Chapter 2

The Arab Spring Changes under the Prism of International Relations Theory[1]

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1. Introduction

International factors have been important in all democratising waves and especially in the most recent, although they have not been studied in great detail. This is also true for the so-called 'third democratising wave' (Huntington 1991), which includes the changes in southern Europe in the 70s, Latin America in the 80s, and what we shall describe here as the 'fourth wave' that affected central and eastern Europe in the 90s (see the first chapter; Szmolka 2016). This observation is also applicable to other democratisation processes and more geographically localised political changes that took place in Asia (e.g. the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia and Indonesia from 1997 onwards), in subsaharan Africa (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Ghana and Senegal), and in the area of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), such as in Algeria (1988-1992), Jordan (1989-1993) and Turkey (from 1999-2007).

Specifically, a good test of the differential treatment by international actors is provided by the Spanish (1975-82) and Algerian (1988-1992) transitions; the former a

great success and the latter conflictual and anomalous, given that it gave way to another authoritarian regime (Bustos García de Castro 2004). If in the case of Spain, the generous political and financial support of the SPD party of Willy Brandt and the German social-democratic foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, to the PSOE in the early years of the transition has been well-studied (Muñoz Sánchez 2012) and the prior knowledge that the CIA had about the failed coup d'état of 23-F 1982 has been closely analysed by historians (Palacios 2010; López-Tapico 2011, among others)[1], the details of international intervention in the process of political opening undertaken in Algeria is much less well-known, despite the effort of some authors to unravel it (Thieux 2002; Moore 1994; and especially, Cavatorta 2009).

The aim of this study is not so much to employ an international dimension to understand transition paradigms or theories of 'resilient authoritarianism', as a large part of this book does, but rather to contribute to the analysis from the perspective of International Relations' theories.

It is clear that both positive and negative international influences are crucial in some cases, and essential in others, in order to move beyond the state centred framework of Political Science. Therefore it makes sense to include a full chapter in this book on international processes linked to the Arab Spring. Some strong examples in different regional contexts of international processes affecting political change include the emulation and synergy generated between the Portuguese and Spanish democratic opposition (in the army, the trade unions and the press, for example) and the interactions of the Argentinian, Chilean and Uruguayan opposition starting from the women's movement. Similarly, firm pressure from external actors such as the European Economic Community and European social democratic parties to the transitions in southern Europe

and Latin America as well as the Vatican and the United States in Eastern Europe have been decisive.

It is not only important to consider the support of states, because the role of International Organisations (IO), which is even less researched, is considerable. Poast and Urpelainen concluded in a recent empirical study that mere pertinence to an IO consolidated democratic regimes, particularly when they followed long military dictatorships; while it could not be said that they had an appreciable impact on the fall of authoritarian regimes (Poast and Urpelainen 2015). Richard Youngs, on the other hand, has critically analysed the question of the EUs promotion of democracy, along with other western actors such as governments, companies and NGOs (Youngs 2004; Youngs 2010).

Separately, the help of particular western countries to sustain and strengthen authoritarian regimes (both autocratic and totalitarian) and aggressive ethno-democracies in the MENA region has made the implementation of processes of political opening from the top and the materialisation of popular demands from below more difficult and impractical. It is not only the fact that some of these countries are among the key beneficiaries of US and EU aid. Israel and Egypt, for example, are among the main receivers of American military and economic aid in the world, respectively first and second in 2014 (Amoros 2015), and Morocco has been the main receiver in the south Mediterranean of EU aid through MEDA funds between 1995-2006 (Natorski 2008) and the second, after Palestine, of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument between 2007-2013 (European Commission 2014). More importantly is that many of these countries' political economies have fallen into the perverse circle of employing hydrocarbons/remittances, foreign-aid generated income and/or rent-seeking, together with heavy arms expenditure and/or military alliances in order to protect themselves,

which produces a dynamic that substantially increases the authoritarian and repressive resources of governmental regimes, thereby simultaneously generating an irresolvable 'security dilemma' (Korany *et al.* 1993; Anderson 1995) and making themselves less vulnerable to foreign criticism due to their apparent stability. That 'false stability' of authoritarian regimes, which are frequently in conflict among themselves, does not allow them to be consolidated as states. As Lu and Thies have demonstrated very perceptively, despite the predatory theory predictions of Charles Tilly (1990), civil and international wars have had a negative effect on the construction and consolidation of states in the Middle East and North Africa (Lu and Thies 2013).

However international aid can halt abruptly or in particular conditions. For example, the end of USSR financial support to single party communist regimes provoked their successive collapse in the early 90s, something that did not occur among other single party regimes that were not sustained by foreign support (Geddes 1999: 139-140). In other cases, only under certain conditions (an exogenous crisis of the regime and absences of alternatives to the liberal democratic model) has the US decided to withdraw its support for authoritarian governments (for example, in the Philippines and South Korea), enabling a democratic transition (Owen IV and Poznansky 2014).

In order to conclude this introduction, it can be argued that regarding the Arab Spring - in contrast with the majority of the third and fourth wave cases - neither the international (e.g. the world economic crisis and tensions with Russia over the Ukraine) or regional context (e.g. armed battles in Libya, Syria and Yemen, growing Iran-Saudi rivalry) have been favourable for political change. Neither have the leading global powers or international organisations stood out for their rapid and active support of the anti-authoritarian uprisings. Furthermore, in some cases, some of these powers actually supported authoritarian regimes up until the very last moment (e.g. France in Tunisia) or

impeded their fall (e.g. Russia in Syria or Saudi Arabia in Bahrein), while in other cases the responses were slow (e.g. the EU), contradictory (e.g. the US in Egypt), or showed little enthusiasm (such as that from Brussels, see among others Hollis 2012; Tömmel 2013). This question of direct foreign support and the regional context is analysed in various chapters of this book (11, 12 and 13), and so it is simply sketched out here.

2. Theories of International Relations towards the Arab Spring

Following the 'democratic pause' that the events of 2001 represented, some authors predicted the start of a new democratising wave from the eruption of the Arab Spring in 2010-2011 (Blaydes and Lo 2012; Grand 2011; Howard and Hussain 2013), despite the scepticism of others (Diamond 2011). Diamond warned in 2011 that democratic processes were closing more rapidly and abruptly in a number of Arab countries than in other regions, with the unique exception of the rapid backlash of the ex-Soviet republics (Diamond 2011). In this sense, as the editor of this book points out in the first chapter, the Arab Spring involved processes of political change that could be authoritarian or democratic in nature, rather than democratisations in series, as had happened at the end of the 80s and start of the 90s in some countries of the region.

This chapter next turns to an analysis of these processes via the main paradigms of international relations: (neo)liberalism; institutional liberalism; social constructivism and critical theories, by drawing on their key reference authors[2] and the main journals associated with them[3]: *International Security** (neo-realism), *Review of International Studies, International Politics** and *International Organization* (liberal institutionalism), *European Journal of International Relations** and *International Theory* (social constructivism) and *Journal of International Feminist Politics*, *Millennium* and *International Political Sociology ** (critical theory).

2.1 (Neo)-realism and the Arab Spring

Neo-realism, the main paradigm of International Relations, does not ignore the Arab Spring but it fundamentally conceives it in terms of power and more specifically, of state power. Power in this context is particularly measured in economic, military and technological terms. Changes in its distribution are, on the other hand, fundamental for the neo-realist theorists of International Relations. They argue that an uneven distribution of resources in the international system generates different 'power structures' (Waltz 1979), which depending on the number and capacities of the principal states of the system will make up either a unipolar structure, a bipolar structure or a multipolar structure.[4] The most powerful states in each possible structure determine the rules of the game of international society. The realists, attentive to historic changes, have fixed on the evolution of these structures (unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity), and identified both emerging states that have achieved the status of 'system powers' and those that have declined and stopped being (world) powers.

The countries of the MENA region are, clearly, peripheral in the distribution of power and although some aspire to being regional powers (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey etc.) none can be considered a power at world level. In realist thought, in which the current world structure is often defined as multipolar (although this is an object of debate within realism), no country in the MENA region would be considered a global power. However, their possession of significant energy resources (deposits and reserves), as well as their geographic location, has converted this region into a zone of world strategic importance due to its exporting capacity. These exports are directed at both developed economies and emerging countries (BRICS), which are predominantly net importers of petrol, with the notable exceptions of Russia, Canada, Brazil and Norway that are net

exporters).[5] The MENA countries attract a certain amount of global foreign investment, even though their instability impedes their continued growth.[6] For this same reason, foreign investment is normally limited to extractive infrastructures and public utilities, weakening the development of the industrial sector.

Due, among other reasons, to the MENA countries peripheral condition, two of the main realist theorists, Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer have been critical of American over-intervention and particularly scathing about US 'meddling' in Egypt and Syria, as well as in other MENA locations. This coincidence is worth noting as it emanates from two theorists who are identified with the two poles of realism: defensive (Waltz) and offensive (Mearsheimer). Waltz, who died in 2013, left us with a wake up call over excessive American intervention in the world, at the same time as he put forward a surprising idea that was already formulated in 1980, that a world with a nuclear Iran and other nuclear powers would be more secure (Waltz 2012; Joyner 2013). Mearsheimer argues that the strategic importance of Syria and Egypt for the US has been exaggerated, as their security and freedom of action are not conditioned internationally, and can only be limited from afar by the ascent of China, for which reason, the US should not intervene in those countries (Mearsheimer 2014).[7] Along the same line, the ex-secretary of state Henry Kissinger stated he was against a possible intervention in Syria (Kissinger 2012), as Robert Gilpin had previously argued in relation to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Gilpin 2005).

Realism does not completely ignore other types of changes, such as internal changes, although they receive much less attention. The changes affecting the economic, demographic, military or technological power of the states, which emanate from internal transformations, also concern theoretical realists. However, political changes are less important in this sense, unless they make society more cohesive, mobilise its citizens and

project that growing power abroad (*internal balancing*). Specifically this relates to revolutionary type processes, such as the Naserist Revolution in Egypt or the Islamic Revolution in Iran. These political changes are an object of interest as they produce internal cohesion, civil and/or military mobilisation and a will to exercise power beyond national frontiers, by exporting, for example, the revolutionary or democratic model.

Regime changes, and more specifically democratic transitions and liberalisation policies, are not a particular focus of attention except when they are linked with other changes in state power. Hence Esther Barbé (2007) argues that analyses based exclusively on political-military structures 'are incapable of capturing change factors' (Barbé 2007: 184-185). As is well known, in line with the realist vision, all states act in accordance with the same motive: that is the search for and maximisation of power, whether it is at the minimum level, survival (defensive realism), or at the maximum (offensive realism). In other words, whatever the nature of the state, democratic or authoritarian, revolutionary or traditional, its actions on the international stage will be governed by the same key issues: namely the 'anarchy of international society' and by the capacities of global powers. Therefore all possible changes of regime are interpreted and reduced to variations on the power of the state.

Realism holds that the appearance of revisionist states, whether revolutionary or not, have been historically responded to (in an intentional or unconscious way) by military alliances that have finished with the territorial ambitions of the rebel state; whether it be Napoleonic France, Hitler's Germany or Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Specifically in the journal *International Security* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology MIT, 1976-) realist authors have been most attracted to the effect of the Arab Spring on military alliances (Crawford 2011; Beckley 2015). This issue has received almost as much attention as nuclear proliferation (Braut-Hegghammer 2011;

Bell 2015), alongside Waltz himself (2012) and the fight against Jihadist terrorism (whether it is al-Qaida or transnational Jihadism, see Hegghammer 2010; Long and Wilner 2014). However the journal's leading themes during the Arab Spring (2011-16) have been petrol, wars and the role of hydrocarbons in conflicts (Shifrinson, Itzkowitz and Priebe 2011; Colgan 2013; Glaser 2013; Hughes and Long 2014). Also worth mentioning is an article about the majoritarian failure of regime changes by force (Downes and Monten 2013), which is a clear allusion to the policy followed by the US neo-conservatives in Iraq that, as noted above, has been criticised by the leading neo-realists.

Consequently, the changes underway in the Arab world are only important to realists in the extent to which they produce variations of power in the region, modify perceptions of state security (security dilemma), or restructure alliances with foreign states that have the status of world powers (external balancing). In principle both a country in transition and a country in conflict are considered to lose power on the world stage, in contrast to an emerging country that, because of its growth and its potential is closer to having the capacity of other powers (internal balancing). A country in conflict may also suffer intervention by other(s), end up weaker and even lose sovereignty (such as in the cases of Libya, Syria and Yemen, for example). However, if at the end of a period of democratic transition the country can become a model for the region, it may be able to increase its capacity of influence over their neighbours (soft power). Furthermore the instauration of a democratic regime in one country can significantly alter that country's foreign policy by breaking or departing from the links its authoritarian regime had so far maintained. On the other hand, a strong legitimate political system generates cohesion and also, therefore, the capacity of mobilisation in its defence. The example of Egypt is clear. Although Egypt's failed transition has currently resulted in an

authoritarian regime, as a democracy it could emerge again as a clear aspirant to regional hegemony, as has been left patent by its role as a mediator in the Gaza conflict of November 2012 (Associated Press 2012).

It is clear that these changes can generate distrust and fear in neighbouring states that maintain authoritarian political systems, and that fear rapid contagion. In this sense, the overthrowing of regimes and the start of regime change in the region can increase conflict not only within societies, but also between countries. This defensive response appears to have been regularly repeated in the MENA zone due to the uprisings in Bahrein, Libya, Yemen and Syria.

Finally, the ongoing transitions can have an impact on the alliances of world powers with the MENA states and lead to a potential redistribution of their areas of influence. At what point will the Tunisian transition, with Islamists playing a leading role, lead to France being displaced by the US in an area traditionally considered to be France's 'backyard'? When will French military protection for Tunisia - maintained for so long out of fear of its unpredictable Libyan neighbour - stop being necessary?

As for Syria, would not the fall of the Bachar al-Assad regime represent the loss of the last ally that Russia has in the MENA region? And are the Muslim Brotherhood not now weaving relationships with susceptible states to alter the region's political map? If not, how can the withdrawal of Hamas' support for the Syrian regime be interpreted? Is the Muslim Brotherhood not pushing, under the influence of Qatar, for a new Syria in which the Alawi minority will be replaced by Islamists from the Sunni majority? It is clear that in a potential scenario where Syria was governed by Islamist Sunnis, the country would definitively stop being within the sphere of Russian influence and move into the American zone.

2.2 Liberal Institutionalism and the Arab Spring

Within liberal institutionalism there coexists a pragmatic theoretical approach - that states cooperate among themselves when they all gain something (absolute gain) - with another normative – that the opening up of trade, investments and the development of democratic values and freedom are positive historical forces that cannot be detained. The former corresponds with the utilitarian focus of the neoliberal institutionalists (Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane 1984) and includes international regime theorists (Krasner 1982 among others; Rittberger and Mayer 1993), while the latter relates more to idealism at the start of the XX century and its intellectual tradition (from Grotius, Kant, Rousseau and Wilson to the recent theorists of liberal cosmopolitanism: Beck (1944-2015), Held, Doyle and Ikenberry)[8]. It is also consistent with the positivist or liberal current, dominant among internationalists or specialists in Public International Law.

In general, institutionalists and liberals do not enquire about the origin of international forces, such as globalisation, or whether they are guided by a specific actor; they are considered to be invisible forces, like the market in the economy or the anarchy in international society. Institutionalists and liberals are acritical of a phenomenon that, from their perspective, only seeks to eliminate barriers and obstacles to a future standardisation of the world whose consequences will be more beneficial than prejudicial. Within their optimistic conception of history and time, market forces and human freedoms can only combine to bring about a more prosperous and safe world.

The liberal institutionalist current is not only known for its emphasis on 'complex interdependence'[9], but in a more general way on globalisation, as they focus on a variety of global actors such as international organisations, NGOs, multinational companies, etc. that operate together with states. Neoliberal institutionalists consider the state and other actors to be rational subjects that pursue and define their objectives based on cost and

benefit calculations. Institutions are created and maintained because they reduce the transactional costs of state interaction and allow information to be generated and shared. Nevertheless, there is no reason for cooperation to prevail in every circumstance; this will depend on the specific 'constellation of interest' established in a specific negotiation or international issue. These constellations of interest can take distinct forms according to the participants and the issue under negotiation; forms that the experts of game theory have sought to categorise as distinct games: competitive, cooperative, and with or without coordination (Rittberger, Zangl and Kruck 2012: 21-23).

In his empirical-rational analysis of institutions, Robert O. Keohane recently wrote that the Security Council is not the only institution with exclusive competence to maintain peace and that given its inability to abide by the 'Responsibility to Protect' (RtoP) doctrine, as well as its incapacity to reform itself, it should be complemented by a new institution, comprising of countries that are pre-committed to democracy (Buchanan and Keohane 2011).

Along similar lines, David A. Lake has evaluated the benefit to the US of maintaining alliances or hierarchies with Persian Gulf countries, taking into account not only the cost/benefit but also the type of regime. According to his analytical model, the alliances or "hierarchies have distributive national and international consequences over coalition governments and the types of regime" (Lake 2013). According to Lake there is a relationship between the profits derived from that hierarchy (large/small) and the distance in citizen political preferences to the states in the alliance (short/long), on the one hand, and the type of regime that that hierarchy or alliance implies, on the other. In other words, where the profits are scarce and concentrated and the distance in the preferences are long (in the case of Central America and the Persian Gulf), the hierarchy will support autocratic friends. Conversely, there where the profits are big and numerous

and/or the distance between the preferences short (Western Europe), the hierarchy will support democracies. With time, the former model will generate a perverse circle, while the latter will create a virtuous circle. Under this prism and given the elevated costs of maintaining security in the Gulf region, including both the fight against terrorism and extending benefits beyond the elites, Lake recommends that the US withdraws from the zone and dismantles the structures of military and economic dependency that it has established with those countries (Lake 2013).

In the journal *International Politics* (London School of Economics and Palgrave, 1996-) Michael Doyle (Doyle 2016) and Alex Bellamy (Bellamy 2014) write about the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) in Libya and Syria. While employment of the doctrine in Libya did great harm (despite which its repeated practice will result in it becoming international common law), in Syria, opposition to the use of the RtoP is related to other factors in the neighbouring area. Doyle and Bellamy argue that neither Russia nor China have consistently raised the 'Libyan issue' in the Security Council and nor did the countries that most opposed the Libyan resolution slow down the draft proposal over Syria, and it therefore seems that IOs appear increasingly comfortable with the RtoP.

Another interesting debate raised in the journal is that of the liberal (re) construction of states. While some articles have argued that there is a crisis in this model, liberal authors such as Hameiri contend that expansion will continue because the critics have only focused on the peace missions as an object of analysis and not the more general role that international institutions play (Hameiri 2014). Regarding security, while Cerny argues that the global extension of the liberal state, where armed forces give way to police, will occur within the rule of law (Cerny 2015), Williams contends that in Afghanistan this pattern will not be successful because the Afghan army formed by

NATO will finally prevail over the civil government due to the threats the country currently faces (Williams 2015).

In contrast with the realists, liberals believe that the form of the state, its institutions and the values which govern it, is relevant for two fundamental reasons: first, to open the country internally and externally, and second to respect the rule of law and international norms. This translates into the following liberal premise: that states with open economies tend to trade more and more readily see cooperation as in their interest. Liberals further argue that states with open political and democratic systems prefer to resolve their differences by means of negotiation, respect norms (the rule of law) within and beyond their frontiers, and are more inclined to cooperation and peaceful interaction. These premises are summarised in the theory of 'democratic peace' or 'liberal peace', which contends that democracies do not make war among themselves, but rather prefer to trade and resolve their differences by other means (Russett 1993; Weart 1998; Doyle 2011).

While the idea of 'democratic peace' has been criticised, it continues to be a pillar of liberal institutionalism. This explains why the changes in the Arab countries are very significant, whether they are seen from the perspective of the triumph of the liberal-capitalist model and the end of history (Fukuyama), from the prism of democratising waves (Huntington), from the 'flat world' of technological globalisation (Friedman), or from the social movements of the 'network society' (Castells). In the end, have the Arab uprisings not been possible thanks to the new information technologies of the internet, with social media at the head?

The institutionalist paradigm argues that globalisation is a blind and unstoppable force that modifies international relationships in multiple dimensions, transforming and eroding the Westphalia order that has ruled since 1648. Leading liberal author Andrew

Moravcsik, who developed a 'structural theory' of liberalism, states: 'Liberals argue that the universal condition of world politics is globalisation. States are, and always have been, embedded in a domestic and transnational society, which creates incentives for economic, social and cultural interaction across borders' (Moravcsik 2010: 1).

Globalisation blurs sovereignty, de-territorialises the state and power and weakens the autonomy and independence of political communities (Baylis, Smith and Owens 2011). This generates problems of complex interdependence that enables or pushes states towards international cooperation.

2.3 Social Constructivism and the Arab Spring

Social Constructivism is the most recent International Relations theory to emerge. It was predominantly developed by Alexander Wendt (Wendt 1992; Wendt 1999); although significant predecessors include Onuf, Kratochwil, Ruggie, Katzenstein, and contributors such as Adler, Kubalková, Reus-Smit, Barnett, Finnemore, Sikkink and the Copenhagen school[10] (in the area of security).

Constructivism shares with other critical theories a normative as well as scientific vocation. It seeks to transform social reality by revealing the interactive processes that structure the interests, objectives and finally the identity of international actors. Both vocations reject the presumed objectivity or scientific neutrality and the net separation of the object and subject. However in contrast to critical theories, constructivism does not provide a general description of international relations nor a prognosis of how these relations will evolve. However because it is an essentially contextual and 'interactional' paradigm, the result is open, depending on the shared prior knowledge, values and experiences of the actors involved.

A central issue of social constructivism is the diffusion of norms, especially those that emanate from international organisations (Barnett and Finnemore 1999). This connects directly with the Arab Spring and relationships with actors such as the EU in this area of the world. Regarding the diffusion of values, it has been some time since European political analysts argued that the EU is a 'normative power' or even a 'normative empire' (Del Sarto 2016), which diffuses values and norms throughout the world and primarily, in the Mediterranean and Arab world. The object of this liberal diffusion of ideas, apparently devoid of power and imposition, is to gradually transfer the values of democracy and market economy.

It is clear that constructivist authors seek to distance themselves from the natural optimism of the liberals and suggest that the diffusion of norms such as democracy can have negative effects. Seva Gunitsky argues in a comparative study of the Arab Spring with the Spring of Nations (1848) and the Velvet Revolutions (1989) that this diffusion is not linear but rather a complex process of co-evolution and co-adaptation, which is characterised by dynamics that are usually contradictory. Futhermore, the diffusion is normally accompanied by a learning process of the authoritarian elite, who unleash greater repression, while specific democratic experiences are also successful (Gunitsky 2013).

Natorski (2015), for his part, has underscored that in times of crisis and uncertainty, like that which produced the Arab Spring and the institutional and economic changes in Europe (from 2010 onwards), actors such as the European Union employ social conventions such as 'epistemological coherence' as a means to give continuity to their neighbourhood policies, thereby avoiding having to make more drastic changes that would be necessary in a modified environment.

The *European Journal of International Relations* (EJIR) (European Consortium for Political Research ECPR, 1995-) frequently debates the role of the EU in the world and its power of normative diffusion, as can be seen in the article by Kunz and Maisenbacher about the promotion of women in the MENA region, and in that of Natorski about the epistimological uncertainty before the Arab Spring. This is also the case of another article about the *twinning* policy in Egypt and Tunisia, and how this 'brotherhood' has allowed technical knowledge and efficiencies to be diffused to the administrations of the Mediterranean within a neoliberal governance model (İşleyen 2015). Equally successful has been the normative diffusion of the Palestine Liberation Organisation since 1974, which through distinct resolutions, whether vetoed or not, has managed to develop a strong concensus within the UN Security Council that the Palestinians have a right to their own state and that this is essential for a solution, while the Israeli occupation is perceived as the main obstacle (Graubart and Jimenez-Bacardi 2016). Another key issue in the journal has been the invisibility of certain actors that has led it to overlook micro-movements like the Arab Spring in which ordinary citizens and emotions are important (Sylvester 2013a) (Solomon and Steele 2016). Likewise, the idea that (epistemological) silence can constitute a form of violence in the theory and practice of international relations, is illustrated in the case of Yemen. The breaking of civil society's silence during the Arab Spring, argues the author, should not be interpreted as a monolithic voice in favour of individual freedom but rather as a heterogeneous group of social demands for dignity (Dingli 2015).

Arab uprisings have, although only partially, brought down the western ideological prejudice that Arabs as oriental subjects accept a good degree of autocracy and despotism. This is one of the bases of Orientalism, which was so well analysed and denounced by the intellectual Edward Said (1979; 1993). The Arab Spring has

demonstrated that people in the MENA region desire freedom and dignity like any other. They have sought it with strength and astonishing determination, something that has not only perplexed observers and the public of the North in general but has made these young Arabs believe still more in their possibilities.

The varying degrees of European and western support for Arab autocracies hinged in part on that belief that these societies had resigned themselves or had adapted to live without freedoms and democracy and that therefore they could only change gradually. The spectre of a worse evil than autocracies, personified by political Islam, provided convincing arguments for diplomats to maintain pragmatic relations with anti-democratic regimes. However once the revolutions and uprisings began, the western 'mental veil', which could not comprehend that Arab people wanted – like other populations - to pursue liberty and freedom, started to tear.

This about turn in perception is Copernican and clearly marks a before and after, and is what certain critics, between constructivist and critical theorists, call the 'decolonisation of thought' (Spivak, De Sousa and Mignolo). The changes in the Arab world have forced western thought to be deconstructed and 'decolonised' rather than continuing to see the 'other', those of the South, as different, passive, and therefore deserving of the oppressive reality that surrounds them, or as a primitive subject that must be 'civilised'. Equally the west is striving to completely reconsider North-South relations in the Euro-Mediterranean space. As the French philosopher Alain Badiou recently argued, the North cannot expect to continue giving lessons when it has so much to learn from these revolutions, and this fact shakes western arrogance (Badiou 2012). It also implies putting an end to the paternalism of governments and societies of the North and completely re-evaluating the European model of diffusion of democratic and liberal norms.

These cognitive changes must certainly involve discussion about rights and liberties, but on both sides of the Mediterranean, because those rights and liberties are not the patrimony of particular countries and nor are they fully protected anywhere. However the EU has been determined to continue with its 'civilising mission' on the basis of its promotion of gender equality. As Kunz and Maisenbacher accurately point out, the New European Neighbourhood Policy, launched in response to the Arab Spring, recreates a geographically and temporally distant 'other' - just at the moment in which these countries are closer to Europe than ever - whether by emphasising the incorporation of the European law 'community heritage' or democratisation processes (Kunz and Maisenbacher 2015). It is appropriate for the South to allow its civil society to be 'empowered' and become true co-participants in all Euro-Mediterranean initiatives. The changes imply that Arabs become wholly international subjects, free of illegitimate regimes but also of post-colonial relationships constructed around paternalism. To what extent is Northern paternalism receptive to the message that comes from the South and willing to reconstruct its relationships in the Mediterranean and other spaces?

2.4 Critical theories and the Arab Spring

An alternative analysis is put forward by critical theories, an umbrella term under which very distinct currents are grouped: post-positivists and post-modernists (Ashley, Der Derian, etc.), feminists (Tickner, Sylvester, etc.), neo-Marxists and neo-Gramscians (Cox, Gill, Wallerstein, Van der Pijl, Ali, etc.), and cosmopolitan radicals (Linklater, etc.), who have influenced International Relations as much as the theory of Public International Law (Kennedy, Koskenniemi, Falk, Chimni, Reus-Smit, Bachand and Lapointe).[11]

These authors argue that globalisation is not a new phenomenon, nor distinct, but rather the deepening of a process of capitalist accumulation that started five centuries ago

with the conquest of America and that has been through distinct cycles in that period of time (Wallerstein 2004). They contend that economic processes are far from being an invisible hand that produces beneficial effects; rather that globalisation and the changes in the Arab world have been induced by well-known capitalist states. Peter Gowan, for example, explains how capital deregulation was decided upon and driven by the Nixon administration following the abandonment of the gold-dollar formula and was sustained afterwards, for the benefit of the economy and American banks that recycled the petro-dollars of the Middle East to lend them to southern countries; a process that served the euro-dollar markets that connected Wall Street with the City of London (Gowan 2000a).

While Immanuel Wallerstein is the best known, he has not been alone in arguing that some of the Arab riots were 'remote-controlled' by Washington and their European allies. On the one hand Wallerstein argues that the disturbances are healthy and inspired in May 1968, and on the other that there are reactionaries who seek to maintain the status quo by relying on foreign allies, as has been the case in Libya (Wallerstein 2011) and in Syria (Wallerstein 2012). Other authors suggest that the US provoked the riots to gain new markets for American businesses: was it not Facebook and Twitter, American companies, which facilitated and encouraged the process? Along the same line, Kees Van der Pijl, an influential critic from the Amsterdam School of Global Political Economy, repeated the information that after the coup d'état in Mali, Cheikh Modibo Diarra, who was up to that time director of Microsoft for Africa, had been appointed prime minister, and that Google had contracted various human rights defenders in Arab countries (Allard, cited in Van der Pijl 2013: 13).

These authors argue that the differential approach of the US when faced on the one hand with the disturbances in Syria and Lybia, and the riots in Persian Gulf countries on the other, is proof of a hypocritical US discourse that does not hide market greed. The

way in which the US tolerated the crushing of the Bahrein riots at the hands of the Gulf Cooperation Council security forces, with Saudi Arabia at the head, reveals the double standards of the leading capitalist power. This is behaviour, it is argued, which openly contrasts with untiring support, in many forms, for the *rogue states* (as US authorities describe them) of Libya and Syria.

Other theoretical neo-Marxists, such as the influential writer and journalist Tariq Ali, editor of the *New Left Review*,[12] deny that the Arab Spring represents any fundamental change and argue that the North-South relationship has not substantially varied, except among specific leaders (the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia) who maintain links with the US (Ali 2013), but without altering their political, economic and military dependence on the North. Ali compares the Arab Spring with the advent of popular regimes in Latin America during the 2000s, which he named favourably 'the axis of hope', (Ali 2008) and argues that the current changes in the Arab world have not produced true revolutions that have replaced elites or that have been capable of slowing neo-liberalism and breaking with their foreign partners. This fact, argues Ali, is fundamentally due to the variable of foreign intervention in the MENA countries, especially of the US and its actions through their allies in the region (Israel and Saudi Arabia): "If the Arab uprisings began as indigenous revolts against corrupt police states and social deprivation, they were rapidly internationalised as western powers and regional neighbours entered the fray" (Ali 2013: 64).

The journal *International Political Sociology* (International Studies Association ISA, 2007-), which contains very diverse publications, has shown little direct interest in the Arab Spring (2011-16), but considerable interest in issues that cross the problematic of uprisings, interventions and conflicts in the MENA region. The Reflectivist focus is dominant in the journal, which frequently deals with aspects of the inter-subjective

production of security, 'securitisation', vigilance and biopolitics, both in relation to emigrants (Doty and Wheatley 2013; Johnson 2013) and prisoners of war in Guantanamo (Beier and Mutimer 2014), as well as the Palestinian population under occupation. It also critically considers the legitimacy (not only legal, but also ethical and political) of the military use of drones (Gregory 2015) and the limits of private security organisations (e.g. massive espionage, use of virtual reality by the intelligence services, immigrant detention centres, etc.). Resistance to the Palestinian occupation and in general to the processes of neoliberal globalisation (Corry 2014), are dealt with alongside the concepts and contributions of French sociological theorists (Foucault, Bourdieu, etc.).

From feminist theories, Sylvester underscores the need to analyse everyday international practices from the starting point of individual experiences, both in the study of relationships in periods of peace as well as in current wars (Sylvester 2013a; Sylvester 2013b) and criticises neo-realist theorists, for being excessively abstract and reductionist, with Waltz at the head:

> 'those who set themselves up as scientific authorities on the international system, all the while denying that official authority exists for that system, decide that anarchy means the absence of formal governance "out there". They do not recognise that the political realm of no government is actually a gender-ruled space that forecloses a potential site for (disorderly) "women" in politics' (Sylvester 1994 citado en Sylvester 2014: 550)

The emphasis on war as a by-product of the Arab Spring is also put forward by the school of Global Political Economy. Authors like Van der Pijl link the stripped-down competition for capitalist supremacy with the use that the US makes of the 'industrial military complex': 'My argument in this paper is that the United States (leading the

liberal West more broadly speaking) since the financial crisis of 2007-08 has been compelled to rely ever-more on its military assets to secure its global primacy' (Van der Pijl 2013: 1).

It is clear that these critical theories tend to extol and amplify the role of external actors to the point of becoming, in some cases, close to conspiracy theories. These approaches, even when not so extreme, consequently view the autonomy and decision-making will of internal actors in quite a limited way (Wallerstein), unless they produce revolutions, and underscore the importance of economic and military factors, and their interaction as determinants of international policy (Ali and Van der Pijl). Others, however, such as feminist theorists, point to political and cultural factors that underlie and feed war and conflicts: specifically the invisibility of specific actors (women) and female agency in everyday experiences, which are hidden in dominant macro-theories (neo-realism) and their narratives (Sylvester).

3. Conclusions

This chapter showed above that, unlike previous waves of democratisation, neither the regional nor the global context has been particularly favourable for the Arab Spring. This does not mean, however, that international factors related to the Arab Spring should not receive greater attention. The chapter has also demonstrated how similar topics are treated in rather inverted ways. Thus while neo-realists tend not to focus on the Arab Spring itself but rather on the possible threats that derive from it (an increase in Jihadism, nuclear proliferation, etc.) and their consequences for alliances and US interests, critical theorists reverse the analysis and locate it in the economic causes and implications of armed interventions (e.g. neoliberalism, distribution of markets, the military leverage of US hegemony) as well as the social processes of vigilance and control that are associated

with the "security obsession" (e.g. census elaboration, detention centres, massive espionage, "biopolitics", etc.).

For their part, liberals and institutionalists move between rational calculations relating to the utility of institutions (e.g. UN Security Council reform) and of US alliances in the Middle East (including its eventual withdrawal from the region) and a more or less nuanced defence of the RtoP doctrine, despite the evident lack of restraint shown in the Libyan case. Finally, the Constructivist prism of 'normative diffusion' allows a less optimistic position than the liberals, by identifying contradictory processes, such as those present in the promotion of democracy. These contradictions may lead, for example, to authoritarian learning, autocratic regression and change avoidance. Likewise, Constructivists question the receptivity of the 'natural transmitters of norms' (the North, the EU, etc.), as when Arab societies of the South, empowered by the Arab Spring, sent a message that shattered the dominant perception of the North (Orientalism). Disruptive messages like those sent by Arab Spring actors on the self-representation of Arab societies create epistemological uncertainty and cognitive dissonance among those who take decisions. These cognitive changes imply a "decolonisation" of western thinking and involve a necessary discussion on rights and freedoms on both shores of the Mediterranean.

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[1] As López-Tapico and Manuel Pastor themselves point out, knowledge is not a synonym of approval and the question about the complicity of the CIA has been much more debated than the knowledge that, without doubt, the US had through its embassy and the secret services field office in Madrid (López-Tapico 2011) (Pastor 2014).

[2] In order to identify the key authors of each paradigm, this chapter has basically followed the collective work 'Theories of International Relations' (Arenal and Sanahuja 2015).

[3] Those particular journals on which the author has worked closely, undertaking an exhaustive analysis of the period 2011-15 are followed by an asterisk (*).

[4] For an application of the structure of realist power in the second half of the XX century, see for example Sodupe 2002.

[5] In recent years the production of gas and petrol of oil shale in the US has increased at a great pace, in a way that the rate of coverage (production over consumption) especially of

gas, has risen rapidly. However the US will still need to continue importing petrol to cover its needs.

[6] In effect, the Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) in the MENA region (1.5% of GDP) was behind that of other regions in development in 2014: Latin America (4%), South-east Asia (5.4%), Eastern Africa (4.7%), etc. and of the developing countries average (2.6%). If the calculation is made over the total of the DFI, the MENA region only receives 4.5 % of the total, and the countries in development 55%. Data from the Statistics Division of UNCTAD, http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Index.html [accessed 16/03/2016].

[7] It is clarified below how some liberal/institutionalist authors arrive at similar conclusions about the recommendable withdrawal of the US to the east of the Suez Canal. Other realists extend criticism of the role of the US in Libya and the application in that country of the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP).

[8] See regarding this current, the criticism of this author by Peter Gowan (Gowan 2000b).

[9] A concept that is principally owed to Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, who introduced it in the 70s but then continued using it, although in a revised form (Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane and Nye 1987; Keohane and Nye 2015).

[10] Formed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and De Wilde, who studied the 'new security' after the Cold War and later coined the concept of 'securitisation'.

[11] This post-positivist current simultaneously brings together post-modern, post-colonial and structuralist Marxist authors. Nevertheless, these authors fall outside this analysis as they are more academics and theorists of International Public Law than theorists of International Relations.

[12] For a full critique of the considerations of New Left Review and Tariq Ali about imperialism in the MENA region, see the interview of the Irish Professor of International Relations and MENA specialist, Fred Halliday (1946-2010) (Halliday 2005).

We are going to reflect on the link between Arab Spring and terrorism. Arab Spring may have been a moment of parenthesis for violent action, but today, as we can see in the former liberated countries, we could speak of terrorism against Arab Spring. What are the possible relations between Arab Spring as a popular and spontaneous movement and the place of terrorism in the Muslim space? The first thing that emerges is a question of justice and equity in order to move towards recognition of the The Arab Spring, then, has not changed the fact that Arab public opinion overwhelmingly supports the Palestinian cause, opposes the Israeli occupation, and criticizes the U.S. for supporting Israel. The Arab Spring, however, has brought about a change in the Arab World's priorities. Â It may be that the true purpose of the resolution was to give the appearance of international support for the Palestinian cause without doing anything of substance to support it (much like the policy that many Arab governments have long pursued). Indeed, some important external powers have long understood that it is not in their interests to become involved in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Political science and international relations program. September 2015. Ethical declaration. Â This thesis critically examines the concept of the Arab Spring in describing the recent uprisings. Exploring the modern history of the MENA region in regard to the socioeconomic and political aspects is crucial to assess the background of the uprisings. Â In the light of the questions raised above, the first chapter looks at different theories of revolution in order to assess their relevance for the analysis of the recent Arab uprising. This chapter includes definitions of revolution as well as the causes and outcomes of revolutions based on several major intellectuals and theorists who have contributed to understanding the study of revolution. What were the causes for the Arab Spring in 2011? Read about the top ten developments that both triggered the revolt and helped it come to pass. Â The Arab world has a long history of struggle for political change, from leftist groups to Islamist radicals. But the protests that started in 2011 could not have evolved into a mass phenomenon had it not been for the widespread discontent over unemployment and low living standards. The anger of university graduates forced to drive taxis to survive, and families struggling to provide for their children transcended ideological divisions. Â The economic situation could stabilize over time under a competent and credible government, but by the end of the 20th century, most Arab dictatorships were utterly bankrupt both ideologically and morally. The term Arab Spring refers to the sequence of protest movements that started in Tunisia in December 2010. The protests there, and subsequently in other Arab countries, were intended to put an end to government oppression, corruption and incompetence. They have led to the overthrow of existing regimes and to the conduct of parliamentary elections in Tunisia, in Egypt and in Libya. The protest movement in Syria has developed into a civil war, and protest movements elsewhere in the Arab world have