



# Securitization of spaces in the aftermath of the Arab Spring

A CHALLENGE OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

# Securitization of spaces

- ▶ State (security) challenged by non-state actors;
- ▶ Increased security measures, capacities and legal provisions to enhance security of the state;
- ▶ Control of spaces to reduce vulnerabilities (e.g. Morocco);
- ▶ Increased securitization after each of the 4 waves of terrorism;
- ▶ Strong securitization wave since 9-11;
- ▶ Impact higher when relation between state and citizen is disturbed/tensed;
- ▶ Horizontal Social Contract vs Vertical Social Contract.

# Spaces

- ▶ Public spaces;
- ▶ Political space;
- ▶ Cyber space;
- ▶ Economic space (exclusivity, de-banking; know your client);
- ▶ Operational space for non-state actors, e.g. Conflict Resolution;
- ▶ Humanitarian space;
- ▶ Freedom of expression/press;
- ▶ Criminalising idea's, thought control.

# Freedom House report 2017

- ▶ 67 countries net decline in freedom of expression and space;
- ▶ 37 gains;
- ▶ 11th consecutive year that declines outnumber the gains;
- ▶ Declines not only in autocratic or undemocratic states;
- ▶ Nearly one-quarter of the countries registering declines in 2016 were in Europe.

# Reduction of political space, some examples:

- ▶ Kenya (2014/15) deregistration of 500 ('14) plus 959 ('15)CSO's;
- ▶ Pakistan (2017) deregistration of 3773 CSO's;
- ▶ Kazakhstan (2015) legal powers to regulate funding of CSO's;
- ▶ Russia (2012) foreign-funded CSO's are required to register as "foreign agents";
- ▶ Egypt, Somalia, Panama, Laos, Zimbabwe, India, UK, US.....

# Relevant spaces of an Arab spring

## Helpful

- ▶ Cyber
  - ▶ Tipping point
- ▶ Physical spaces
  - ▶ City squares

## Obstacles/Exclusion

- ▶ Political
  - ▶ Limited/ to mosques
- ▶ Economic
  - ▶ Limited to in-groups/military
  - ▶ Fear for islamists and their (unclear) economic agenda.

# Economic space limited even before

- ▶ Egypt
  - ▶ Mubarak knitted his own business architecture
  - ▶ Based on business connections of Mubarak's son Gamal, (The Family)
  - ▶ Competing with Military
- ▶ Tunisia
  - ▶ More than half of Tunisia's commercial elites were personally related to Ben Ali

# Economic Space

- ▶ Algeria
  - ▶ Capture of hydrocarbon wealth by le Pouvoir,
  - ▶ An opaque body of generals, politicians and politically-connected businessmen
- ▶ Libya
  - ▶ Gaddafi family appropriated oil income
  - ▶ Libyan reforms remained limited to the opening of the hydrocarbons sector to foreign investment



# Spaces needed for economic growth

- ▶ Access
  - ▶ Inclusiveness
  - ▶ Economic space
- ▶ Political space/democratic space plus institutional oversight
  - ▶ Transparency
  - ▶ Predictability
  - ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Operational space
  - ▶ Infrastructure
  - ▶ Innovation

# Has the situation improved? Securitization since the Arab spring

- ▶ Counter revolutions;
- ▶ Civil war or protracted crisis in Yemen, Syria, Libya;
- ▶ Some (few) positive examples;
- ▶ Increased State security concerns;
- ▶ Mostly worrisome and following international trends.

# Tunisia

- ▶ Improvement of civil liberties
- ▶ Investment code
- ▶ Supreme Judicial Council
- ▶ Gender parity law

# Egypt

- ▶ Restrictions on NGO's and freedom of speech
- ▶ Sectarian violence against Christians
- ▶ Regeni (torture)
- ▶ Violent reactions towards demonstrators
- ▶ Parliament not independent
- ▶ Corruption and mismanagement of govt services

# Algeria

- ▶ Restrictions on freedom of assembly
- ▶ Aggressive measures to stop immigration
- ▶ More control of media
  - ▶ Issad Rebrab prevented from buying KBC Television
  - ▶ KBC journalists prison sentences
  - ▶ Mohammed Tamalt died in December after hunger strike.

# Conclusion

- ▶ Securitization and reduction of spaces is a global trend;
- ▶ MENA is (in general terms) no exception;
- ▶ State security does not guarantee inclusive economic development;
- ▶ It may help secure the state owned/centred economic interests;
- ▶ It may contribute to exclusion and alienation;
- ▶ Especially where social contract is horizontal;
- ▶ One of the drivers for radicalisation and recruitment into violent organisations.