Zeppelin University

Sociology, Politics & Economics

Economic Origins and Outcomes of the Arab Spring

Term Paper in Political Economy

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Study program: Sociology, Politics & Economics

Semester: Fall 2018

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1 To Do (include points based on literature)

- structure of the economy / factor endowment
 - determines who easy it is to repress / redistribute
 - landowners are easier to tax because they cannot move their capital
 - landowners are on average richer than capitalists
- globalization
- which institutions are in place? What is their nature? (de facto, de jure) confer Why nations fail
- Collective Action Problem (!)
 - In the Arab Spring, it was solved also by social media, cf. Acemoglue 2018 Evidence from Arab Spring
- Cost and Benefits of Rev / Concessions
 - GDP per capita
 - GDP according to factor endowment
 - Unemployment per group which participated in the revolution -> no decrease for unemployment of the youth population -> hard to find evidence
 - Problematic of finding evidence?
 - Groups (demostrants, military, ...)
 - political identities
 - Reliance on export -> instability (Diversitination)
- international trade: dependence on international trade
- Fragen spezifizieren
- general weakness of civil society
- institutions (does an opposition exist?)

2 Introduction: Problem Statement & Hypotheses

Economic aspects have been one of the main explanations for the political unrest during the Arab Spring used not only by many scholars, but also used by the media. The Economist's "Shoethrower's Index" is a noteworthy example. Youth population, years of government in power, corruption, GDP per capita, and several other indicators were assumed to measure the Arab countries' vulnerability for a revolution. It turns out that the potential for unrest in the Arab world 2010 were highest in Yemen, Libya, Egypt and Syria, while countries like Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Lebanon had the lowest scores (The Economist 2011:26). Even though the index lacks of theoretical backing, not only its predictions of social

 $^{^{1}} http://www.geocurrents.info/geopolitics/the-economists-shoe-throwers-index-a-success$

unrest are empirically supported (see Appendix² of this Paper). The scientific literature supports some of the indicators used by the Economist (see Chapter). The observation that the economic situation is seems to be a suitable indicator for social unrest is the starting point of this paper.

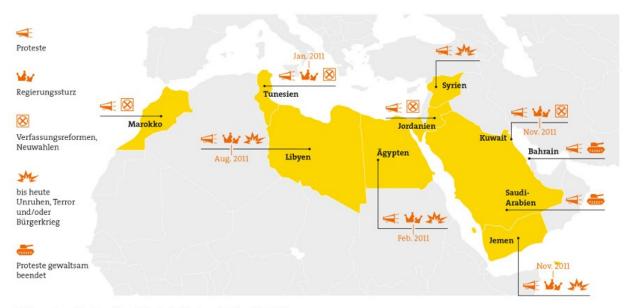
However, the motivation is to study the economic origins and outcomes of the Arab Spring from the perspective the more systematic approach of Acemoglu and Robinson's (2006) "Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy". Their account provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the creation and consolidation of different political institutions from a game theoretical perspective. It implies strategical behavior of social groups with respect to the way they allocate political power and resources. Democracy, on the one hand, is preferred by the majority of citizens due their gain of political influence on how ressources are distributed in a society. On the other hand, autocratic regimes are preferred by the elites because ressources and power are centered among few individuals. The question under which conditions these regime changes occur and consolidate is interesting both theoretically and empirically. The focus of this paper is to relate Acemoglu and Robinson's (2006) theoretical account to empirical findings on economic origins and outcomes of the Arabic Spring from existing literature and key economic indicators taken from the World Bank's database. More specificly, the interest of this paper is twofold:

- 1. Does the degree of inequality correspond to the severeness of revolutionary movements? Accomoglu and Robinson's framework suggest that only with a sufficiently high economic incentive the poor can solve the collective action problem. In other words: In countries with higher economic welfare accuring to the poor, policital concessions by the incumbent regime were effective to calm down social unrest. In the contrary, lower economic welfare should be related to a higher degree of social unrest (local protests, nationwide protests, regime changes).
- 2. What are the economic consequences of a revolution? In the model of Acemoglu and Robinson individuals behave strategically under the conditions of complete information. It follows, that successful regime transitions towards more democratic political institutions should be related to higher share of available ressources accuring to the poor in the years after the revolution. (Successfull: Tunesia, Unsucessful: Egypt, ...)

Since were are not in the domain of controlled experiments we cannot replay the dynamics of the Arabic Spring as if the regime changes and the political or economic concessions did not happen. Therefore, this paper can neither trace back the emergence of regime critical movements to specific economic conditions before the revolution nor explain the economic developments as the result of the events of the Arabic Spring. Still, this interpretative approach provides evidence for Acemoglu and Robinson's theoretical framework that can be put to test with a more elaborated methodological approach.

²The appendix of this paper contains an overview of the major events and outcomes of the Arab Spring for each country provided by the "Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung", a federal public authority providing citizenship education and information on political issues for all people in Germany.

Der Arabische Frühling und seine Folgen Massenproteste und Rebellionen erschütterten ab Dezember 2010 die autokratischen Regierungen in diesen Ländern in Nordafrika und im Nahen Osten.



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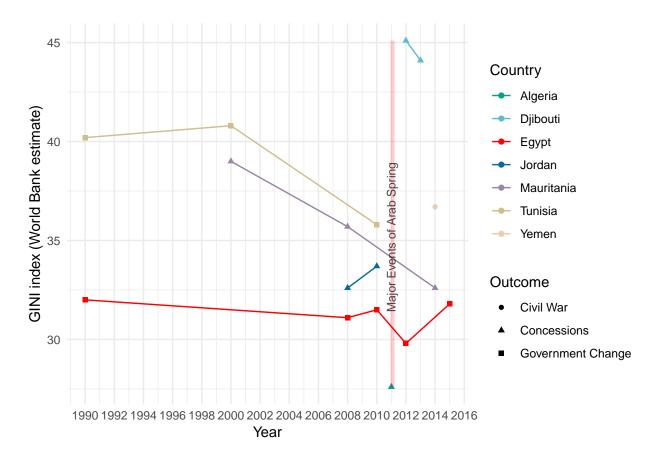


Figure 1: GINI index (World Bank estimate)

3 World Bank Data

3.1 Inequality

- Commitment problem: In Egypt inequality decreased after the events of the regime change but again increased afterwards
- Only one more observation that allows comparing before and after the political unrest: in Morocco there was no major change regarding inequality

3.2 Unemployment

- Tunesia: unemployment decreases
- Cost of Revolution: The result of the Arab Spring is a higher unemployment rate except for Morocco, Bahrain and Yemen the Arab
- Strongest increase in case of Syria, Tunesia (and Libya)
- Group differences: In those countries with lower unemployment concessions were made.

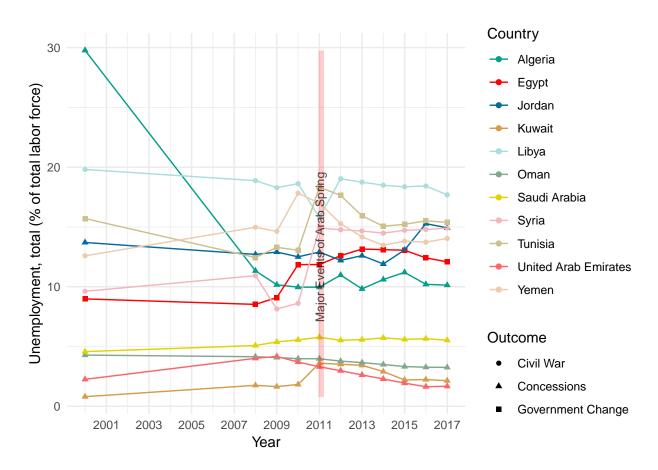


Figure 2: Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)

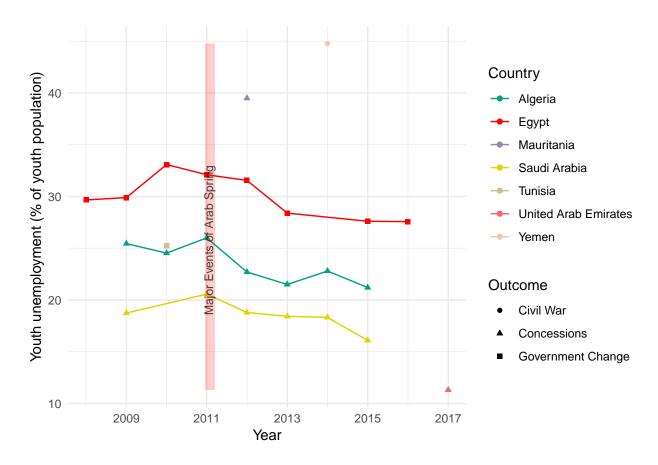


Figure 3: Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of youth population)

- Explanation of social unrest: As supported by other sources younger population of Egypt suffered from high unemployment compared to the overall unemployment.
- Concessions and lower unemployment: Cost of revolution too high respectively economic incentive too low?

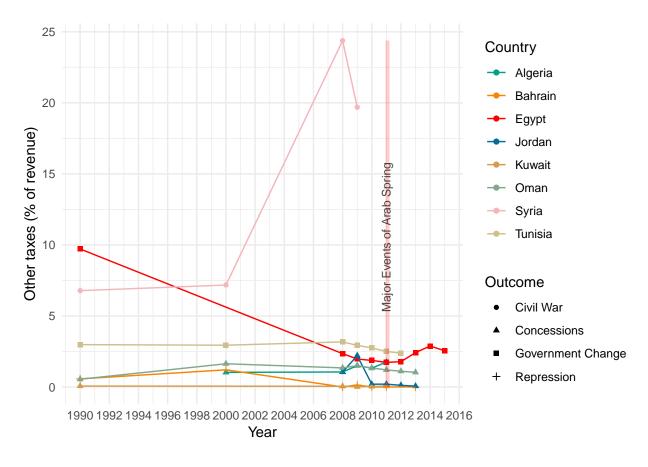


Figure 4: Other taxes (% of revenue)

- Definition: Other taxes include employer payroll or labor taxes, taxes on property, and taxes not allocable to other categories, such as penalties for late payment or nonpayment of taxes.
- increased in Egypt

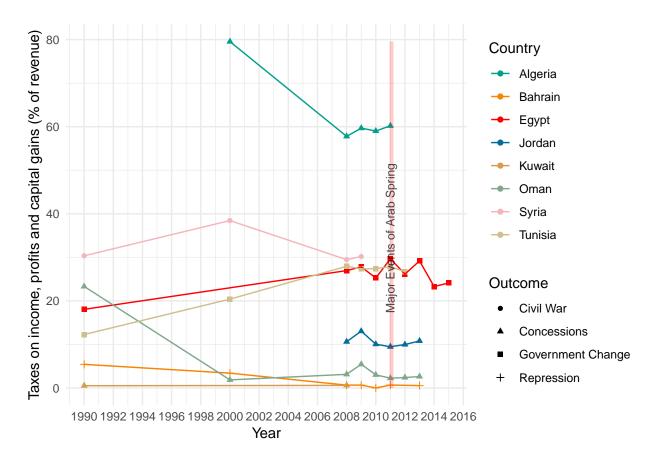


Figure 5: Taxes on income, profits and capital gains (% of revenue)

3.3 Taxes (not necessarily related to the rich / poor)

- in case of Egypt, Bahrain and Tunesia tax rate increases with political unrest compared to period before
- in case of Jordan and Morroco the tax rate declines
- not necessarily correlated with policital unrest: state could impose higher taxes due to the costs of the revolution also on the elites
- taxation that affects especially the rich population? Taxes on income, profits, and capital gains are levied on the actual or presumptive net income of individuals, on the profits of corporations and enterprises, and on capital gains, whether realized or not, on land, securities, and other assets. Intragovernmental payments are eliminated in consolidation.

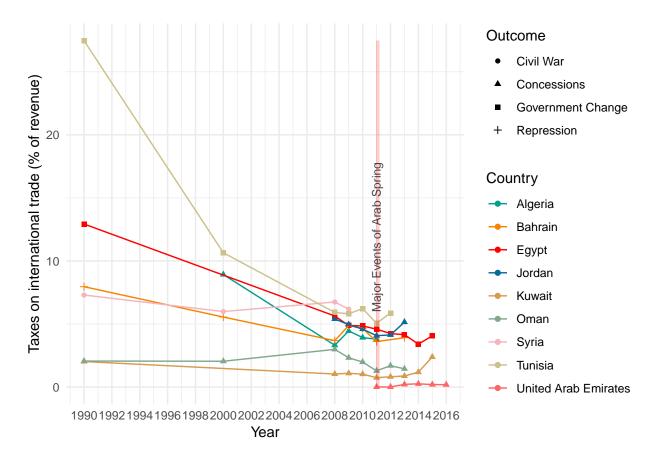


Figure 6: Taxes on international trade (% of revenue)

- Cost of revolution: Taxes on international trade increased in the subsequent years after the initial events of the Arabic Spring
- Concessions and international trade
- Definition: Customs and other import duties are all levies collected on goods that are entering the
 country or services delivered by nonresidents to residents. They include levies imposed for revenue or
 protection purposes and determined on a specific or ad valorem basis as long as they are restricted to
 imported goods or services.

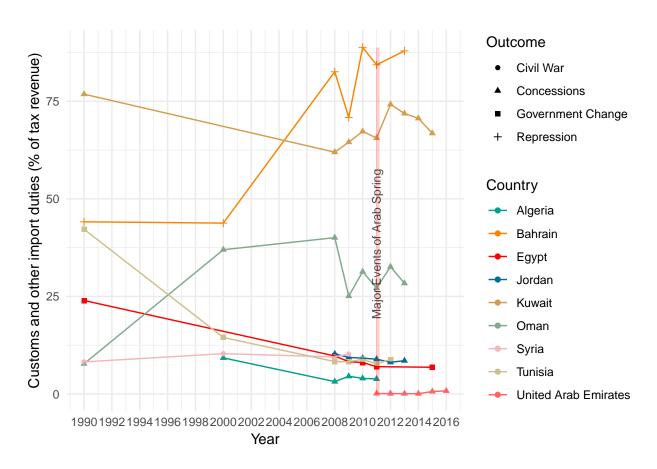


Figure 7: Customs and other import duties (% of tax revenue)

Literature

Acemoglu, Daron	and James A.	Robinson. 2	006. '	"Economic	Origins of	Dictatorship	o and	Democracy."

Land		Proteste und Forderungen im Arabischen Frühling	Regime-Reaktionen und Folgen der Proteste
Ägypten	μģ	Am 25.1.2011 einsetzende Proteste führen dazu, dass Hosni Mubarak am 11.2. als Präsident zurücktritt. Bei Par- lamentswahlen (11.2011 bis 1.2012) und Präsidentschafts- wahlen (6.2012) siegt die Muslimbruderschaft.	Im Juli 2013 putscht das Militär gegen die Muslimbruderschaft und errichtet unter General Sisi eine autoritäre Präsidialherrschaft.
Algerien	œ	Proteste gegen Wohnungsnot und gestiegene Nahrungsmittelpreise	Die Regierung hebt am 22.2.2011 den seit 19 Jahren geltenden Ausnahmezustand auf und subventioniert Grundnahrungsmittel.
Bahrain		Vor allem von der schiitischen Bevölkerungsmehrheit getragene Proteste fordern eine konstitutionelle Monarchie.	Gewaltsames Vorgehen des Regimes, am 14.3.2011 intervenieren Truppen des Golfkooperationsrats unter saudischer Führung und unterstützen die gewaltsame Niederschlagung der Proteste. Schiiten protestieren bis heute gegen ihre Diskriminierung, die sunnitische Monarchie reagiert weiterhin repressiv.
Djibouti		Proteste gegen Arbeitslosigkeit und Korruption	Kosmetische Reformen
Irak	الله اكبر	Demonstrationen von Schiiten, Sunniten und Kurden gegen Korruption, Arbeitslosigkeit und soziale Miss- stände. Seit 2012 demonstrieren Sunniten gegen ihre Diskriminierung durch die schiitisch dominierte Zentralregierung.	Die Regierung Maliki geht gewaltsam gegen sunnitische Proteste vor. Der IS gewinnt an Zulauf, intensiviert seine Terrorkampagne gegen vorwiegend schiitische Ziele und erobert 2014 weite Gebiete in Syrien und im Irak. Bis Sommer 2016 verliert er große Teile seines Herrschaftsgebiets, setzt aber seine Terroranschläge fort.
Jemen		Proteste gegen Korruption und Machtmissbrauch seit 27.1.2011	Präsident Salih reagiert gewaltsam auf Proteste, tritt erst im November 2011 zugunsten von Vizepräsident Hadi ab. Der wird im Februar 2012 für zwei Jahre zum Übergangspräsidenten gewählt, tritt danach aber nicht ab. Huthi-Milizen sowie Anhänger Salihs rebellieren und erobern im September 2014 die Hauptstadt Sanaa. Im März 2015 wiederum greift eine von Saudi-Arabien geführte Militärallianz ein, um Hadi zurück an die Macht zu bringen. Separatisten im Süden, al-Qaida und der IS profitieren vom Machtvakuum. Das Land versinkt im Bürgerkrieg.
Jordanien		Seit 7.1.2011 Proteste gegen die Regierung, aber nicht gegen den König	Regierungsumbildungen durch den König (1.2.2011 und 17.10.2011), kosmetische institutionelle Reformen
Katar		Keine öffentlichen Proteste	Der Emir erhöht die Löhne.
Kuwait		Mehrere Demonstrationen in 2011 gegen Korruption und den Ministerpräsidenten	Im November 2011 Regierungsumbildung durch den Emir
Libanon	*	Proteste gegen die konfessionalistische Machtverteilung	Während des Arabischen Frühlings ist das Land ohne Regierung, das heißt, es existiert kein wirklicher Adressat für die Proteste.
Libyen	C	Seit 17.2.2011 Proteste in verschiedenen Landesteilen	Das Regime geht mit massiver Repression dagegen vor, was zu einem bewaffneten Aufstand und – nach UN-Resolution 1973 vom 17,3-2011 – zu einer internationalen Militärintervention unter NATO-Kommando führt. Weite Teile des Landes werden von Milizen der Opposition erobert. Am 20.10.2011 Tod von Gaddafi. Der Demokratisierungsprozess stockt. Im Sommer 2016 kämpfen drei konkurrierende Regierungen und verschiedene Milizen, darunter auch der IS, um die Kontrolle unterschiedlicher Landesteile.
Marokko	*	Proteste gegen Korruption und Arbeitslosigkeit	Mohammed VI. erlaubt eine Verfassungsreform, freie Wahlen und die Stärkung der Regierung gegenüber dem König, der allerdings die wich- tigsten politischen Kompetenzen behält.
Mauretanien	*	Proteste gegen Korruption, Menschenrechtsverletzungen und Sklaverei	Minimale Zugeständnisse
Oman	*	Seit 17.1.2011 Proteste in verschiedenen Landesteilen gegen Korruption und Machmissbrauch, für eine Verbesserung der Lebensverhältnisse, aber nicht gegen den Sultan	Der Sultan erhöht die Löhne, verspricht die Schaffung neuer Arbeitsplätze, entlässt Minister und erweitert die Kompetenzen des Parlaments.
Palästinensische Gebiete		Forderungen nach einer Einheitsregierung	Bemühungen um Versöhnung bleiben erfolglos. Zweiter Gazakrieg im Juli-August 2014
Saudi-Arabien	#### ——	Lokale Proteste verschiedener Gruppen (Liberale, Frauen, Schiiten, Salafisten) fordern unterschiedliche Reformen. Keine landesweite Protestbewegung	Das Königshaus reagiert mit massiver Erhöhung der Löhne und zielgerichteter Repression, insbesondere gegen Schiiten und Liberale.
Syrien	* *	Seit dem 18.3.2011 weiten sich lokale Proteste angesichts massiver staatlicher Repression zu landesweiten Protes- ten aus.	Regimekräfte, abgespaltene Armeeteile, lokale und ausländische Kämpfer führen seit Sommer 2011 einen Bürgerkrieg mit massiver externer Betei- ligung (Iran und Russland direkt; USA, Türkei, Saudi-Arabien, Katar und andere indirekt). Mehr als die Hälfte der Bevölkerung ist auf der Flucht, über 300 000 Tote.
Tunesien	®	Am 17.12.2010 beginnt mit landesweiten Protesten der Arabische Frühling.	Präsident Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali tritt zurück und verlässt am 14.1.2011 das Land. Eine neue Verfassung wird erarbeitet, es kommt zu demokratischen Parlamentswahlen und einer Machtteilung zwischen säkularen Parteien und gemäßigten Islamisten. Salafisten und Dschihadisten bedrohen die friedliche Transformation.
Vereinigte Ara- bische Emirate (VAE)		Keine öffentlichen Proteste	Lohnerhöhungen und Schaffung neuer Arbeitsplätze im öffentlichen Sektor

I hereby declare that the work in this term paper

Economic Origins and Outcomes of the Arab Spring

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Friedrichshafen, 1st January 2019