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FINAL PAPER

"The Arab Revolts and the Prospects of People Power Democracy"

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The Noble Peace Prize award to Tawakkul Karman, a leader of the Yemeni 2011 Revolution, symbolized the world's captivation by the Arab revolts. Beyond elite reactions, a number of grassroots movements around the world have been inspired by the Arab Spring. Spanish protesters occupied main squares in Madrid to call for direct democracy, ignoring a legal ban on public gatherings on the eve of an election. Americans across the country, including thousands of students protesting corporate greed, are mobilizing "Occupy Wall Street" encampments reminiscent of the Tahrir Square eighteen-day rally. But to what extent do the Arab revolts represent a change in political culture? Is Arab democracy possible? What form would it take in the wake of persisting mass protests?

Political Unrest or Cultural Transformation?

The study of contemporary Arab political culture has taken different approaches. One track examined the compatibility between Islam and/or Arab culture and democracy. Interpretations ranged from suggestions that the Qur'an justifies despotism to readings that claim democratic pluralism is rooted in Islam.[1] One religious studies scholar, attempting to root the divergent views in Qur'anic interpretations observed: "The construction of religious and political authority in Islamic thought hinges to a considerable degree on the understanding of the critical Qur'anic verse (4:59), which states, 'Oh those who believe, obey God and the Messenger and those in possession of authority among you.'"[2] Throughout history caliphs, sultans and kings have used this verse to suppress criticism.

The lack of contemporary democratic states in the Arab world left room for Samuel Huntington's earlier suggestion that the Arab world in particular is unlikely to become democratic. "The Islamic revival would seem to reduce even further the likelihood of democratic development, particularly since democracy is often identified with the very Western influences the revival strongly opposes."[3]

This suggestion, however, was not based on a study of participants in Islamic revivalist movements or their effects on Arab public opinion. More recent studies have attempted to move beyond the ideology-driven view of culture. Summing up learning from democratization studies, Mark Tessler have sought to "identify two analytically distinct concerns to which attention must be devoted. One involves political institutions and processes. The other involves citizen attitudes and values, often described as political culture."[4] Tessler conducted a survey in four Arab countries and concluded that Islam is not a predictor of Arab views on democracy. A 2006 Gallup poll of ten Muslim majority countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Lebanon, found that most respondents do not find contradictions between Islam and the principles of democracy.[5]

Yet even as millions of Arabs risk their lives to demand freedom, the potential of actual democracy building in the Arab world is received with skepticism. Some observers noted that this was not first time Arabs take the streets in massive numbers, although they acknowledged the revolts "were not spearheaded by the military, engineered from outside, backed by a powerful organization, or equipped with a clear vision and leadership. Nor, remarkably, were they violent."[6] Others dismissed the democratic potential of the revolts, suggesting that they are not comparable to the East European revolutions of 1989 but the Spring of Europe of 1848.[7] These assessments are logical; they are based on the simple fact that no democracy has or is getting close to emerge yet. But people's movements are messy and uncertain and the study of democratization should focus not on results but on evidence of change.

Significant developments have taken place: one regime has been completely overthrown; military leaders in Egypt and Tunisia have refused to suppress the revolts; much of the military in Yemen has sided with the people, although Saleh continues to enjoy the loyalty of the elite units in the capital; and people power movements have withstood suppression in Syria and Bahrain and in much of the region continue to produce an increasing number of political actors and demands. The kings of Morocco and Jordan have sought to preempt grassroots revolts by offering constitutional and political reforms, but in both countries discontent is rising.

Even in the rich Gulf region, pressures on the ruling families are increasing. Bahrain was the first monarchy to erupt, although the uprising was set back by the ruler's effective use of sectarian differences. Still, massive protests continue despite the crackdown. Oman witnessed a limited eruption; Sultan Qaboos followed a combination of repression and financial inducements to restore quiet. The Saudi Monarch offered money and limited political reforms, including a promise that women will take part in local elections in 2015. In Kuwait, people are becoming increasingly vocal in their demand for a constitutional monarchy that limits the powers of the ruling family. Most recently employees of Kuwait Oil Company went on strike that stopped oil exports in order to improve their bargaining position. Clearly, there is a new player in Arab politics that must be considered: the people.

Some writers have attributed the politicization of Arab masses to the fact that Arab populations are young; the vast majority is under the age of 25. But older Arabs, including opposition groups and individuals who had not been politically active previously have joined as well. Besides, a combination of other factors point to considerable change in political culture and international politics that could ultimately contribute to fundamental changes in in the nature of Arab politics. First, while education levels vary across countries, most Arabs are literate with millions having attained college education. The resulting rise of political awareness combined with continued political marginalization created pressure that was released during the Arab Spring.

Second, satellite television and the Internet are popular among people, especially this educated class. It is not a coincidence that Tunisia, which enjoys 40 percent Internet connectivity, was the first to erupt. Exposure to the outside world allowed Arabs to realize that there are many people outside their world enjoying more freedoms and generally better living conditions.

Third, although Arab regimes have been despotic, they have used the language of rights and have claimed legitimacy on grounds that they are inclusive or democratic. Even Qaddafi claimed that he gave power to the people since he issued his Green Book in the mid-1970s. Globalization technologies have allowed educated Arabs to increase their proficiency in developing discourses debunking the false claims of their regimes.

Fourth, after September 11, 2011, western powers no longer viewed the stability of Arab regimes as a key policy objective. The prospects of massive interest among Arab populations in politics during the Arab Spring, the western pro-democracy rhetoric that was rolled back at the first Islamist victory in 2005 has now returned to center stage. The successful NATO action in support of the Libyan rebellion has emboldened other Arabs wanting to rid themselves of their own dictators. Many hope the international community will not let them down if they take the initiative to free themselves of bad rulers.

While conversations about political power had been the domain of generals, ruling families and a small number of opposition groups, today politics is the concern of the common person. People have connected the exercise of political power to life essentials: food, shelter, jobs and public services. This newfound will to power is seen even among conservative religious groups that used to deny that they wanted to rule.

For example, leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood used to claim that they were not after political power. Prophetic traditions teach Muslims not to give leadership to those who seek it. Yet power has been depersonalized and institutionalized in modern times. Young Muslim Brotherhood members, who are more aware of this fact than their older leaders, do not hesitate to acknowledge that they want part in the power structure of their countries. To verify this matter the present author interviewed Muhammad al-Qudhah, head of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front Youth Section, after the launch of February 24th Movement in 2011 in Amman. He is an East Bank Jordanian from Ajloun and a well-off engineer who drives an American-made SUV. His vision for Jordan's political future is clear: a constitutional monarchy in which the king is no longer an absolute sovereign. Al-Qudhah was not apologetic about his desire to run for a government office or to have a say in restructuring the political system.[8] Of course, the monarchy made this change easier by promulgating the Parties Law in 1992. Parties are supposed to contest power. But those who formed them found during several rounds of election that the new system was devoid of power sharing. Now people are not willing to go through the same experience again.

But while Arab factions in modern (and pre-modern) times have risen up against authoritarian rulers and while the grassroots have supported charismatic leaders or rebellion against foreign rule, the 2011 revolts represent a unique pattern in the history of Arab political expression. It marks the first time people from diverse social, political and geographical backgrounds come out demanding not only the removal of despots but also that the people become the source of political legitimacy. Al-Qudhah justified his interest in government by claiming that he wants to share power with all other Jordanians, including secularists. In other words, the change Arab peoples are anticipating goes beyond the removal of despots in favor free and fair elections.

This sentiment is evident in artistic expression and juristic rulings. People power rap dominates Arab street demonstrations and cyberspaces. The lyrics of one song captured the collective political memory of Arabs:

> Revolution, revolution, revolution, free republic!
> We will not accept an individual or a family, Leave! Leave!
> For half a century, you [people] have persisted despite oppressive rule!
> But today you have risen up to break the idols!
> This regime is farce, dissimulating and delaying!
> It's enough that it turned half the population unemployed!
> Our position is unified, our demand is clear!
> We do not accept a ruler responsible for poverty and corruption!
> Divorce, one thousand divorces, to those with the criminal past!
> The voice of the people is more powerful than your rocket fire.[9]

Protester resiliency in the face of crackdown has inspired jurists. Shaykh Yousef al-Qaradawi, whose weekly al-Jazeeera Arabic program "Sharia and Life" is believed to be followed widely in the Arab world, have spoken repeatedly since the mid-1990s in favor of democracy and equal citizenship rights for minorities. Since the Arab spring he looked at the early history of Islam found that the Prophet Muhammad and his companions engaged in demonstrations to make their views public. Also al-Qaradawi expressed the view that freedom is one of *maqasid al-Sharia* (high objectives of Islam).[10] He also advocated the view that *shura* (consultation) in modern times means political legitimacy rests with the people.[11] Al-Qaradawi stressed that even classical jurists believed people have the obligation to remove from power, by force if necessary, rulers who cause mischief in the land.[12] So in this time of people's overwhelming expression of a collective will to change regime the old adage "one hour of chaos is worse than sixty years of oppression" has little value.

But the Arab Spring may have changed al-Qaradawi's approach to Islamic thought favor of emphasizing *Aql* (reasoning) as much as *naql* (text, or Qur'an and Hadith). In four episodes of the show (one hour each) al-Qaradawi supported the right of people to demonstrate and overthrow their rulers by stressing the compatibility between modern conceptions of freedom and politics and the core values of the Islamic tradition. He drew on more philosophy and observational knowledge than on classical fatwas and passages of scripture to make sense of Arab peoples' movements. [13]

Al-Qaradawi had a history in political activism; he revealed in his program that he was arrested in the 1950s. His support for revolutionary change comes after the fact. Arab masses have expressed desire to reconstitute the exercise of political power in order to preclude reversion to the old authoritarian ways. This is evident in demonstration slogans calling for *dawlah haditha* (modern state), *dawlah madaniyah* (civil state—as opposed to clerical state) *la lihukm al-Askar* (no for military rule), *la lihukm al-fard* (no for rule by an individual despot), *la lihukm al-A'ilah* (no for rule by a family), *la lil-hizb al-wahid* (no for one party rule).

Tribes and Islamists: Obstacles to Democracy?
Can Arab societies with their tribal social structure allow democracy to grow? First, this generalization about the social structure of Arab societies is not accurate. For example, there are few tribes in Egypt; they live in remote areas and do not exert much influence on national politics. Egypt has thousands of clans. The defunct National Democratic Party (NDP) coopted some of their patriarchs at the local level. Clan leaders have been incentivized to join a top-down government

structure to create a façade of legitimacy for the military regime. Other incentives can be created to ensure that the old practices at the national level do not become a basis for local politics.

Tunisian society is largely urban; the nuclear family structure is becoming a more dominant pattern of social organization. Hence the traditional society argument does not hold any water in this country.

Even in the more traditional societies, tribal dynamics have been responsive to change. There are Arab tribal leaders today with Ph.Ds. In Libya, Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi predicted that the country will split along tribal lines when the rebellion began. But even his own tribe, al-Qathathifa, did not fight to retain the rule of his family whose support has been reduced to scattered groups of dead-enders with lethal weapons.

Political diversity is evident in the Yemeni case too. Both Ali Saleh and the head of the opposition belong to the Hashid tribe. Shaykh Sadiq al-Ahmar, joined by leaders of other tribes, went to public squares to give allegiance to the young revolutionaries. If the tribe has not been an obstacle to revolutions, they are less likely to stand in the way of political reforms that would institutionalize anti-nepotism measures and disincentives for tribal political mobilization. In many parts of the Arab world, social structure has been moving in favor of the nuclear family unit. Thus there is increasing receptivity to the idea that the tribe, like the clan and family, is a social structure that needs not be the basis for power politics. The break-up of the extended family structure due to changing socioeconomic conditions and the

Wouldn't Islamists hijack democracy if they come to power? Islamist groups enjoy public trust and grassroots support. But Islamist leaders are aware that most people have voted for them because they represented the strongest challenge to corrupt regimes. When voters have other choices, Islamists will be reduced to their ideological core. Islamists cannot even secure the allegiance of all practicing Muslims who now make up a plurality if not a majority of Arabs. Their political views vary and this variance may even become more pronounced in freer political systems.

In revolutionary Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood agreed to be represented by five out of nineteen seats in the Executive Committee of the recently formed Syrian National Council. Although they form the largest bloc, they did not contest the nomination of French-Syrian secularist professor Burhan Ghalyun to lead the opposition. Cooperation with non-Islamists might change once the regime is deposed, but this goes both ways. It demonstrates, however, that the Syrian MB is willing to make deals beyond the parameters of ideology.

In Egypt, Islamists have split into more than a dozen parties, with the younger members joining secular leaning co-revolutionaries to establish Hizb al-Tayyar al-Misri (the Egyptian Current Party). The ambitious leaders seem persistent in their effort to move politics into practical rather than ideological conceptualization of national priorities.[14] They seek to claim a political center that they believe would attract the vast majority of Egyptian voters who are not aligned with any ideology. These people grew up in an environment when national discourses in Arab countries have been moving away from the polarization of 1950s and 1960s that pitted Arab nationalists against Islamists. The young leaders of the January 25th Revolution hold an Arabo-Muslim identity. They want to lead a successful life and contribute to human civilization. Only time will tell how much societal support they have gained. But there is no doubt that their experience represents a strong evidence of change in the political culture.

The Search for Power Regime Models
Cultural change is no guarantee for successful transition to democracy. The world will be confident about the intentions of the revolutionary leadership if they offer a clear vision not only about their party values and priorities, but also about taking their countries into new ways of contesting power, which is the core problem that plagued their countries for centuries and ultimately caused the current peoples' movements. While classical religious sources offer little help; *ijtihad* might be the solution. This paper proposes that power should be divided laterally and horizontally to reflect the very structure of support for the current revolutions and to adequately respond to the experience of abuse of political power.

The Islamic tradition itself does not have instructions on power politics. The Qur'an speaks of powerful queens and kings who were corrupt and oppressive and others who were wise, just and merciful. The scripture instructs that the public affairs of the believers are to be decided through *shura* (consultation). Arabs today are full of hope and want to move into the future. They don't mind using the past to build on it; they do not mind using experiences from other cultures to inform theirs. Observing the functioning of modern states, Arabs and Muslims are contemplating the institutionalization of power dynamics, taking into consideration their human experience and their current conditions and needs.

Arab protesters have toppled families and military autocrats. Faction regimes in the form of one party rule failed miserably. But fear of factional hegemony threatening the development of democracy is real. Arab history is rife with examples of secular and religious factions that have followed exclusionary political power practices. Secularist rule in Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, and Syria, has been frustrated by internal deficiencies, corruption and human rights abuses. The Tunisian case ended up with the autocracy of Bin Ali. The Algerian National Liberation Front turned out to be a front for military rule. The Baath Party split along national borders and both descended into family rule—and in one case power moved from father to son. Islamist rule has been equally undemocratic and has failed to work well for the people in the international arena. This has been evident in Sudan and Gaza. Thus constitutional interventions are warranted in order to preclude the possibility of factional domination of political life. Winning election should not mean a license to exercise absolute power.

Tunisian and Egyptian transitions have stressed formal processes. Each country has established a road map of democratic change comprised of elections, assemblies and the writing of new constitutions. Power regimes, however, often operate outside formal politics. Arabs know this very well. Qaddafi maintained a despotic rule for decades without any government position. Fatah lost the election to Hamas in 2006 but maintained its grip on whatever power the Israelis allowed them to exercise in the West Bank. Thus the introduction of free and fair elections alone may not deliver the intrinsic change the people are hoping for. Many Tunisians and Egyptians worry that the Mubarak and Bin Ali power regimes are still intact despite losing their heads.

Political scientists writing on the concept of political power identified economic wealth as a major source of political power in stable western democracies.[15] The Arab revolts have not been led by aristocrats, like the ones who spearheaded the American Revolution, for example. Thus Arab democracies are not likely to gravitate toward money. Nor are they likely to follow the remaining communist power model. Under Chinese communism, the Central Committee of the Communist Party stands at the top of the power pyramid that extends down to local members of the one party in power. Arabs are not likely to consider the Chinese model for the atheism the state and its one

party rule. A plutocracy is neither desirable nor practically possible in the current conditions of the Arab world.

Iran's *velayeti fagih* (rule by a jurist) model is easy to rule out. It has been discredited in its place of origin. Also, the trajectory of the Iranian Revolution stands in sharp contrast to the completely spontaneous Arab revolts. Imam Khomeini gathered religious studies students for lectures that became his 1969 book, *The Islamic Government*. The thrust of Khomeneini's work since then was to offer a justification for claiming power and to mobilize for the overthrow of the monarchy, which took only a decade to come to fruition. The Iranian model of giving power to the clergy has shown the severe limitations. More, there is no Khomeini-like Arab figure.

No Sunni scholar has ever claimed this sort of religio-political authority. Also, Sunni masses have taken the lead without any order or suggestions of imams. They inspired Shia masses in Iran and Bahrain to rise up against their regimes.

Lebanon's confessional democracy model envisions a division of power between sectarian communities. But Lebanon's make up is unique. Most countries revolting today are much more homogenous ethnically and religiously. Yet, Muslim-Coptic tensions have risen in Egypt and point to the need for effective minority rights protection regime.

The Turkish Experience
Some commentators believe the Turkish model of military leaders exercising control from behind the scenes is adaptable to Arab countries. The Turkish military built modern Turkey by allowing democratic institutions to develop while keeping ultimate power decisions in the hands of the generals. They used constitutional powers to interfere in the democratic process during what they deemed as times of national emergency. Recently, civilians have been gaining more power and the country is preparing for a new constitution that would limit the ability of the military to intervene in politics. Thus the so-called Turkish model is a suggestion to go into a path the Turks have left. Egypt is the most likely case to consider emulating the old Turkish ways. But leaving the Egyptian military powerful effectively means keeping the power structure close to the status quo. The military in Egypt is practically a state inside a state. It runs a good chunk of the economy and answers to no one but itself. Young leaders of the revolutions have explicitly called for the removal of security institutions from politics. The October 7th Tahrir Square protest was dubbed: "Thank you, now you can return to your barracks!"[16]

But it is not that simple. The military regime in Egypt has always regarded rural areas as fair game. Their agrarian economy and lack of attention to education has separated them from the city-based political parties. The Egyptian generals decided to run the next election using the same election law that reserved half the seats for independent candidates in part to assure rural representation. This seems more democratic than forcing all candidates to run in party lists because currently most Egyptians are not affiliated with any party. Using informal networks of patronage built through six decades of rule, the electoral system could be used to assure the return of leaders of these networks, or NDP leaders, to politics. This exercise of power over a segment of the civilian population is already in motion. Many Egyptians believe it violates the promise made by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to hand power over to civilians. It remains to be seen whether the NDP leaders will still be able to use state funds and facilities to mobilize support or if will resort to infamous election rigging practices such as *tagfil* (closure, or awarding all village ballots to certain candidates believed to have won local consent).

This is not how the Turkish military exercises influence in political life. The Turks do not play under the table. They claim constitutional authority to interrupt civilian politics and force the restructuring of parties. They do not have a party of cronies and clients. The Nationalist Party (known as CHP) that supports the military is completely independent from the state. Its support is not based on patronage payments; rather, it is justified through an ideological affinity to the founder of the modern Turkey, military leader Kemal Ataturk who espoused republicanism and secularism. CHP has to contest elections like all other parties. Thus reference to the Turkish model by the Egyptian generals is only a public relations gimmick.

But the Arab rulers are not the only ones resisting the idea of dividing power. The Muslim Brotherhood, which warrants special attention because of its large presence in key Arab states, has never accepted the idea that politics is a distinct domain that would work more effectively if separated form functions of *dawa* (religious call) and charity. In Jordan, the group started as a charitable society in the 1940s. When party life was formalized in the 1990s, the MB launched the Islamic Action Front. It does not run as an independent political party but as an arm of the mother movement. Their excuse, of course, is that the regime does more horrible things, including the use of public funds to support pro-regime candidates whose victory is often secured through arbitrary electoral fixes. The Egyptian Justice and Freedom Party was approved as an independent political organization, but the leaders of the MB did not stop their involvement in politics, rending the party effectively as a division of the larger body. This resistance to accept any division of power is a form of authoritarianism that must be checked. The demand to divide power does not violate their view that Islam does not separate religion from politics. The MB does not claim to speak for the religion nor are they asked to abandon any of their view on religion or politics. Contemporary states function more effectively when functions among state and society institutions are demarcated clearly.

The Turkish experience, however, demonstrates that social movements only expand their influence if they separate themselves from partisanship. Fethullah Gulen, contemporary Turkish intellectual and spiritual leaders of the influential *Hizmit* (Service) Movement, stays away from partisan politics. He believes the movement is relevant to the political sphere only to restore amity in public discourse and prevent polarization. This position accepts that politics is about contesting power, which is distinct from ritual, spiritual and social functions. *Hizmit*'s acceptance of separation between social and political functions has not diminished the group's role in public life. Indeed, Gulen has become a world figure whose company is sought by world religious and non-religious leaders. The movement has been able to build schools and social service centers throughout the world, because of their commitment to stay away from politics. The movement's members, however, participate in political life. Their views on politics are regarded as private matters. However, it is not a secret that most *Hizmit* members vote for the ruling AKP.

Fortunately, Al-Azhar, which has been the officially sanctioned Islamic religious authority and stayed clear from the revolution, is now jumping in to help. Its leadership recently issued Al-Azhar Document calling for the election of its own leadership and its independence from the state. It also endorsed the notion of civil (non-religious) state.[17] This document addresses key issues in the debate between secularist and religious groups. It allows a great room for the development of a pluralistic polity where religious values operate at the level of culture rather than at the level of political power. This is very crucial because it paves the way for the inclusion of all citizens regardless of religiosity or religious affiliation as equal citizens.

Still, Arab citizens have not been used to free politics; during the dictatorial period it had been risky to join opposition parties while ruling parties have been largely corrupt and controlled from the top by the few. Given this history, Arab people power regimes can choose an easy path to change by simply precluding any potential reversion to unfavorable political practices. This may lead to different political systems altogether.

Imagining People Power Democracy

Is it possible to create power regimes where the citizens are collectively the center of gravity? Many Arab activists and intellectuals think it can be done by creating state and civil society institutions to (1) assure that military and internal security organizations remain not only politically neutral but also controlled by civilian authority and (2) prevent any individual, family, organization, or faction from exercising a hegemonic role in the political system.

Indeed, if democracy is a government of the people by the people for the people, then the Arabs (and the rest of the world) are yet to see the first true democracy. Given the rise of Arab people power and the lack of enthusiasm about existing models of power regimes, it might be logical to contemplate the possibility that Arabs may organically develop people power democracy. What would that look like?

A people power democracy is different from direct democracy in that it is not about processes and procedures but about a continuous restructuring of the center of power gravity so as to ensure the people remain that center. People power is different from populism in that it views the rich as people too who would enjoy protections of rights and whose contribution to society is appreciated and rewarded, but not to the point where they can exercise undue influence. Nor would a people power democracy yield a weak state, as military and national security institutions would be professionalized and centralized.

People power democracy then is a political system where political power dynamics are consciously designed to fulfill the collective goals of the people and reflect their own experience in power politics. It is premised on: (1) the division of political power among existing or future participants in the political process; (2) the facilitation of entry to the political arena by all citizens, as individuals or groups, in order to ensure maximum levels of participation and representation; and (3) the prevention of hegemony by a single ideology, sect, interest, institution, ethnicity, tribe, or any other social, economic or political actor. As a system of inclusion, it

1. defines the state as a system of power shared collectively by all citizens;
2. defines the political sphere in ways that acts as disincentives for the politicization of non-political affiliations. Political affiliations are ones that form for the purpose of contesting power;
3. encourages the creation of a body-politic that transcends primary associations and rewards collaboration between different components of society;
4. limits the functions of the national government to national security, foreign affairs and the management of national wealth;
5. strengthens the roles of local government and assigns service delivery to them; and
6. establishes checks and balances to preclude the hegemonic exercise of power and to prevent acts of exclusion

What facilitates a people power democracy in the Arab world is the waning of ideological fights over questions of identity. There is near consensus on Islam and Arab culture as the core components of national identities. Even Western powers no longer contest the right of people in the region to their

cherished values. The Iraqi Constitution, which was written under the tutelage of these powers, requires that state law to conform to Islam. Also, the NATO decision to support the Libyan Revolution militarily signaled a clear change in western powers' attitude toward working with popular movements in the Arab world, including Islamists. No longer is this off the table. Yet western powers will not be happy with anti-western groups coming to power. Suspect groups like the MB would do themselves and their countries great deal of good if they adopt people power democracy as a model they seek to achieve. This position can go a long ways in assuring the international community that the group is seeking to empower all citizens, all the time. It also sends a message that Arab leaders understand their historical moment, which calls for them to own their states by accepting to share it with all citizens. Sharing a state means sharing power.

People power rule would employ all tools of direct democracy, dividing political power among the various constituencies and levels of government. To protect the system, it is essential to establish private and public commissions of professionals to monitor the enforcement of new laws and regulations aimed at preventing the partisan use of state institutions—to mention one major pattern of corruption and abuse of power. Likewise, non-political NGOs, especially places of worship, should be separate from political organizations. Clans and tribes would be banned from forming political parties because this goes against their core social role. No organizations would be allowed to operate outside the law. In a system of free association, clandestine operations only saw mistrust and divisiveness.

The current sectarian violence in Egypt and the crackdown on protesters demonstrating against the airing of a blasphemous film in Tunisia indicate holes in transitional justice and raises doubts about the intention of the ruling elites to hand over power. To be sure, the future of Arab politics is unclear. The military and family elites are well entrenched in state institutions and the economic structures of the countries. The oppositions have not articulated a recipe for the political systems they desire. History tells that any change is not possible unless there are leaders who believe in it and are willing to struggle to achieve it.

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[8] Muhammad al-Qudah, Interview with the author, March 22, 2011.

[9] Song by Bring Down the Regime Band at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gE1fFuU0sc&feature=related, October 8, 2011.

[10] *Al-Sharia wal Hayat*, September 18, 2011.

[11] Al Jazeera, *Al-Sharia wal Hayat* (Islamic Law and Life), September 25, 2011.

[12] Al Jazeera, *Al-Sharia wal Hayat*, September 11, 2011.

[13] In his most recent show, al-Qaradawi placed scripture and reason on equal footing. *Al-Sharia wal Hayat,* October 9, 2011.

[14] See the Vision and Mission of Al-Tayar Al-Misri Party, http://www.tayarmasry.com, October 10, 2011. Islam Lutfi, a known Muslim Brotherhood leader, is one of the founders of this new party.

[15] Talcott Parsons, "On the Concept of Political Power," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 107, No. 3, 1963, pp.232-262.

[16] An increasing number of protests in Egypt have targeted the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which is now acting as a presidential council after Mubarak stepped down. See "Egypt Revolutionary groups call for SCAF 'return-to-barracks' Friday," Ahram Online, October 4, 2011: http://english.ahram.org.eg/~/NewsContent/1/64/23336/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-Revolutionary-groups-call-for-SCAF-%E2%80%98returnto.aspx, October 8, 2011.

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