greece) to its membership of the European club, has revised its regional relations.¹⁷ It, using its diverse national attributes, has thus increasingly tended to opt for closer engagement in the neighbouring Middle East. As one commentator notes, “Turkey is seen as a necessary partner in region-wide security through cooperation with surrounding regions. Thanks to its military power, it is the second largest in NATO and stronger and better equipped than the majority of neighboring countries.”¹⁸

Turkey’s “Middle East pivot” grew with the successive Islamist-led government’s reexamination of its security and political links with its neighbours and also those with Israel. Israel’s anti-Palestinian policies facilitated Ankara’s diplomatic rotation away from Israel, though security ties were never severed and indeed have been restored since early 2013. But perhaps it was Prime Minister Erdoğan’s dramatic walking out of a high-powered panel discussion at the annual World Economic Forum meeting in Davos in January 2009 in protest to President Peres’ comments that set the dye for Turkey’s rapid acceptance by the Muslim Middle East as a regional player, even bringing praise from such unlikely quarters as Syria, with which Ankara had cultivated warm relations prior to the 2011 Syrian uprising. But the move away from Israel was part of a much bigger revision, arguably a reorientation towards its Muslim hinterland, which initially began with the forging of close ties with the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, and extended to the resource-rich countries of the Persian Gulf. With Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE Turkey pressed energy and trade and investment ties, and lately also has deepened links with the Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq.

At the diplomatic level, arguably, Ankara’s reorientation towards the Muslim Middle East as part of its Middle East pivot has taken place along three tracks. First, as already noted, it has put a distance between itself and Israel, to the satisfaction of many of its Middle Eastern neighbours. Secondly, until the Syria crisis weakened the bond with Iran, Turkey had tried to act as an honest broker between Iran and the West in the nuclear crisis. Turkey and Iran had in fact seized the opportunity presented by Turkey’s growing appetite for energy in the 1990s and had steadily edged closer together to widen their burgeoning economic relationship into a broader political partnership.¹⁹ And thirdly, Ankara has taken full advantage of its growing economic muscle to develop closer political and economic links with the Arab region. There are, in addition, two sets of drivers for Ankara’s strategy. The first is the domestic imperatives and interests of an increasingly

17 Meliha Benli Altunişik and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change*, London, Routledge, 2005.

18 Bülent Aras, *Turkey and the Greater Middle East*, Istanbul, Tasam Publications, 2004, p.27.

19 See Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Süleyman Elik, “Turkey’s Growing Relations with Iran and the Arab Middle East”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.12, No.4, December 2011, p.643-662.

powerful Islamist-led government taking root in Turkey and being more at ease in looking towards the Muslim world for its daily interactions.

The other driver is an increasing awareness of the needs and aspirations of a rapidly growing economy which is set to join the so-called BRICS group of fast-emerging economies by 2020 or thereabouts. Having already joined the G20 Turkey is increasingly in a position to join the world's top 20 global actors by 2015. To put Turkey's economic rise in perspective, it is worth noting that its national economy had grown threefold in the 10 years to 2011 – this is remarkable by any measure. Also, its development has been externally-fed: some \$100 billion in foreign investment poured into the country between 2000 and 2010,²⁰ which provided the catalyst for its “take-off”. Naturally, Turkey's trade with the Middle East has also grown, which today exceeds \$25 billion, having not even reached \$4.0 billion in 2000. Trade with the GCC group of countries had reached \$13 billion in 2012 and its trade with Iran and Iraq has equally blossomed. Thus, Turkey's primary goal has been trade and investment and in rapid succession since 2004 it has managed to reach broad economic cooperation and free trade agreements with a number of Arab states: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and also Lebanon once this was ratified by the Lebanese parliament.

In this context, penetration and management of its hinterland (Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia) has become essential for the country's future growth and prosperity. In a nutshell, Turkey has recognized that insecurity is bad for business, while also appreciating that its bigger economic weight enables it to exploit its hinterland more effectively.

As noted above, Turkey has improved its ties with the GCC states, working closely with Saudi Arabia, but also with the smaller oil monarchies such as Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE in the fields of energy, tourism, construction and real estate.

What is of particular interest is the growing security links between Turkey and the Arab states, often developed as a counterbalance to Iran and Israel. Thus, in recent years Ankara has reached security agreements with Kuwait (vulnerable to Iran and Iraq), Saudi Arabia (in competition with Iran in the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant and Afghanistan-Pakistan), and Syria (Iran's only Arab state ally) the latter clearly being no longer valid given the tensions between Damascus and Ankara over Turkey's unambiguous support for the Syrian opposition. As is clear then Turkey has been playing a unique role in the region, and despite allegations of “neo-Ottomanism”²¹ creeping into its policies it has built mutually beneficial links with its rediscovered non-European hinterland. Moreover, Turkey's integrative strategy has set it apart from the conduct of both Iran and Israel, whose interactions have tended to be more confrontational and divisive.

20 Özdem Sanberk, “How Strong is Turkey in the Middle East”, *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 9 May 2012.

21 See for example Kadri Gürsel, “Turkey Seeks Ottoman Sphere of Influence”, *Al-Monitor*, 3 April 2013.

Iran

Iran, more than thirty years after its Islamic revolution, is still looking for what it regards to be its rightful place in the region. The problem is not simply that it has not found its suitable place in the regional order, but that it is struggling to consolidate its niche as the strategic foe of the United States in the region (which is of course Iran's neighbours' main security ally). Iran's positioning, therefore, causes considerable friction with several of its Arab neighbours in particular. It has, moreover, not managed to contain its revisionist tendencies in its power projection, articulation of aspirations, and – most importantly of all – its actions. Under President Ahmadinejad (2005–2013) Iran has pushed for a more assertive role in the region, having famously declared early on during his first term in office that Iran was “rapidly becoming a superpower.”²² Speaking with more colour on the 30th anniversary of the revolution President Ahmadinejad boldly stated: “I declare officially the Iranian nation to be a true and real superpower. The Iranian nation is a prudent and justice-seeking power and the friend of all nations; it has never had an eye to the territories and resources of other nations, and it has always been the helper of nations. Today the Islamic Revolution, in its 30th year, is like a 15-year old kid, full of energy, joy and values, and like a 60-year old, full of experience, prudence and determination.”²³

Ahmadinejad's administration then spent the next five years trying to act as a superpower: threatening the United States in the Middle East theatre, building links with South American (opening six new embassies there) and sub-Saharan countries, opposing the West's role in shaping regional and international agendas, and demanding the withdrawal of American forces from the region. For all its bluster it did not in fact find it uniformly easy to expand its role in sub-Saharan Africa or South America. While Tehran built bridges with Venezuela, for example, it was unable to sustain its increasingly close links with Brazil post-da Silva presidency. President Dilma Rousseff took great exception to Iran's human rights violations and for the regime's punishment practices of stoning and amputations.

In Africa too, it was often one step forward and two steps back: with great fanfare in 2008 it started local production of its flagship *Samand* motor car in Senegal and yet in February 2011 Senegal broke off diplomatic relations with Iran for alleged Iranian arms deliveries to the separatist rebels in Casamance.²⁴

But closer to home Tehran has built a strong constituency. It has used its links with Iraq, Syria and the rejectionist forces in Palestine and Lebanon to press home its geopolitical and ideological advantages against Israel and the pro-Western Arab regimes. The summer 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon-based Hezbollah marked the zenith of Iran's ability to project power and sustain a proxy war with the region's most powerful military machine.

22 He said this on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of the Islamic revolution. See *International Herald Tribune*, 2 February 2007.

23 IRNA, 10 February 2009.

24 *Aljazeera*, 23 February 2011. The crisis was so severe that neighbouring Gambia also cut off diplomatic relations with Iran in protest.

While Iran has a strong political, economic and security foothold in the Arab territories between Iraq and the Mediterranean, its relations with several Arab states has more often than not been caught up in Iran's quarrels with the United States, which has helped to dampen Tehran's influence in the most prominent Arab capitals, such as Riyadh, Cairo, Amman, Algiers – inevitably to Iran's frustration. Its message of resistance to foreign occupation and Israeli aggression, as articulated by the populist Iranian president has done little to gain the confidence of the key handful of pro-Western Arab states. Furthermore, its vocal support for the al-Houthi rebellion in Yemen, backing for the Shia-led demands in Bahrain, and express support for radical movements across the region has helped push the main Arab actors away from Tehran. Growing distance between Tehran and many neighbouring Arab states has been compounded by the latter's fears of Iran's nuclear programme and its confrontational stance towards the West.

The greatest fear of the neighbours of course is a slide towards war between Iran and Israel/United States which would arguably engulf the rest of the region. Tehran's repeated threats that if attacked it would take action against US interests in the region has been interpreted by the Arab side as a direct threat to their sovereignty, given that virtually all of America's military assets are either based on Arab soil or within their territorial waters. Any attack on these will inevitably constitute an attack on the concerned Arab state(s) as well. An Israeli-led attack on Iran, moreover, will not only unleash the gods of war, mobilizing Hezbollah, Hamas and other sympathizers to Iran's cause, but also challenge the political stability of many Arab states who would find themselves in the most unenviable position of trying to resist the calls to go to Iran's defence or confront Israel for its aggression against a Muslim country. Such a war would leave the Arab elite with an impossible choice, which would dramatically worsen by the prospects of Syria aligning with Iran in an all-out war.

Iran's domestic situation also is having a direct effect on its regional behaviour. First, since the Arab spring Tehran has been even more eager to flaunt its Islamist credentials and has championed the causes of the "resistance front" in the Arab world. This is partly due to the crisis of legitimacy that the regime faced after the 2009 presidential elections and the violence that it unleashed against its own people. It was caught doing what it had always attacked such Arab states as Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and some of the Gulf monarchies for doing.

But, as such movements as Hamas have since the Syrian uprising (on the one hand) and the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood (on the other hand) have weakened their ties with Tehran and this has raised tensions between an Iranian-inspired resistance front and the revolutionary aspirations of the new Arab Islamist elites and forces which are now articulating a competing vision of and a narrative for regional change.

Iran has also pressed ahead with consolidating its presence in Iraq, again to the chagrin of Turkey, Jordan and the GCC neighbouring states. Add to this Iran's nuclear programme and it is easy to see why the pro-Western Arab states fear to tread down the path chosen by Iran's leaders. Tensions with the Gulf states remain high, but are also rising

with Turkey, for Ankara is increasingly being seen in Tehran as a credible challenger to Iran: “If we view the option of war as a possibility, we have to pay attention to the conduit for the imposition of such a war. Where is the country which has the suitable human resources? Which country can hope for the entry of its European and American friends into the arena of war, if it enters into war against us? Will NATO be considered as the supporter of our future enemy or the Arab league? The answer is clear. Turkey is the only option for the advancement of the West’s ambitions.”²⁵

One startling conclusion from such an analysis is that, as “between the two, Turkey has a bigger and more advanced economy. Its relations with the United States and EU are far better than those of Iran. So are its relations with Sunni countries as well as Shiite ones. Iranian leaders will soon be looking for some kind of competitive advantage. With their economy in tatters and their country more isolated than before, becoming a nuclear armed country is likely to be the most attractive and convenient means for Iran’s Supreme Leader to gain an edge over the Turks.”²⁶

Interest, as much as strategic rivalry amongst these recognised powers, is thus reinforcing their ambitions to lead and also act broadly on the regional canvass.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** is the third Muslim power to be considered as a middle or regional power. Saudi Arabia has always had the *potential* to be a great regional power though not without greater limitations on being a true middle power. Its economic foundations have been strong for some years, today making it the region’s largest economy with a GDP (PPP-based) of \$740 billion, exports valued at \$382 billion, and foreign exchange and gold reserves totaling \$630 billion.²⁷ The Kingdom’s sovereign wealth fund today is worth at least \$530 billion, as valued in January 2013 by the SWF Institute.²⁸ Such sums make the Kingdom’s sovereign wealth fund one of the biggest in the world.

Saudi Arabia’s military power (in terms of hardware and training) is also substantial, though as we saw above in man-power terms it is still relatively weak. Its military machine is superior to all of its neighbours bar Turkey and Israel, and is regularly replenished by state of the art purchases from European sources and the United States. With an annual defence budget of around \$45 billion the Kingdom is easily the only country in the world which devotes more than 10 percent of its GDP to defence, second only to the United States which puts nearly 5 percent of its GDP in defence.²⁹

25 Farid Al Din Hadad-Adel, son of the former Speaker of Parliament (Gholam Ali Haded-Adel) cited by Meir Javedanfar in *The Diplomat Blogs*, 18 June 2010.

26 Meir Javedanfar in *The Diplomat Blogs*, 18 June 2010.

27 Data is from The World Bank and refers to 2012.

28 <http://www.swfinstitute.org/fund-rankings/>

29 Data from the IISS, *The Military Balance 2011*, Routledge, London, 2011.

The Kingdom enjoys strong support from the West, is a firm ally of the United States, but at the same time has close links with such key Asian countries as China, India and Japan, which have close energy links with the Kingdom. Furthermore, through leading the MENA subsystem's strongest bloc, the GCC regional grouping, it has also created around itself a cohesive community of rather well off – though not necessarily invulnerable – Arab monarchies. It has sought closer ties with Jordan since the Arab spring and has reached out to Morocco as well.

But due to its demographic vulnerabilities (with a national population base of 23 million in a total population of 29 million), geopolitical vulnerabilities (unstable Yemen, weak states across the Red Sea, a fragile Jordan and restless Palestinians to the west, and Shia-run Iraq to the north), and a reserved and cautious leadership, till recently the Kingdom had tended to play a rather low-key and non-confrontational role in the region. As was put to me in a private conversation, “the Kingdom does not invite trouble.”

This mindset changed for five main reasons. First, King Abdullah proved to be much more assertive than his predecessor (King Fahd) in the pursuit of the Kingdom's interests and role in the region. He pushed Saudi Arabia to the front and began taking a leading role in the Arab region. Secondly, 9/11 and the rise of al-Qaeda forced the Kingdom to become more engaged internationally and to articulate its regional interests more openly and systematically. In search of implementing its policies, it also began building alliances to counter Jihadists at home and in the Arabian Peninsula.³⁰ Thirdly, regime change in Iraq in 2003 and the emergence of an Arab-Iranian Shia alliance on the northern shores of the Persian Gulf provided shock therapy for the regime, forcing the Kingdom to carve for itself a new and more assertive role in the region as the champion of Sunni Arab constituencies in Arab lands. Iran's rise and its assertiveness in the two arenas of strategic importance to the Saudis (the Persian Gulf and the Levant) warranted a response from the Kingdom.³¹

Fourth, its vast petrodollar resources enabled it to use its economic muscle in the advancement of its regional role and the building of beneficial international partnerships. With Asian countries – China, India, Japan, South Korea – in particular the Kingdom has developed far-reaching economic, and some significant security, ties. And fifthly, the sense that after 9/11 the Kingdom could rely less on the United States for its national security forced the country to develop its own zones of influence for its defence and new regional partnerships. The fall of Saudi-friendly regimes in Tunisia and Egypt and the fragility of monarchies in Bahrain and Jordan drove home the perception of strategic vulnerability and underlined the need for the country to pursue its interests unilaterally where it could not do so multilaterally.

Today, despite glaring structural vulnerabilities, the Kingdom is recognized as a regional power. It is fully aware of the attributes of power which it increasingly freely uses in its regional and international interactions.

30 Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival*, Routledge, London, 2006.

31 See Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *Competing Powerbrokers of the Middle East: Iran and Saudi Arabia*, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, 2008.

Three Muslim states then account for the largest of the nominated regional powers. Despite being the fatherlands of Sunni and Shia Islam in power (Ottomans and the Safavids respectively), Turkey and Iran operate within the wider community of Muslim states and wherever possible issues that may arise with their neighbours tends to be perceived through the lens of ‘brotherly’ political and religious relationships. Saudi Arabia perceives itself as the home of Islam and as a consequence in a better place than any other Muslim country comparatively speaking, but still the Kingdom contextualizes its conduct towards Iran and Turkey as belonging to the *umma* (the Muslim community). These set of relationships do not inform the final country’s role in and relations with the region.

Israel

This fourth member of the MENA power quartet, **Israel**, is distinct from all other MENA states in terms of its origin, history, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic roots. This country is still perceived as a ‘planted’ country by many of its neighbours and as such suffers a real crisis of legitimacy in regional terms, which inevitably is exploited to a maximum by its enemies and detractors. Despite its undeniable influence, the analysis of Israel should arguably therefore be separated from that of Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia in a structural sense, in that the former constitutes a wholly different kind of actor in the region and whose exchanges with the rest of the Muslim-dominated region have tended to be arms-length and strained.

As Ayoob comments, by such measures as size, population, GNP and resources, this country should not even aspire to a regional role, but it does so for the “fact that Israel has been able to maintain its military predominance on the basis of its technological and organizational superiority as well as on the basis of its symbiotic relationship with the United States.”³² Being the region’s only nuclear-weapon state and armed with the most sophisticated of delivery systems to challenge any combination of its rivals has also played its part of course.

Israel’s relationships then have tended to be indirect, usually hidden from view, and on many occasions confrontational. Israel is very much the outsider state looking in, despite its peace treaties with some of its neighbours – notably Egypt and Jordan – and informal contacts with a number other Arab countries. Israel’s relations with the Arab world are dictated by its strategy towards the Palestinians and its continuing occupation of Arab lands. Israel’s relations with Turkey, therefore, and its confrontations with Iran do not directly affect the wider balance of forces in the region, or between the Muslim states more generally. But Israel remains a very powerful actor in the region and its ability to project its military power, in Palestine, Lebanon, East Africa, Syria in recent years, does show that it is able to penetrate and influence Arab power relations, and at the very least try and disrupt their efforts to derive a collective strategy towards, though not necessarily against, Israel. For deep-rooted strategic reasons Israel does not seem prepared to take any chances with any bloc of Arab states.

32 Mohammed Ayoob, ‘Unravelling the Concept: ‘National Security’ in the Third World,’ in Bahgat Korany, Paul Noble and Rex Brynen (eds), *The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World*, Macmillan, London, 1993, p.45.

Israel's outright rejection of the "two-state solution" under the hard line Netanyahu government since 2009 has not helped the Arabs' efforts to settle their long-standing differences with Israel. Indeed, ironically Arab moderation in their collective subscription to the decade-old Abdullah Peace Plan has been matched by Israeli intransigence as Netanyahu has seen his government's dependence grow on the smaller, fringe, rejectionist Israeli political parties and actors. As a result, while other regional states may be unable to influence the direction of Israeli domestic politics they cannot avoid the consequences of the hardening of Israel's position in the peace process and the direction of travel in Israeli society.

The other matter of concern for Israel is Iran's nuclear programme, for not only does this challenge Israel's nuclear monopoly in the region, not only can it encourage proliferation amongst the Arab states, but this potentially also threatens the very existence of Israel itself. So, what Israel does to counter this perceived threat, whether to build up its own defences and counter-punch capability, or to try and debilitate Iran's programme, has direct consequences for the rest of the region. Israel's tussle with Iran is a regional matter and its escalation could cause a rapid reshuffling of the regional balance of power.

The regional states as whole, then, are exposed to domestic political developments in all three non-Arab countries, whose dynamic political systems make their state policies more fluid and indeed sometimes less predictable.

On top of the fragmented anarchy dominating the region, we today also have to consider the impact on the subsystem of the Arab uprisings which since December 2010 have swept across the region. The uprisings have added a new layer of complexity to an already unstable and tense environment, as they have – in the words of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "scrambled" the region's "power dynamics."³³ The Arab uprisings have added more fluidity and uncertainty to the region, but they have also challenged many of the existing assumptions about the region and the relationships between the regional powers. Power is being defined in new ways and the growth and influence of non-state organs within and across the Arab region is simply remarkable. States, whose polities had been static, indeed stagnant, for a generation or more have started to go through rapid change and in the process have thrown up a mix of old and new social forces onto public space and have suddenly become active and dynamic. Regime types too have changed and the new elites have begun to inject new ideas and priorities into the system and have thus brought about change in unpredictable, and at times unexpected, ways. All this unpredictable and unforeseen change has, inevitably, affected the subsystem as a whole and has impacted directly the calculations of regional powers and the pursuit of their strategic objectives.

Thus, Israel, for example, is today much less certain about its peace treaty with Egypt and is much more concerned about the stability of Syria, with which it has had an amicable cold war relationship since 1974. While Iran has welcomed the Arab uprisings as validation of its own revolution and while it has called these uprisings an "Islamic

33 Secretary of State's Testimony to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee's Hearing on 23 January, 2013 on the Benghazi killings of 11 September 2012. Source: U.S. <http://www.state.gov/>.

awakening” it had not bargained for the protest movements to militarily challenge its long-standing ally in Syria, or to create in Egypt a very different (ideologically, politically and institutionally) Islamist elite which remained allied with the moderate Gulf Arab monarchies or with the United States.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey too have been caught up in the Arab spring’s whirlwind. For Turkey the first phase of the uprisings – in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya – was a welcome window through which the revitalized Turkish state could extend its influence in the Arab region. But the crisis in Syria next door has had a more negative impact on Turkey and its national security.

Saudi Arabia too has been stung by the Arab spring, not simply because its neighbours in Yemen and Bahrain have been directly affected by it, but also because the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have seen the removal of former Saudi Arab allies. Furthermore, the crisis in Syria has forced it to become more deliberative in its regional role and also try and contain the arc of instability in Iraq and Syria spreading to Jordan and Lebanon. These dramatic turn of events in the Arab region have adversely affected the Kingdom’s security calculus, but of even greater importance to Riyadh has been the threat arising from the emergence of Muslim Brotherhood-linked elites in critical Arab countries. So, while struggling to assemble a counter-Shia/Iran Sunni coalition in the subsystem, it has had to take steps to counter the influence of the Brotherhood as well, which it has tended to do through support for Saudi-leaning, anti-Shia, Salafist forces which are also unpredictable. But its stance against the Brotherhood has not been risk-free as it has also brought it into an unwanted competition with the regional backers of the Brotherhood, namely Turkey and Qatar.

The crisis arising from the Arab spring has been playing itself out in Syria, affecting all the parties concerned: Turkey and Qatar have emerged as the patrons of the Brotherhood forces in the anti-Assad coalition, the Saudis have bestowed their patronage on the armed Salafist forces, Iran has tried to keep the Assad ship from sinking, and Israel (not able to influence the situation on the ground in Syria) has tried desperately hard to contain the Syrian crisis and also prevent Syrian weapons falling into the hands of Hezbollah and other radical groups.

The Arab spring then has been the ‘x factor’ in regional relations and as the masses have challenged the status quo in Arab states so they also have disrupted the existing flow of relations between MENA states. Everything has become less certain and more things have become hostage of *machtpolitik*.

Machtpolitik

In the Middle East inter-state relations has shown a tendency towards the exercise of international relations by force – that is to say the politics of force (*machtpolitik*), as Wight put it.³⁴ Furthermore, as the region has had difficulty recovering from the costs of violence

34 Wight, *Power Politics*, p.29.

it has tended to fall back on force to sustain the status quo. By way of illustrations, Iraq alone had lost \$2.3 trillion in economic potential between 1991 and 2011. The opportunity cost of war to the region as a whole since 1989 stands at a staggering \$12 trillion. These are sums in addition to the direct costs of war. This reality partly explains the resilience of the ‘fierce state’ in so many parts of the region,³⁵ and the constant reliance on the coercive arm of the state for settling disputes or domestic rebellions. As Gause notes, nine Arab-Israeli wars, three wars in the Persian Gulf, civil wars in Lebanon, Oman, Yemen, Iraq (and of course now in Syria too), and countless border skirmishes must make their mark somewhere on the average MENA state.³⁶

Also, one must be wary of equating the category of middle power, which has the dimensions of global power politics at its heart, with that of “great regional powers” that our case studies fall under. Sure, such countries as Turkey and Saudi Arabia have accumulated sufficient power reserves as to qualify for membership of the global club of “G-20”, and undoubtedly Iran’s nuclear programme and the tussle between Iran and Israel are global geo-security concerns, but none of these countries are middle powers in global power politics terms. In essence, they are yet below the position of many European powers and indeed that of the increasingly prevalent BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Apart from Turkey, which has a residual European and NATO power base, none of these countries are players outside of their own region. True, Israel is an economic giant and has done miracles with its small population base, but precisely because of its unsteady regional relationships it has not managed to emerge from the region to join the ranks of the truly middle powers, such as South Korea and Indonesia in Asia, and Brazil and Mexico in Latin America; nor has it been able to build the necessary alliances (beyond the United States) to help it rise in the global division of labour. Iran fairs worse still for not only its economy is still largely dependent on hydrocarbons, despite rising non-oil exports, but the fact that it has virtually no concrete allies to call on for the extension of its power is its strategic weakness. Its soft power is blunted precisely because it is unable to project it as part of a regional initiative. Its relationships with Russia, China and even India are either tactical or driven by the desire to counter the United States’ overbearing presence on its doorstep – Iran is in this sense reactive instead of being proactive.

In a structured and hierarchical world the MENA subsystem’s four great regional powers may have left the periphery of the global order, but are arguably no further than the so-called semi-periphery on the world stage.³⁷ They do, however, exert great influence in their own subsystem, despite each of them suffering from profound structural weaknesses. These are important, indeed dominant, regional powers, but still too weak or handicapped to be able to act as great regional powers.

35 Nazih N. Auybi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1995.

36 F. Gregory Gause III, “The Impact of International Politics”, Michele Penner Angrist (ed.), *Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 2010, p. 49-68.

37 This concept is derived from the Dependency School and the work of Immanuel Wallerstein in particular: *The Capitalist World-Economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979.

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