Syria, the Arab uprisings, and the political economy of authoritarian resilience

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Abstract

The article argues that while generalizing is useful, it often times obscures the particular dynamics in each case of the Arab revolutions, and discusses how the Syrian case is not only about minority rule, but more so an entrenched system of local economic and regional dynamics that makes the Syrian case different and requires thus a different approach.

Introduction

This paper examines the causes of the Arab uprisings that have been given short shrift or that have been caricaturized in the deluge of literature on the topic. The emphasis will be on the Syrian case, particularly in terms of the weighted political-economic considerations that have been neglected in some analyses. The stalemate in Syria at the time of writing is indicative of a need for a more nuanced and multifaceted analysis of the causes of the revolt. The paper concludes by foreshadowing the shape of things to come in terms of the continuity of similar political-economic formulas, irrespective of who remains standing.

Since the Arab uprisings started in Tunisia in December 2010, there have been early attempts to frame them with generic economic arguments about poverty (Breisinger et al. 2011) and destitution, with regional comparisons to the case of Syria (SRCC 2011). Equally, narrow arguments about the uprisings being a reaction to decades of authoritarian rule do not help us to understand why they are occurring now. Finally, the prevalent "social media revolution" narratives[1] merely obscure the important issues at play.

Little attention has been given to the interaction between political and economic variables, and even less to the particularities of every case and their political-economic legacies and trajectories. The urge to see commonality has often clouded both the differences and the analysis of single cases.

A case in point is some of the analysis on Syria. An examination of events in Syria through 2011 can, intentionally or otherwise, elevate "sectarianism" arguments (Van Dam 1996 / 2011; Seale 2011) or the "sectarian rule" argument (where the Alawite minority is pitted against the Sunni majority). More nuanced analyses that recognize the inadequacy of the "sectarianism" narrative still fail

[1] See report authored by University of Washington academics: Howard et al., 2011.

to highlight that nearly half of Syrian society is itself comprised of minorities,[2] a fact that dilutes the misplaced claim that a small sect rules the majority.

Finally, some leftist intellectuals and policy analysts have raised Syria's credentials as a powerful regional player, as well as its record of "resistance to imperialism," to define the struggle at hand.[3] The fears of some leftist watchdogs and so-called security concerns over the possible alignment with imperial aims often take precedence over, and indeed may inadvertently undermine, the very raison d'être of the uprisings.[4] While regional and international interference clouds the domestic setting and often alters the "conflict," such factors should nonetheless be integrated into the analysis to reveal the complexity of the Syrian case. They should not simply *replace* or hijack the essential narrative of the causes of the uprising.

The abovementioned political, economic, revolutionary, and communal arguments often form an amorphous explanatory lens through which the battle on the ground has been interpreted, at least in the mainstream media (Agha and Malley, 2011). Most narratives focus on symptoms rather than on the tangible causes that have driven the confrontation. Most egregiously, much weight is placed on the here and now as opposed to the political and economic context of the last few decades. Thus, analysis has proceeded from the basic binary that pits dictators against democrats, collapsing decades of institutional and strategic relations and contexts into a simplified normative battle. What compounds the analytical fog is the deluge of "knowledge production" in the form of articles, opinion editorials, and books that are responding to a public thirst on all matters related to the uprisings. The uprisings thus became a fad of sorts that will eventually be shattered by counter-revolutionary efforts in the region and beyond—if onlookers continue to pay attention.

Fortunately or not, the Syrian case invites analytical pause as it disrupts the normative binary opposition. It is not that the Syrian regime is not authoritarian or that the sentiment behind the protest is not about freedom. Rather, class, sect, region, institutions, ideology, domestic strategic relations, and foreign relations all come to the fore in creating the ten-month old stalemate there, with no foreseeable exit in sight. However, without identifying the structural causes for the Syrian uprising as well as the strategic relations that continue to hold the regime together, we will be lured and misled by the glitter of the normative aspects of the uprising, even as we conduct our analysis.

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[2] Again, van Dam's work has been indicative of the focus on the Alawi and Sunni positions, often neglecting other minorities in Syria.

[3] Critiqued by Khalil Issa, Brian Whitaker, and the author as arguments against the anti-authoritarianism protests: Issa, 2011; Haddad, 2011a; and Whitaker, 2012a.

[4] For one perspective on the regional machinations see Hicham Safieddine, 2011.

Definitions and Caveats

I shall start by positing some remarks and caveats about the recent events in the region. I use the word "events" deliberately to underscore the multitude of problematic and misleading ways in which observers have characterized, interpreted, connected, and/or written off the protests. Are these revolutions, or are they what Asef Bayat (2011) termed "Refo-lutions?" Or are they uprisings and revolts? Could they simply be just recurring demonstrations with no long-term tangible consequences? How do we discern exactly what they are? I shall discuss the caveats first, and then examine the particularities of the Syrian case in its international, regional, and local context. The two discussions are connected by virtue of the fact that we are not actually experiencing real "revolutions" in the Marxist or classic conceptions.[5]

Most of us casually refer to these events by using one or another of these words. And though the boundary between some of them is not always clear, some of these designations, namely "revolution" and "demonstration," are hardly reconcilable. We are not sure *exactly* what is transpiring across the region. What we do know is that what we are witnessing, even in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, is not a revolution, neither is it complete regime change. What we have in cases where the head or symbol of the regime resigned or departed, is a *project* for regime change that may or may not produce the results desired by the protesters, a category that itself may shatter, as we witness today in Egypt.[6] But that should not be a cause for pessimism.

A review of the history of revolutions[7] and political change might actually advise optimism, despite all seen and unforeseen hurdles. In most cases that have experienced upheaval we could be witnessing what has been termed the "second Arab revolt" or the "1968 current" (Wallerstein 2011). These consist of more genuine levels of participation and contestation, but often with major counterrevolutionary currents in places like Egypt. Another more apt characterization of the current uprisings is that they represent the struggle to end the post-colonial period of successive liberal and autocratic regimes.[8] These

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[5] See Juan Cole's introduction to *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East* (1999: 3-18) for a primer on revolutions.

[6] See SCAF positions on *Ahram online* at

http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/30286/Egypt/Politics-/In-turnaround,-Abbasiya-hosts-antiSCAF-rally.aspx, and calls for unity at

http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/30392/Egypt/Politics-/Calls-issued-for-Unity-Friday-btwn-pro-and-antiSCA.aspx; and analysis by Ez Eldin, 2012 in relation to women and Egypt.

[7] As well as Cole, 1999, mentioned in n10, see Skocpol, 1979 and Arendt, 1963/2006 on social revolution and the changing face of revolution respectively.

[8] See Khalidi, 2011: Preliminary Historical Observations on the Arab Revolutions of 2011,in *Jadaliyya,* http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/970/preliminary-historical-observations-on-the-arab-re

broad characterizations are important gateways and frameworks for much needed focused analysis on single cases. The lure of the word "revolution" is strong, but must begin to give way to sober and empirically based analysis over and beyond terminology.

Furthermore, after a year of uprisings, we must note that we are no longer witnessing spontaneous protests by a discontented and oppressed public, with jittery responses by established regimes. We have entered the realm of strategic and medium-to long-term decision-making on both sides, one that includes actors from the Gulf countries (Hokayem 2011) as well as strategic neighbors like Turkey (Philips 2011), all of whom have sought to play a more active role in the region. We are also witnessing international inputs that have complicated the situation and given leverage to incumbent regimes that then cite such inputs as evidence that their local uprisings have foreign influences or starting points. The veracity of such claims in every case is less important than its actual effects in a region deeply injured or affected by foreign intervention. What might have started as protests and revolts are slowly becoming protracted struggles and—where incumbent regimes have some public support (e.g., Syria)—conflicts.

Thus, I shall treat this apparent fog of definitions not by trying to find the right or correct characterization, but by bypassing or suspending this task to emphasize the basic heterogeneity of the cases involved. Egypt is not Tunisia, and both are not Libya. All three are removed from Yemen (International Crisis Group 2011a), Bahrain (Shehabi 2011), and Syria. We also witnessed tremors in Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria[9] that have emanated from yet another set of circumstances which, clearly, have not yet sufficed to maintain a strong protest momentum.

The Limits of Commonality

The recurring theme across these Arab countries is that they are experiencing high levels of mass mobilization on a scale hitherto unseen in the Arab part of the Middle East, at least not in unison and certainly not since the struggles for independence from colonial and imperial rule. We have also witnessed a strong affinity among these publics for learning from each other's experience, creating a domino-like effect across the Arab countries. This signals the persistent, even if amorphous, historical, cultural, and political dimensions that continue to bind many Arabs in a systemic way—though we should not overstate this affinity as it remains at the level of triggers and signaling, not cooperation and collaboration.

Beyond that, the commonality dwindles, and in some cases, stops. It is more productive to focus instead on the significant differences among these polities, in terms of social structure, ethnic, regional, social, and sectarian diversity. Most importantly, more attention must be paid to the different political economies—as will be discussed below—that obtain as well as the cumulative

[9] See Abu-Rish, 2011 on Jordan; Dalmasso and Cavatorta, 2011 on Morocco; and Davis, 2011 on Algeria.

effects of economic development and change, even across similarly structured political economies.

Thus, we should avoid addressing the regional protests as a singular unit of analysis. It is also important to recognize the similarities between what we are witnessing in the region and what many other countries, beyond the developing world, are experiencing. Barring an exaggerated connection between the local (here) and the local (elsewhere), it is important to consider the effect of particular alliances and interests at the global level that determined the nature and extent of intervention or pressure. The US-supported Saudi military deployment (Bahaa 2011) in Bahrain to effectively quell the protests is a case in point, and one that is related to common political and economic interests between Bahrain's neighbors and an array of non-Arab countries. Similar concerns, though more political than economic in this case, play a role in moderating the push for regime change in Syria, even by its enemies. But in nearly all local and global cases of uprisings during the past year, including in the United States, there has been a growing populist/popular rejection of corrupt leadership.[10] In most Arab cases that experienced turmoil, the authoritarian alliance between the political and economic elite is invariably the target of protests. The details differ from case to case, though, signaling the end of the commonality and the need to delve into the particularities of each single case.

Effects of the Nexus of Political and Economic Power

Instead of surveying the gamut of factors and claims about the causes of the uprisings, I shall examine a factor that has been given scant attention despite its centrality in each of the countries that have experienced revolts and turbulence. Namely, the growing relationship in the past few decades between the political and economic elites[11] in the countries undergoing mass uprisings. This nexus of power pervades most global political economies but produces deleterious effects to the extent that the context allows. In many Arab countries, it is associated with the protracted process related to the unraveling of state-centered economies there. One must caution in the same breath against the emphasis on such factors as singular causes for the uprisings.

Assessing the impact of this alliance/nexus is difficult because it requires one to disentangle the gamut of existing political, social, and economic ills in the region and neatly attribute some of them to the uprisings. To be sure, there are many sources of polarization, poverty, repression, and, ultimately revolt, that some analysts are finding it convenient to go back to the residual category of the cultural black box to explain the region's shortcomings[12] (some have never left it

[10] See Walt, 2011 for a critique of American dominance.

[11] On Syria see Perthes, 1995, 2004; Haddad, 2011b; and Heydemann, 2004.

[12] See Khouri's problematizing of the use of the term "Arab Spring", 2011; and a thought-provoking critique by Mandhai on Ikhwanweb, 2011.

in the first place). It is possible, however, to highlight some problematic areas that have been exacerbated by the new elitism, and the modes of coping, resistance, governance, and living that it has engendered. Systematic research is required to conduct rigorous process-tracing, but some of the direct and not-so-direct effects are inescapably evident, especially when one considers the new forms of collaboration between repressive political elites and (often) happily unaccountable business actors.

On the face of it, we can preliminarily divide the impact of this nexus of power into at least two categories, both of which have directly or indirectly affected the outcomes we have witnessed last spring. Politically, the new nexus of power between the political and economic elite seems to have buttressed authoritarian rule over the past decades (depending on the case), whether or not other factors contributed to this outcome. This is not simply a function of "support" for the status quo by these elites, for this is the norm nearly everywhere. It is also a form of legitimation of the status quo because the corollary of this nexus involves various forms of "liberalization" or state retreat.

This includes a:

1. "budding," "growing," or seemingly "vibrant" civil society[13] that may be considered a sign of political "opening," a "freer" economic environment in which the state gives up its monopoly over some sectors of the economy; and
2. a large "private" sector that purportedly grows at the expense of the state-run "public" sector,[14] giving way to a broader dispersion of resources with economically democratizing effects.

These outcomes are pleasing to some external actors, including the amorphously labeled "the international community"— a view that is reflected in the USAID economic growth plan for Egypt (USAID 2004-2010). However, the overwhelming majority of the population, who has to fend for itself, does not view this in positive terms, as public provisions, jobs, and welfare dwindle.

The social effects of this new nexus of power have been all too clear in the years before the 2011 revolts. Economic reforms have led to the destruction of social safety nets (e.g., welfare, subsidies, and job provisions) that have usually compensated for the failure of the market to keep people out of poverty and hardship. Basic health and education provision has been affected during years of neoliberal led economic policies. Poor and low-income people in the Middle East rely on state subsidies on wheat, flower, and sugar as well as oil, so that they can afford the basic necessities such as bread.[15] Such drastic changes are contributing to two dangerously related phenomena. Increasing poverty[16]

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[13] Pratt, 2007 examines how civil society can actually undermine democracy in the Middle East.

[14] See Samer Abboud (2010: 9-12) for a summary of economic reformist positions in Syria.

[15] For insight into downward trends for subsidies in Syria, see Haddad, 2011b Chapter 6.

[16] See UNICEF report, 2010, on child poverty in Egypt.

(including absolute poverty) and thus social polarization, whereby societies are increasingly losing their middle classes. Secondly, economic exclusion from the "market," a phenomenon that has contributed to a dramatic increase of the informal sector[17] and of those who are functioning, and living, almost completely outside the market. The populations affected by these policies have been documented in various publications, from Diane Singerman's (2009) work on the informal sector in Egypt to Asef Bayat's (2009) work on "quiet encroachment" in the same country. More recently, we saw such groups protest side-by-side with lower-middle and middle class Egyptians throughout Egypt—not just in Cairo.

In Egypt Nadine Marroushi (2011) has noted that there continues to be support in the direction of the free market and privatization from both the liberal and Islamist parties. This has remained the case even after the Egyptian revolution, with its attendant neoliberal assumptions such as the trickle down effect, tight state budgets, private sector growth, the importance of self-reliance, and ending the "dependence" on the state. All these rationales must be carefully examined, for most of them emanate less from a demonstrable conviction and intent to guarantee alternatives and more from the sheer desire and ability to deprioritize long-term collective interests and mass provisions. There are alternative approaches and models (Gamal 2011) that are simply not being given the space they deserve, largely because they involve redistribution.

The incremental—and not so incremental—goring of workers' and labor interests in the private *and* public sectors is another outcome that can be easily traceable to policies and political decisions associated with the new elitism. The shifting of effective alliances from labor to business in various Arab regimes was part and parcel of the unraveling of state-centered economies.[18] Rights, rules, and regulations increasingly favored business at the expense of labor as time went by, starting in the 1970s (officially or unofficially). Through the 1980s and 1990s trade unions, peasant federations, and labor organizations in countries like Egypt (Beinin 2001) and Syria (Hinnebusch, 2009: 20-21; Haddad, 2011b: 80) were increasingly co-opted by corporatist authoritarian systems of representation, but continued to enjoy some privileges. Therefore, it is true that the political elite started this process of shifting alliances and privileging capital long before business actors became prominent, but the sort of change that took place in recent years has had a different character.

Earlier, such stripping of labor rights was considered a function of problematic authoritarian arbitrariness, something that is frowned upon socially and viewed as a departure from what Marsha Pripstein Posusney (1997: 4 – 6), in her work on Egypt, called the "moral contract" between labor and the state. More recently, and before the wave of protests and revolts began, the incremental stripping away of labor rights was carried out in the name of "investment" and "growth."

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[17] See Schneider and Enste 2002 on informal economies.

[18] On the role of the state see Ayubi, 1995.

In Syria the ideological context was one of a socialist-nationalist[19] coloring that provided a basis for judgment and norms, an ideological, or rhetorical, underpinning that was influential from Egypt to Iraq. Hence, social polarization, poverty, and developmental exclusion were considered "wrong" and unacceptable. Today, such disturbing effects became the new norm, a means to a "better" future, a legitimate station along the way to prosperity and efficiency. All such designations were short-circuited by the uprisings, but it is too early to sound the death-knell for growth formulas that are zero-sum in character.

Perhaps most significantly were the socioeconomic implications of a new elitism that vehemently emphasized urban development (at the expense of the neglected countryside and its modes of production) and non-productive economic activity, characterized primarily by consumption (Mitchell 1999). The increase in shares of the tourism and service sectors at the expense of manufacturing and agricultural production (associated with land re-reform laws and other regulations) produced different kinds of needs in society.[20] For instance, there is significantly less need for skilled labor, along with the educational systems and institutions that would be required to train skilled labor. Whatever is arising in terms of the "new economy" and the field of Information Technology lags far behind other countries. It is too small and too underdeveloped to substitute for losses in other sectors and is certainly not competitive internationally. Employment (Achy 2011) of hundreds of thousands of yearly new entrants into the job market will continue to suffer accordingly if public policy continues to be colonized as it has been by the new elitism in the context of authoritarian governance or post-revolution reform.

The much heralded private sector is nearly everywhere in the region only picking up "shares" of fixed capital formation from the embattled and bloated public sector, but is nowhere near compensating for job losses, let alone accommodating new job-seekers. The revolts of spring 2011 are not unrelated to the failure of the "private-sector-led" alternative to state-centered economies. Neither model served people or sustainable growth. Hence the need for a more imaginative approach that involves an optimal division of labor between the private and public sector as well as the proper distribution of emphasis across sectors (i.e., industry, trade, tourism, service, information technology, agriculture) and regions (i.e., rural, urban).

The often-neglected elements in some circles are the combination of measures that fall under the rubric of trickle down economics (private sector investment, foreign direct investment, new market institutions, new rules and regulations, the rule of law, etc.). It is erroneous to place the causes of the revolutions and protests squarely on these economic variables—which is not the point of this intervention. However, one cannot understand the depth, breadth, and

[19] For insight into the language and rhetoric, read Syria's 10th Five Year Plan 2006-2010.

[20] See Haddad, 2011b Chapter 4, for a discussion on a new state-business collusion in Syria.

magnitude, of the revolts without reference to the effects of these policies, and their agents.

The problem of development is not simply about rules and markets and will not be resolved as such. Whatever else is at work, the most egregious problems stem from various and continuing forms of political *and* economic disempowerment and denial of self-determination at the individual and collective levels.[21] Most of these problems were/are being exacerbated by a new nexus of power that is as unrelenting as it is/was unchallenged (depending on the case). This new elitism was not the only source of these problems, but a guarantee that they will fester if alternative agencies and institutions do not develop.

Compounding Effects of the New Nexus of Power

The new nexus of power in and of itself is not sufficient to bring about sustained protests. It was only the constellation of various factors that brought an end to the seemingly impenetrable wall of fear. These factors are by no means restricted to structure: politics and strategy, as well as subjective calculations, ultimately played a significant role to tip the balance in favor of the unthinkable: public protest in Syria.

Namely, in addition to the economic deterioration brought about by the nexus of power in Syria, we can identify two major factors: the independent effect of authoritarian rule and demonstration effect. Deep economic deterioration (Perthes, 1995; Hinnebusch, 2009, 15-17; and Perthes, 2004, 28-29), elite capture of public policy, and authoritarian rule proceeded without the existence of meaningful avenues for redress. This created a pressure cooker effect for many years (more or less, depending on the case at hand), leading to a sense of despair across broad sectors of the population, affecting more than just people's livelihood and desire for political "freedom" (these societies always wanted more political freedom). What took the situation to a deeper level is that this combination also struck deeply at people's dignity. I will argue that even that outcome (when one's dignity is affected) was not sufficient to spur mass mobilization in some countries, notably Syria. What tilted the calculus of individuals and groups in Syria in terms of going to the streets is the feeling that, NOW, after Tunisia and Egypt, they can actually do something about it.

Thus, the structural political/economic factors obtained, the injury to one's dignity obtained, but such factors required some strategic principle or agency for them to spur mass uprisings. Many onlookers ask why people were willing to risk their lives and continue to risk their lives, especially in Syria? It is precisely because of the deep injuries that were incurred for long periods of time, coupled with the presence of hope for a way out. In that sense, we can observe that this explanation comports with a rational actor model if we adjust preferences.

[21] See the latest AHDR Report, 2009.

Ultimately, this somewhat crude narrative manifested itself in various ways across the countries that experienced upheaval (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain), and certainly in Syria. However, some countries were less ripe for such uprisings in the sense that the discontent as well as the tools/factors available did not allow for critical mass and/or immediately effective/terminal challenge to the status quo. Syria, and Yemen to a lesser extent, is a case in point. Ripe here means that the injuries discussed and the possibility of a better alternative had not yet reached deep into the core of all major segments or regions of the country. Hence the relative quiet one witnesses in Damascus and Aleppo.

Conclusion: The Shape of Things To Come After the Uprisings

The concern about the growing nexus of power is at heart a structural, not an empirical, one. When authoritarian elites began to build relations with capitalists or the business class in the 1970s and 1980s they were doing more than simply pursuing their own interests. They were trying to respond to growing economic troubles or crisis. However, with time, these political elites and their offspring were increasingly becoming the economic elite.[22] Their interests were reflected in their policy preferences, their lifestyles, and their changing social alliances (if not tastes). Most importantly, the incentive structure in the 1980s changed.

While it was more profitable for an ascendant counter leadership in the 1940s and 1950s to champion the cause of the oppressed and exploited on account of their prevalence, in the 1980s the incumbent regimes became increasingly threatened by this growing and powerful force, i.e., the masses. High birth rates, low infant mortality, and increasingly urbanized and political engaged (if muted in practice) societies have become a liability, not a ticket for establishing legitimacy vis-à-vis an ancient regime/order still connected to former colonizers. Decrepit state institutions could not keep up with massive urbanization and the rate of new entrants into the job market every year. Failing public sectors were already over-bloated and began seriously to strain state budgets[23]—largely because of mismanagement whereby economic decisions were guided by a political logic that emphasized control.

Recognizing that a new social contract with labor and populist forces would require a modicum of power-sharing, and noting their own growing interest in the "market" and a malleable "private" sector, the political elite opted for the easy way out that comported with their changing preferences and the changing incentive structure: i.e., they began to deepen their connections with select parts of the business community, mostly at the expense of gains made by labor since the late 1950s under the United Arab Republic, and then in the mid-1960s under the new radical and rural-minoritarian Ba`thist leadership.

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[22] For a detailed study of this process in the case of Syria, see Haddad (2012b), chapter 4.

[23] See Haddad (2012b), chapter 5.

The increasing structural power of capital (i.e., the increasing opportunities for transforming economic wealth into political power) drew more and more state officials and, later in the 1990s, their offspring, into a crony-dominated market in which networks that bind bureaucrats/politicians and capitalists were able to skew economic policy formulation and implementation to their favor. And when this was not possible, they were able to transgress the law to the extent that they were well-connected or to the extent that they themselves were the "connection," i.e., the strongmen that can transgress laws with impunity. A growing group of "entrepreneurs" and capitalists began to develop an interest not only in the so-called "private" sector, but also in beginning to organize themselves in order to protect their interests either through increasing accountability in the economic environment or by strengthening their ties and lobbying efforts.

This process, which started after 2005, when Bashar heralded the Social Market Economy principle, was severely and prematurely interrupted by the advent of the uprisings in March 2011. It remains to be seen what kind of alignments were beginning to take place as researchers go back and revisit the critical years between 2005 and 2011. In any case, it is safe to assume that this social stratum has developed a keen interest in preserving its position at the helm of the socioeconomic pyramid. This explains to a large extent its ambivalence vis-à-vis the Syrian uprisings and its quiet and non-explicit support of the protesters, when they did so.[24] Notably, the upper layer of the business community—which is comprised mainly of individuals connected to the regime in an organic manner—is firmly supportive of the regime because of their intertwined interests in maintaining the physical assets that it continues to guarantee.

In any future formula, it would be erroneous to assume that these business interests and their social carriers are going to revert to a preference for a state-centered economic formula, even if a populist-leaning leadership emerges out of the uprising—notwithstanding the analytical fog that surrounds the changing nature of the Syrian uprising beginning in late 2011 and continuing to the time of writing.[25] We are likely to see the creeping back through various avenues of the very same capital and interests that gave rise to the social polarization in the first place, except with better packaging. This is not necessarily deterministic, but it is not likely that the rebuilding of these polities will eschew these business interests unless the structural power of capital is balanced by a robust democratic process with stable institutions. Based on any cursory observation of the Syrian scene, this is not likely to be on the horizon.

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[24] See Bassam Haddad, "Syria's Business Backbone," in *MERIP*, Winter 2012.

[25] See Bassam Haddad, "The End of Taking the Syrian Revolution at Face Value," in *Jadaliyya* (http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4519/the-end-of-taking-the-syrian-revolution-at-face-va).

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