

NOREF Report

Arab Spring, Turkish “Summer”? The trajectory of a pro-Western “moderate Islam”¹

Kees van der Pijl

Executive summary

The “moderate Islam” that has developed in Turkey could play a role in shaping the outcome of the Arab revolt that began in 2011. The modern Turkish state established by Atatürk after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire had to find ways to integrate Islam politically. Turkey was a late-industrialising country and the Islamic political current tended to have an anti-Western, anti-liberal profile on this account. Two tendencies within Turkish political Islam are distinguished: one connecting religion to economic nationalism, the other primarily cultural and willing to accommodate to neoliberalism. The 1980 military

coup geared the country to neoliberalism and cleared the way for this second tendency to rise to power through the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of R.T. Erdoğan. For the West and the Gulf Arab states the export of this model to the Arab countries destabilised in the popular revolt would amount to a very favourable outcome. Gulf Arab capital was already involved in the opening up of state-controlled Arab economies, including Syria. Although the situation is still in flux, by following the Turkish model Muslim Brotherhood governments could potentially embrace political loyalty to the West and neoliberal capitalism.

Kees van der Pijl is a fellow of the Centre for Global Political Economy and professor emeritus in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex. His publications include *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class* (new edition 2012, first published 1984), *Transnational Classes and International Relations* (1998), *Global Rivalries from the Cold War to Iraq* (2006), *Nomads, Empires, States* (2007) and *The Foreign Encounter in Myth and Religion* (2010).

¹ This report is based on the introductory notes for the Turkish translation of K. van der Pijl, *Global Rivalries from the Cold War to Iraq*, London, Pluto, and New Delhi, Sage Vistaar, 2006

The Arab revolt that was ignited in December 2010 by the self-immolation of a Tunisian university graduate in protest over the confiscation of his vegetable stall has triggered a series of attempts by the U.S. and European Union (EU) to regain their influence over the countries affected after initial steps to shore up the regimes destabilised by the demonstrations had failed. Thus French foreign minister Michèle Alliot-Marie at first offered the embattled Tunisian president, Zine Ben Ali, a contingent of French riot police to help suppress popular discontent, while the Pentagon's direct telephone link to the Egyptian military (the latter is subsidised by the U.S. at a rate of \$1.3 billion a year since 1979, second only to Washington's annual subsidy to Israel), was not disconnected at any point during the uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak.²

Indeed, as popular uprisings spread to Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Israeli-occupied Palestine, Libya and Syria, the U.S. and its NATO partners have been primarily concerned with maintaining control over a region where the geopolitical and economic stakes are vital to the West's global pre-eminence. The NATO campaign against Libya, launched under the auspices of a UN Security Council resolution mandating the imposition of a no-fly zone to protect the civilian population of Benghazi against air attack, clearly revealed this overriding interest. Not only did it over-interpret the resolution as a mandate for regime change, thus blocking further co-operation in the Security Council with Russia and China (which by abstaining had allowed the resolution to be adopted), but it also applied the policy of NATO air support for Islamist insurrection tried out in Kosovo in 1999 to the Middle East, with the effect of militarising what otherwise might have become a real revolution.

The present report links the Arab revolt to the crystallisation of a "moderate" Islamic alternative in Turkey. The history of this alternative, combining a religious-cultural profile with neoliberal capitalist economics and a pro-Western stance, illustrates its potential to fill the void left by the collapse of the dictatorships in the Middle East.

The Arab Spring in historical perspective

The NATO intervention in Libya served to dispossess the ruling Qaddafi clan, but also destroyed the unity of the country, while destabilising the southern frontier of the Sahara. Reversing the process of welding a homogeneous citizenry out of extended-family, tribal and regional community structures, Libya today is following the examples of Iraq and Afghanistan as it slowly descends back into a pre-modern, fragmented structure. This is not to idealise Qaddafi's Libya or the political systems of societies fracturing in the wake of its break-up, such as Mali. But then, ever since the rule of Oliver Cromwell during the Commonwealth period in mid-17th-century England, the transition to a modern state has relied on dictatorial means. Thomas Hobbes, who provided the rationale for Cromwell's project in the *Leviathan* of 1651, argued that whoever is in authority enjoys "an unlimited right to determine the means to achieve those ends, without conditions and without interference from his subjects".³

The Qaddafis and Saddams of the Middle East, having won power in petit bourgeois officer revolutions, for all their brutality were the executors of such a transition too. In principle, their pre-modern societies were to be transformed into nation states, with a homogeneous citizenry as a result.⁴ However, as previous history has shown, the advantage England obtained by being the first society to cross this threshold and the ensuing political-economic primacy it won in its contest with rival powers profoundly affected subsequent passages to political modernity. Beginning with 17th-century France, repeating the Hobbesian transformation while a modern and more powerful formation is seeking to expand and gain control has produced results very different from the original. As the French example and subsequently the Prussian-German, Japanese, Russian-Soviet and Chinese varieties of the same process were

3 Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Liberty and Property: A Social History of Western Political Thought from Renaissance to Enlightenment*, London, Verso, 2012, p. 254.

4 For informed analysis of Middle Eastern state formation, see Isam al-Khafaji, *Tormented Births: Passages to Modernity in Europe and the Middle East*, London, IB Tauris, 2004 and Nazih N. Ayubi, *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, London, IB Tauris, 2009.

2 See K. van der Pijl, "Arab revolts and nation-state crisis", *New Left Review*, 2nd series, vol 70, 2011, pp. 27-28.

to attest (despite all their further differences), the Hobbesian transition in these countries has had the effect of congealing the modernising force into a more or less permanent, authoritarian state class.

A state class is a grouping that owes its power primarily to its hold on the state apparatus. In the liberal, English-speaking West, which took shape in the epoch between the English Civil War and the American secession that followed it a century later, a different class structure obtained. Once the Hobbesian phase had transpired and an effective state power had been established, the social-economic power of a ruling class was differentiated from the political role of a governing class. Owing to its hereditary social and economic privileges, the ruling class in such a setting can afford to delegate the day-to-day running of public affairs to a professional governing stratum, which, among other things, must gain popular support to function. In the same way, the ruling class mandates a managerial cadre with running capitalist enterprises. Late-modernising states, however, have historically struggled to get to this stage. Because they lack the social space for exchanging one fraction of a governing class for another, power transitions in societies ruled/governed by state classes have been at least opaque, but more often tumultuous, if not actually revolutionary.⁵

From the perspective of the English-speaking West and the societies modelled after it, notably the current EU, rule by a state class is by definition “undemocratic”. This is because of the stunted, fraudulent or absent political procedures for changing the government. Because of the peculiar amnesia about their own history, notably the ethnic cleansing and mass killing of natives on which English-speaking settlement in North America and Australasia was premised, the prevailing consensus in the West tends to be cavalier about the difficulties involved in the transition to a state with a politically homogenised civil society. Hence U.S.- and Western-sponsored “nation-building” – first to gain control of the process of decolonisation after the Second World War and today as part of a project of liberal

global governance – is a policy bound to fail. It remains based on the mistaken assumption that the “assimilationist history of the United States is evidence that the basic identity of a people can be rather easily transferred from the ethnic group to a larger grouping coterminous with the state”.⁶ Yet even apart from the distorting effects of Western capitalism trying to gain access, many late-modernising societies are burdened with a fragmented social (ethno-linguistic or religious) basis inherited from an imperial past, whether the empire was their own (as in Russia or China) or a foreign colonial one.

The Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003 is only the most recent example of the debacle a nation-building exercise inevitably leads to. Once its official mission – to disarm Saddam Hussein of his supposed weapons of mass destruction – was turned midway into a regime change and “democracy promotion” exercise, the collapse of the Baath Party dictatorship revealed a society fragmenting again along its pre-modern dividing lines between clans and tribes, Shia and Sunni Muslims, and Arabs and Kurds. Hence delivering Saddam into the hands of his domestic opponents to be executed, very much as Qaddafi would be later, did not usher in a “democratic process”, but merely destroyed the state. Loyalties, including those expressed in election results, will cut across sectarian and community dividing lines only once the transformation into a political citizenry has taken hold. This is a protracted process under even the most favourable circumstances.

The outbreak of revolutions in late-modernising societies, or as I call them, *contender states*, owes a lot to their failure to digest the pressures exerted by the more advanced West. The French and Russian Revolutions are cases in point. Both took place in societies that could no longer sustain the effort of meeting the standards set by a global political economy organised economically, politically and militarily around Britain and later Anglo-America. Napoleon then resumed the contender challenge to British liberalism by modernising the French state and Stalin did the same in the contest with Atlantic imperialism. I need not highlight how in doing so they both destroyed the humanistic and democratising

⁵ I have elaborated this argument in a range of writings, notably *Transnational Classes and International Relations*, London, Routledge, 1998 and *Global Rivalries from the Cold War to Iraq*, 2006.

⁶ Walker Connor, “Nation-building or nation-destroying?”, *World Politics*, vol 24, no. 3, 1972, p. 344.

elements of the revolutions that they hijacked. But there have equally been attempts to avoid the head-on collision with the Western bloc, as in the Chinese turn to market practices after 1979 or the revolution from above by which sections of the Soviet state class, responding to popular discontent and outside pressure alike, privatised their hold on power and set themselves up as private capitalists.⁷

The demise of the state-socialist bloc has also worked to destabilise the state classes in Third World formations that had been dependent on it. In combination with the removal of most shades of Marxist(-inspired) analysis of capitalism and imperialism from the political debate, this has further entailed attempts by state classes everywhere to try and adjust the basis of their relative power vis-à-vis both their own populations and the West. It is often during this process that a state class loses control altogether, because the attempt to change course will inevitably bring to light the contradictions of a previous policy and various other underlying problems.

Thus in the Arab Middle East and North Africa, the exhaustion of the natural foundations of life characterising the contemporary phase of global capitalism has entailed diminishing harvests and a crisis of the freshwater supply.⁸ In addition, the financial crisis that hit the Atlantic economy in 2007 and terminated the ten-year bull run of neoliberal, speculative enrichment reverberated powerfully in the region. It has exacerbated the underlying disparities between, on the one hand, the regional centres of capital accumulation in the Gulf Arab states (Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the smaller principalities, together constituting the Gulf Co-operation Council, or GCC) and, in a very different position of course, Israel; and, on the other, the poorer countries with no oil income or special status as Western outposts.

After 2000 the expansion of the world economy enhanced the centrality of the GCC states in two ways. As Adam Hanieh writes, "First, the Gulf's commodity exports were essential to facilitating the new patterns of internationalization signified by the expansion of Asian manufacturing.

Second, financial flows from the Gulf to US markets were critical to sustaining the uneven, debt-based consumption that characterized the post-2000 period."⁹ Meeting China's astronomical energy requirements, but working at home with dispensable migrant labour absolved the owners of capital in and around the GCC princely courts from having to seek domestic class compromises and develop their countries' internal markets. Given the effective disenfranchisement of their populations, the Arab monarchies and sheikdoms, armed to the teeth by the West with the latest weaponry, are not subject to popular moods that might force them to undertake foreign policy adventures not approved by Washington or London. This alone removes them from any potential coalition against the Israeli occupation of Palestine. But then, according to a Clinton administration National Security Council official, their dependence on U.S. arms deliveries has also deprived them of any effective autonomy to act militarily outside their own territories.¹⁰

Thus, as a rentier sub-imperialism, the Gulf states have expanded in the Middle East through direct investment as the state classes of the region have been selectively opening up to hold their own in the neoliberal capitalist world economy. EU figures cited by Hanieh show that, overall, investment project deals in the Mediterranean region (defined as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey) saw Gulf investors involved in 38% of the total value of projects announced in the 2003-06 period (with Europe accounting for 34% and the U.S./Canada for 13%). Gulf capital notably targets the Mashreq countries – Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine and Syria – to which 60% of all Gulf Arab investments were directed in the same period.¹¹

The recipient state classes have cautiously embraced neoliberalism, but without giving up their own family and clan ties backed up

⁷ David M. Kotz with Fred Weir, *Revolution from Above: The Demise of the Soviet System*, London, Routledge, 1997.

⁸ Lester Brown in *The Guardian*, April 23rd 2011.

⁹ Adam Hanieh, "Finance, oil and the Arab uprisings: the global crisis and the Gulf states", in L. Panitch, G. Albo & V. Chibber, eds, *Socialist Register 2012*, London, Merlin Press, 2011, p. 7.

¹⁰ Cited in Alan Cafruny & Timothy Lehmann, "Over the horizon? The United States and Iraq", *New Left Review*, 2nd series, vol 73, 2012, pp. 6-7.

¹¹ Adam Hanieh, *Capitalism and Class in the Gulf Arab States*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 151.

by a strong state. In a sense, the vegetable stall incident in Tunisia encapsulates the core contradictions here: unemployment and poverty, bureaucratic heavy-handedness and repression, and a narrow elite within the state class (the extended Ben Ali family) simultaneously enriching itself on the back of the privatisation process along with EU capital.¹² In Syria, Bashar al-Assad, who took over the reins from his father in 2000, likewise presided over neoliberal economic reforms such as the establishment of private banks and insurance companies in 2004, as well the opening of a stock exchange five years later, while simultaneously opening up the telecommunications sector, trade with Turkey and tourism. But drought and food shortages in combination with growing unemployment and inequality undermined these measures and prevented them from gaining broader public support, while the president's family and entourage were cashing in on new business opportunities – as in the case of the president's cousin, Rami Makhlouf, who controls one of the new mobile phone companies.¹³

The revolts against Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt and the Assad clan (to name the most obvious examples) were therefore determined to a considerable extent by the hardships imposed on the population and the contrast with the enrichment of core parts of the state class. Hence the popular movement that became the Arab Spring was not just directed against dictatorship. It more particularly challenged the neoliberal turn of state classes opening up to Gulf and other foreign capital, cashing in while keeping their own populations under a tight lid. There was even an undertow of resisting neoliberal capitalism as such, manifested in workers' strikes in Egypt and elsewhere. "The logic of these struggles", writes Hanieh, "has raised the significance of wider unity in the Middle East, reversing the colonially-driven fragmentation of nation-states that only acts to

reinforce the massively uneven development of the region."¹⁴

However, the regional pivots of transnational capital, the Gulf Arab states, have not so far been forced to defend their interests directly. Like the monarchies of Morocco and Jordan, they have been able largely to contain the spread of the Arab revolt. No Western calls for "free and fair elections" here: in Bahrain, a Saudi military incursion served to beef up the ruling Sunni minority in the face of a popular movement that might jeopardise the naval base that is home to the U.S. Fifth Fleet poised against Iran. And if the Saudis themselves were given the vote, Zbigniew Brzezinski asked a BBC radio interviewer in February 2011 (before the U.S. assassination raid into Pakistan), "would you really be sure they would not elect Osama bin Laden?" Of course, Western governments would not mind a modicum of relaxation, but not too much; in the words of Elliott Abrams, a State Department official in several Republican administrations, "constitutional monarchy is a form of democracy".¹⁵

The autocracies of the Gulf have also helped provide the political-ideological component of the response to the Arab Spring. While the U.S. and – through NATO – the main European states provided air support in Libya, the forces on the ground included columns of Salafi Islamic fighters, arms from Qatar and favourable press coverage from the latter's Al Jazeera news channel. Even more pronounced in the absence of a direct Western military intervention, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, along with Turkey, have become involved in supporting rebel militias fighting against the Baath regime and its army in Syria. This has greatly contributed to turning the movement for democracy in that country into a sectarian conflict, given Syria's fractious religious make-up and contiguity with Iraq. Across the Syrian-Iraqi border a steady flow of Salafi jihadists, including actual al-Qaeda fighters heeding the call of their leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, to join the fight against Assad, have poured into Syria.

For the West and Israel, taking out the Assad regime would further isolate Iran, the obvious next in line for violent regime change; just as for

12 Tunisia's economic links to Europe notably involve tourism (7% of gross domestic product, employing 400,000 people) and textiles (50% of total exports, with 250,000 workers). In 2006 the United Colours of Benetton were hoisted over the town of Kasserin in one of the many capital investments from the EU in a country that routinely used the interrogation technique of "roasted chicken", i.e. the burning of genitals. See *Le Monde*, special section, "Tunisie – le sursaut d'une nation", January 20th 2011.

13 Patrick Seale, "Les limites d'une posture anti-impérialiste: fatal aveuglement de la famille al-Assad en Syrie", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 2011.

14 Hanieh, "Finance, oil, and the Arab uprisings", 2012, pp. 18-19.

15 Cited in *International Herald Tribune*, February 26th-27th 2011.

that country, as well as Russia and China, the interventionist caravan is coming a bit too close for comfort. But the undiluted Salafi Islamic project of Gulf Arab provenance cannot be expected to fill the ideological void left by the collapse of the Hobbesian states in the Middle East. Democratic aspirations have played too important a role to be stifled altogether and their previous history as secular states cannot be rolled back easily either. It is here that Turkey’s Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AKP) project of a “moderate Islam” has come to occupy the centre ground as the political component of a new political-economic formula. By combining neoliberal economics and a pro-Western stance with an Islamic political culture, the AKP model has obvious relevance for a new Middle East.

Origins and evolution of the “Turkish model”

All nation-state formation rests on the attempt to exteriorise other forms of foreignness and the “the forceful silencing of alternative forms of socio-political belonging”.¹⁶ Turkey is no exception here. Yet Islam has slowly resurfaced politically to the point where today its role is perhaps best compared to post-1945 Christian Democracy in Western Europe, which equally served to facilitate capitalist development by a compensating political aesthetics deployed primarily against the secular Left. My argument here is that throughout its history, modern Turkey has experimented with finding a political space for Islam in this sense and today this is turning out to be highly relevant for the wider Middle East.

At the time of the creation of the modern Turkish state in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the nationalist military around Atatürk saw religion at best as a bulwark against Marxism and other foreign ideologies. Otherwise they relegated it to the private sphere. Only after the Second World War, when the need arose to present the country as a worthy member of the Western coalition against

the Soviet Union, was a multiparty system introduced that could potentially accommodate an Islamic constituency too. On the day he signed the U.S.-Turkish Aid Agreement of 1947, İsmet İnönü, Atatürk’s successor as president, also granted a licence to the Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti or DP) of Adnan Menderes. The DP strove to integrate Islamic culture into the secular state and actually became the governing party in 1950. In the ensuing decade, in line with the temporary contraction of U.S. influence in Europe, Menderes pursued an import substitution industrialisation policy while seeking closer ties with Muslim countries. The DP’s electoral basis certainly increased when Anatolian agriculture was thrown into a crisis as a result of U.S. grain dumping in the second half of the decade. The resulting migration of people to the cities to find work also transplanted a landed culture in which Islam played a much greater role.¹⁷

The remit of the Turkish armed forces, the second largest in NATO, was of course to suppress the Left and keep Soviet influence at bay, but they also set the limits of Islamic presence in Turkish politics. Functioning as a “deep state” (a term coined in Turkey), the national security complex included a CIA-co-ordinated underground army, the “Counter-Guerrilla” organised by the ultra-nationalist Alparslan Türkeş and operating in a NATO framework. In 1960 it intervened for the first time, targeting Menderes. The DP prime minister and four others were hanged, while scores of other politicians were given harsh prison sentences. Yet when power was returned to a civilian government under a new constitution, the number of parties represented in the new bicameral parliament actually increased.¹⁸

17 Yıldız Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State*, London, IB Tauris, 2005, pp. 89-92.

18 Dankwart A. Rustow, “Turkey: the modernity of tradition”, in L.W. Pye & S. Verba, eds, *Political Culture and Political Development*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, pp. 187, 192. The underground army did not accept the new constitution. After another coup attempt in 1963 failed, however, Türkeş transformed the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi or MHP) into an outright fascist party, with the Grey Wolves (Bozkurt) as a youth organisation committed to fighting the Left – for which the NATO underground army remained available too (Daniele Ganser, *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe*, London, Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 227-28; Frank Bovenkerk & Yücel Yeşilgöz, *De maffia van Turkije*, Amsterdam, Meulenhoff-Kritak, 1998, p. 231).

16 Renk Özdemir, “Population exchanges of the Balkans and Asia Minor at the *fin de siècle*: the imposition of political subjectivities in the modern world order”, in G.K. Bhambra & R. Shilliam, eds, *Silencing Human Rights: Critical Engagements with a Contested Project*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 150.

The army/“deep state” structure intervened twice more to impose military rule – in 1971 and 1980, primarily against the Left. Dealing with the presence of Islam in Turkish politics increasingly shifted to the Constitutional Court, which closed down pro-Islamic parties in 1971, 1980, 1983 and 2001. In hindsight, the advance of political Islam almost looks like a process of repeated experimentation, time and again interrupted until a version acceptable not just to the Turkish military, but also to the Atlantic ruling class (which historically has included a prominent Turkish grouping concentrated in Istanbul), could be allowed in. Indeed, over almost the entire post-war period Turkish political Islam had a distinct anti-liberal, anti-Western contender profile (epitomised in the figure of N. Erdogan); only after the turn of the century has this been replaced by a neoliberal orientation compatible with the interests of transnational capital and the global pre-eminence of the liberal West, and embodied in the AKP. This strand today offers itself to the wider Middle East as an option for the future – in the Syrian civil war directly, by taking sides against the Baath regime.

The two main strands that seem to have been at play in the evolution of Turkish political Islam (and which have been entwined and overlapping rather than squarely opposed to each other) can be traced to two currents among Islamic scholarship: the cultural critique of Western society by Said Nursi and the tendency of the Naqshbandi sheikh M.Z. Kotku associated with the import substitution industrialisation strategy. Nursi’s denunciation of the Western nation state as resting on “racism and negative nationalism” takes further ideas developed earlier by al-Afghani and others.¹⁹ Nursi laid the groundwork for the Nurcu Cemaati, of which the Fethullah Gülen movement, one of the civil society components of the AKP project, is an outgrowth. In the AKP’s “neo-Ottomanism” (a contested term, of course) the substitution of Turkish nationalism by a regional perspective has facilitated a rapprochement with the Arab world and Islam generally. The promise of a reconciliation with the Kurdish minority, a prospect meanwhile derailed by the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq

and the disintegration of that country, was one aspect of the attempt to move beyond secular nationalism by including Islam.

Kotku’s Islamic scholarship, on the other hand, was associated with economic nationalism and import substitution, all linked to a contender position. He advocated building model Islamic factories; in the 1960s his ideas influenced the State Planning Organisation. Erdogan, the Islamist leader, and Turgut Özal, the future prime minister, were members of Kotku’s inner circle.²⁰ Erdogan’s ideas about the state’s role in managing morality and keeping the Western way of life at arm’s length, expounded in his book *Millî Görüş* of 1975, echo Kotku’s asceticism and his concern with the moral corruption generated by capitalism.²¹

Erdogan’s appointment as head of the Turkish Union of Chambers (of commerce) in 1968 signalled the increased weight of the small and medium-sized businesses in Anatolia susceptible to the ideas originally expounded by Kotku. This prompted the large private companies and commercial groups based in the Istanbul region to organise themselves separately to form the Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (TUSIAD) three years later. They had flourished under the auspices of the strong state, but were committed to its secular, Atlantic orientation. Certainly, V. Koç, of the famous business dynasty, initially tried to build an alliance with the Erdogan forces on the basis of an enhanced state role; but as import substitution was beginning to fail and class struggles intensified amid a deepening social crisis, the TUSIAD mainstream switched to propagating a free trade policy and a confrontation with the working class.²²

Erdogan’s National Order Party (Millî Nizam Partisi) was outlawed simultaneously with the military coup of 1971. Within a year, however, he reconstituted it as the National Salvation Party (Millî Selâmet Partisi or MSP), on the basis of a compromise between the Naqshbandi and one faction of the Nurcu Cemaati (the followers of Said Nursi). What unified the two Islamic currents

19 Quoted in Yıldız Atasoy, “Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project: competing claims for modernity”, *Social Compass*, vol 44, no. 1, 1997, p. 88. On al-Afghani’s rejection of the Western nation state, see K. van der Pijl, *The Foreign Encounter in Myth and Religion*, Vol. II of *Modes of Foreign Relations and Political Economy*, London, Pluto Press, 2010, p. 209.

20 Atasoy, “Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project”, 1997, p. 91; Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy*, 2005, p. 82.

21 Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy*, 2005, pp. 125-26.

22 Nilgün Önder, “Integrating with the global market: the state and the crisis of political representation: Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s”, *International Journal of Political Economy*, vol 28, no. 2, 1998, p. 45.

was the modernism expounded by the MSP; what gained it the support of Anatolian industrialists and small and medium-sized commercial groups was the fact that they were being discriminated against in the allocation of state funds. Yet the Kotku-Erbakan tendency was still committed to a contender strategy under Islamic auspices, while the followers of Nursi, notably the Gülen Community Movement of Fethullah Gülen (known as the Fethullahcilar), pursued a primarily cultural strategy, avoiding express Islamism also to steer clear of a clash with the Kemalist forces – again heralding the compromise underpinning the AKP later.²³

When the Left grew stronger in the 1970s the Counter-Guerrilla was involved in a range of terror operations. The strategy of tension was comparable to Italy's that ended with the assassination of the architect of the "Historic Compromise" with the communists, Aldo Moro. In Turkey the 1977 bloodbath targeting a May Day demonstration in Istanbul's Taksim Square, leaving 38 dead and hundreds of wounded, also ranks among the worst atrocities of the NATO underground.²⁴ A sustained press campaign against the government of Bülent Ecevit following a high-level TUSIAD visit to the U.S. in late 1978 signalled that the Turkish capitalist mainstream was abandoning class compromise and honing in on the neoliberal trend that was ascendant in the West.²⁵

U.S. geopolitical strategy by that time was aimed at building a ring of Islamic formations around the southern republics of the Soviet Union, including support for the armed opposition fighting the pro-

Soviet regime in Afghanistan.²⁶ Turkey, however, far from aligning itself with the encirclement of the Soviet Union, had actually been moving closer to Moscow for some time: "By the end of the 1970s ... [Turkey] had become one of the largest recipients of Soviet economic aid outside the Warsaw Pact bloc."²⁷ For the liberal West, the chief enemy throughout its modern history has been the secular Left. After the Iranian revolution of 1979 the U.S. even supplied the Islamic Republic with intelligence to destroy its communist party, while Iraq under Saddam Hussein was encouraged to attack its Shia neighbour.²⁸ In Turkey, it was the military coup of September 1980 that cleared the way for a full-scale attack on the working class and a fundamental repositioning of the country in the regional balance.

Western concern that Turkey might drift out of control had been growing for some time, but the events of 1979 made it a priority issue. As President Carter later recalled, "after the [Soviet] intervention in Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Iranian monarchy, the movement for stabilisation in Turkey came as a relief to us". His national security adviser, Brzezinski, felt at the time that the best solution for Turkey was to follow the Brazilian example and establish a military regime.²⁹ Executed under cover of a NATO exercise code-named Anvil Express, the 1980 coup aimed at consolidating the neoliberal turn made late the previous year by the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi or JP) minority government, but which had run into powerful working-class opposition. The junta, however, immediately declared its support for the opening of the Turkish economy.³⁰

23 Atasoy, "Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project", 1997, p. 92; Yıldız Atasoy, "The Islamic ethic and the spirit of Turkish capitalism today", in L. Panitch & C. Leys, eds, *The Socialist Register 2008*, London, Merlin Press, 2008, p. 130.

24 Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies*, 2005, p. 236; Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy*, 2005, p. 120. On the strategy of tension in Italy, see Van der Pijl, *Global Rivalries from the Cold War to Iraq*, 2006, chap. 5.

25 Önder, "Integrating with the global market", 1998, pp. 76-77, notes 1 & 2.

26 Pınar Bedirhanoğlu, "Restrukturierung des türkischen staates im kontext der neoliberalen globalisierung", in Ilker Ataç, Bülent Küçük & Ulaş Şener, eds, *Perspektiven auf die Türkei: Gesellschaftliche Dis-Kontinuitäten im Prozess der Europäisierung*, trans. M. Willenbücher, Münster, Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2008, p. 116. President Carter signed off U.S. support for the Afghan mujahideen in July 1979 on the recommendation of his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who believed that this would provoke a Soviet intervention, which would in turn bleed the Soviet Union to death. Cf. Brzezinski's notorious interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 15th-21st 1998, p. 76.

27 Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy*, 2005, p. 131.

28 Dilip Hiro, *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*, New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 71.

29 Cited in Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies*, 2005, p. 239.

30 Önder, "Integrating with the global market", 1998, pp. 47-49.

From the perspective of NATO, bolstering Turkey against both the Soviet Union and Iran was an equally urgent need. Yet the Turkish Islamists, "moderate" enough in many respects, still stuck to Erbakan's contender line and did not fit into the "moderate Sunni Islamic bloc" the U.S. had encouraged Saudi Arabia to help create in the region.³¹ Initially supporting the JP government without entering it, Erbakan's MSP had even joined the opposition against the neoliberal reforms by accusing the JP of surrendering to Western pressure to liberalise.³² So when the military coup broke the deadlock, power could still not be placed in the hands of the Islamists. Erbakan's views on state regulation of consumption and prioritising heavy industrialisation, his dismissal of the Istanbul-based Atlanticist bourgeoisie as a "comprador-Masonic minority" and his proposals for a Muslim common market at arm's length from the EU robbed him of any chance to be accepted by the West at this critical juncture.³³

Instead the process of fine-tuning began, which, covered by the aforementioned Constitutional Court rulings (1980, 1983, 2001), in hindsight can be seen to have worked to eliminate the Erbakan tendency within Turkey's political Islam and eventually produced the switch to the AKP. The process of Islamist party formation that began with the National Order Party (1970-71), the MSP (1972-80), the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi or RP, 1983-98), and the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi or FP, 1997-2001) was led by Erbakan throughout. It was in the wake of the banning of the FP that the Islamist lineage split into the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, led from behind the scenes by Erbakan again) and the AKP of R.T. Erdoğan.

In the intervening decades Turkish society and its state were subjected to a protracted shock therapy that completely changed the political-economic order, removing the vestiges of the contender posture. All political parties were dissolved, the trade union federation DISK was outlawed and a ferocious repression against the Left was unleashed. From 1980 to 1983 the military enacted 535 laws and 91 decree laws on top of a new Constitution, Electoral Law and

Political Parties' Law, all of them highly restrictive and effectively placing every aspect of social life under surveillance. Martial law and emergency rule provisions were in place should even these draconian measures not prove sufficient. The 1980s worked to shape a new political system from which a range of established politicians and their parties were excluded to the point where many of them were in fact forgotten. Stringent requirements for parliamentary representation favoured larger formations consolidating themselves in the meantime.³⁴

The first of these was the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi or ANAP) led by Turgut Özal, mentioned earlier as one of Kotku's inner circle, but meanwhile converted to neoliberalism (as undersecretary of the JP prime minister he had drafted the ANAP's economic programme). Through a "managed" election the ANAP was allowed to take the country onto a civilian-governed path again in 1983, a limited democracy that (confirmed by real elections in 1987) ruled the country under a consistent neoliberal programme until late 1991. The ANAP, although not an Islamist party, articulated nationalism and neoliberalism with Islamic elements, raising a Turkish-Islamic synthesis to the status of official ideology. In the words of Yıldız Atasoy, "Following the 1980 military coup, it was the decision of civilian and military bureaucrats to restructure state organs and institutionalize neoliberal policies in Turkey while promoting Islam as a panacea to contain the Left". The result was a depoliticised society under a repressive state favouring the harsh exploitation of labour.³⁵

While the Atlantic regulatory and military intelligence infrastructure guided the extermination of the Left and the restructuring of economic

31 Atasoy, "Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project", 1997, p. 93.

32 Önder, "Integrating with the global market", 1998, pp. 47-49.

33 Atasoy, "Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project", 1997, p. 92; Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy*, 2005, pp. 121-23, 129.

34 Bedirhanoğlu, "Restrukturierung des türkischen staates", 2008, pp. 115-16. The forces of Far Right nationalism associated with the NATO underground also had to be domesticated. The MHP was outlawed along with the other parties and Türkeş arrested. Soon after, however, Grey Wolves terrorists were offered their freedom and pay if they were willing to fight the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan or PKK), which in 1984 had started an armed guerrilla insurgency after thousands of its members had been captured and tortured. Using false-flag operation techniques, the Grey Wolves spread terror in Kurdish areas, while enriching themselves by taxing heroin shipments from Afghanistan (Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies*, 2005, pp. 240-41).

35 Yıldız Atasoy, "Cosmopolitan Islamists in Turkey: rethinking the local in a global era", *Studies in Political Economy*, vols 71-72, 2003-04, p. 139, cf. 141; cf. Önder, "Integrating with the global market", 1998, p. 62.

policy to focus on export-led industrialisation, Saudi money had been flowing in to bolster the newly ascendant grouping of Turkish capital in central Anatolia. These businesses – the so-called “Anatolian Tigers” – represented export-oriented, rapidly growing companies most of which were founded after 1980 and were associated with political Islam. Turkish export-oriented firms with links to the Naqshbandi and the Said Nursi movements further pushed the economy away from import substitution to an export strategy; in 1990 they organised themselves and formed the Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği business association (MUSIAD).³⁶ The Saudi-financed international Islamist networks involved here can be traced back to the Islamic Conference or International Sharia Congress, convened in Pakistan in 1976 by the Saudi Muslim World League (Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami) and the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation with its Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Co-operation (ISEDAK in Turkish). Through these channels Saudi financial institutions such as the Al Baraka group gained access to the region; ARAMCO provided additional funding with an estimated 2.5% of its capital going to Rabitat.³⁷

Washington took a benign view of this – as in Afghanistan and elsewhere, everything that might help in combating the Soviet Union and the Left was welcome. Invoking the notion of “leadership of the Islamic world” cultivated in the 1960s, the U.S. “encouraged Saudi Arabia to develop this ideological pole that was solidly anticommunist and thereby acted in conjunction with US policy objectives”.³⁸ The transnational Gülen network includes actual economic players at the heart of this connection. The Fethullahcilar ranks among the fastest-growing capital groups, with about 500 firms in all, very profitable and fully integrated into the market economy. Gülen himself lives in the U.S., but two of the five interest-free Islamist banks in Turkey (two joint ventures with Saudi

and Kuwaiti capital, three by Turkish Muslims), belong to the Gülen group: the Asya Finance House, established in 1996, and Isik Insurance.³⁹

The “constitutional phase” of a neoliberal make-over necessarily requires that the state move into the foreground in order to crush opposition, prioritise private property and sharply demarcate it from non-property (leaving no grey zones in terms of this crucial determinant of the neoliberal order).⁴⁰ As Pinar Bedirhanoglu highlights, this is also the phase in which the most blatant forms of illegal appropriation are in evidence, as those with political power translate their privileges derived from controlling the state into private economic assets. In this respect, Turkey was no exception.⁴¹ In 1994 a major financial crisis brought the underlying contradictions to a head. It inaugurated, once again under International Monetary Fund (IMF) auspices, a deepening of the austerity policy and intensified privatisation. As Turkey’s Social Democrats, as in many other European countries, had alienated their following by giving up the defence of working-class interests, protest against the dislocations of the market could be mobilised by the RP. In the elections of 1995 it reaped the rewards, becoming the prime political force in the country on the promise of social equality, as well as Islamic values and institutions. At this point the battle lines were still between, on the one hand, political Islam and MUSIAD with its Anatolian business constituency and, on the other, the Atlanticist bourgeoisie around TUSIAD, but also the trade unions.⁴²

36 Atasoy, “Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project”, 1997, p. 93.

37 Atasoy, “Islamic revivalism and the nation-state project”, 1997, p. 94. The Al Baraka group, founded in the 1960s by government contractor Saleh Kamel, is a finance, media and food conglomerate that also holds the cleaning and maintenance concession for the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, cf. Hanieh, *Capitalism and Class in the Gulf Arab States*, 2011, p. 189.

38 Hanieh, *Capitalism and Class in the Gulf Arab States*, 2011, pp. 51-52.

39 In the second half of the 1980s the Naqshbandi and Nur movements became the core of the Islamist-led section of capital. Their holding companies (the Nur movement is connected to Fethullah Gülen) expanded to Germany, the Balkans, the Middle East and the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union. The Naqshbandi order played a part in the rise of the Özal and Topbas families, and the Server Holding with 38 companies is directly affiliated with the Naqshbandi order. The Ihlas Holding, with investments in media, autos, finance and insurance, emanates from another line in the Naqshbandi order, i.e. the Iskilar, which is associated once again with Gülen (Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy*, 2005, p. 170; Atasoy, “The Islamic ethic and the spirit of Turkish capitalism today”, 2008, p. 129; Atasoy, “Cosmopolitan Islamists in Turkey”, 2003-04, pp. 143, 154).

40 Alan Randall, “The problem of market failure”, in R. Dorfman & N. Dorfman, eds, *Economics of the Environment: Selected Readings*, 3rd ed., London, Norton, 1993.

41 Bedirhanoglu, “Restrukturierung des türkischen staates”, 2008, p. 105.

42 Atasoy, “Cosmopolitan Islamists in Turkey”, 2003-04, pp. 140-41; Atasoy, “The Islamic ethic and the spirit of Turkish capitalism today”, 2008, p. 125.

The final phase in the fine-tuning of a moderate Islamist political hegemony capable of operating in a transnational neoliberal context began in November 1996 when the intimate connections linking the Turkish state, the parallel "deep state" and organised crime were exposed in the Susurluk incident. The Erbakan government was put in an embarrassing position since Vice-premier Tansu Çiller, of the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi), then in coalition with the RP, was close to the dark forces found in each other's company in a crashed Mercedes at Susurluk.⁴³ The sense of outrage among the public was shared by the armed forces, but when the military intervened in early 1997 its "soft coup" got no further than the arrest of Islamist businessmen and the blacklisting of their companies; prior encouragement by the U.S. and Saudi and other Gulf sponsors, as well as the popularity of the Islamists as clean politicians, worked against effective repression, even apart from the fact that public opinion would no longer tolerate a fully fledged military coup.⁴⁴

European influence at this point was at a low ebb: at the December 1997 EU summit the Turkish aspiration of becoming a candidate for membership was not honoured. The Erbakan forces duly renewed their call for an Islamic economic community and the government that had taken the place of the RP cut off its dialogue with "Europe". Thus the combined weight of U.S. and Saudi influence in Turkey, mediated by the Gülen network, could only increase. The AKP at this point emerged as the ascendant political formation, inheriting its anti-corruption platform from the RP/FP, but abandoning its contender posture and anti-Western rhetoric completely, while substituting the call for an Islamic economic community project by a renewed attempt to join the EU, as candidate status had meanwhile been awarded (in 1999).

The AKP, according to Atasoy, "aims to reconfigure society through a neoliberal discursive synthesis between a Muslim cultural orientation and European standards. It does so through a liberal turn against the nationalist rhetoric of cultural

homogeneity."⁴⁵ In this effort it is supported by the Gülen movement. The Fethullahcilar, comprising some 20,000 micro-communities, propagates civic engagement in the economy on the basis of Islam. It seeks to compensate for the dislocations of neoliberalism by private devotional concerns, creating settings in which asceticism and discipline can assume personal forms. Gülen sees Islam as a "civilization for individual growth" committed to making individuals better, socially responsible citizens of the state. The Fethullahcilar worldview "resembles Adam Smith's view that the pursuit of self-interest must be restrained by morality".⁴⁶ This fits into the broader, transnational neoliberal turn also made elsewhere, but in circumstances and with a form specific to Turkey.

In 2001 a financial crisis marked the opening of the second stage of Turkey's transformation, following the "constitutional" phase with its predatory overtones. Now the semblance of "good governance", i.e. the routine operation of a neoliberal state-society complex, was put in place under the auspices of Kemal Derviş, a World Bank official repatriated to oversee the process. In a second shock treatment, more in the nature of a fine-tuning, "15 laws in 15 days" were enacted to refashion the image of Turkey as a "regular" neoliberal formation ready to assume EU membership.⁴⁷ It was this particular juncture that also brought the AKP to power. The paradox of its rise is that its mass base draws on widespread dissatisfaction with the neoliberal model, which the AKP promotes nevertheless. Erdoğan sees this as (Turkish) "authenticity" expressing itself in ways compatible with (neoliberal) "universal" standards; World Bank concepts like "human capital growth" are deployed to capture the resulting pattern of social change.⁴⁸ Professionals drawn from hitherto disenfranchised backgrounds have shown themselves particularly susceptible to this form of "centrist", individualised modernisation.

43 Bovenkerk & Yeşilgöz, *De maffia van Turkije*, 1998, pp. 23, 219 & passim. A Mercedes with top police, criminal and political underworld figures on board crashed at high speed into an old lorry.

44 Atasoy, "The Islamic ethic and the spirit of Turkish capitalism today", 2008, pp. 125, 129.

45 Yıldız Atasoy, *Islam's Marriage with Neoliberalism: State Transformation in Turkey*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 9.

46 Atasoy, "The Islamic ethic and the spirit of Turkish capitalism today", 2008, p. 132.

47 Bedirhançoğlu, "Restrukturierung des türkischen staates", 2008, p. 105.

48 Atasoy, *Islam's Marriage with Neoliberalism*, 2009, pp. 10, 111.

Prospects for a “moderate Islam” along Turkish lines

“Moderate Islam”, as tried out in Turkey in the experiment with an Islamist current that accepts Anglo-American supremacy and neoliberal capitalist regulation, today holds out the possibility of stabilising the Arab revolt along lines compatible with “good governance” as defined in Western terms. For “Unlike Iran, Algeria, and Egypt, Turkey has achieved a political compromise between secular and Islamic political elites”.⁴⁹

The spread of the Sunni “light” programme as exemplified by the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood (albeit with Salafi Islamists in the wings) has taken shape in a long transition beginning in 1979. In the process, Saudi and other Gulf Arab influence, through direct investment, subsidies and ideological patronage, has crystallised as a sub-imperialism under the U.S. and NATO umbrella.⁵⁰ Turkish interests also have become involved in the spread of their political-economic formula directly, both economically and ideologically. The material conduits for its dissemination across the region are the capital links established by the Gülen network and by the Anatolian Tigers organised in MUSIAD. Although much smaller compared to TUSIAD companies’ contribution to gross national product (10% against 40%), MUSIAD companies’ export competitiveness, links to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states, and orientation towards Muslim and Central Asian countries make them a strategic component of AKP policies that earned them the “neo-Ottoman” label.⁵¹

The Fethullahcilar, besides being involved in this economically, also has more than ten thousand schools in Turkey, and of its seven universities, five are abroad, as are more than 250 middle- and lycée-level schools in the Balkans and the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. This too works as a conveyor belt to export the Turkish model abroad. Certainly this model itself is far from stable or settled. The AKP has demonstrated a great flair for developing

a political aesthetics on which mass politics relies to push through programmes that do not necessarily enjoy mass support in their own right.⁵² The cultural background of key strategists of neoliberal “reform”, such as the row of shoes at the front door of the home of a new Central Bank president, may have been mocked by the secular media, but it pleased an Islamic public, which as a result was distracted from the content of the actual reform.⁵³ As the state casts itself in the role of a spiritual force with certain totalitarian traits, demonising and pursuing its critics, it has increasingly come to rely on the police against the army.⁵⁴ Of course, the continued machinations around a suspected military coup – the “Ergenekon” affair – in combination with this authoritarian populism, risks reinstating the police state or even a new deep state (by the latest count, 95 journalists alone are in prison for covering politically sensitive matters).⁵⁵

The paradox of the popular revolutions in the Arab world is that they have achieved little in the way of a radical democratisation, but a lot in deepening the neoliberal format of their economies. Of course, it makes a difference which revolts we are talking about. Some have been nipped in the bud or kept in a stalemate – the closer to Saudi Arabia, which itself is facing unrest in its oil-rich Shia-dominated areas along the Persian Gulf, the harder for a popular movement to assert itself. Others, like Libya and Syria (as well as Iraq as a consequence of the Anglo-American invasion) have succumbed to a reversal of the transition to a modern state. As indicated earlier, this opens the prospect of endless infighting and economic regression, although at the time of writing the outcome of the Syrian drama is still undecided. The third category, the (relatively) non-violent overthrow of the dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, should provide a testing ground for whether the secular-Islamist compromise that in Turkey has led to a “moderate Islam” presiding over pro-Western neoliberal policies can prevail.

49 Atasoy, “Cosmopolitan Islamists in Turkey”, 2003-04, p. 134; cf. Atasoy, *Islam’s Marriage with Neoliberalism*, 2009, p. 12.

50 Hanieh, *Capitalism and Class in the Gulf Arab States*, 2011.

51 Atasoy, “The Islamic ethic and the spirit of Turkish capitalism today”, 2008, p. 127.

52 I have developed this in Van der Pijl, *Global Rivalries from the Cold War to Iraq*, 2006, chap. 11.

53 Bedirhanoglu, “Restrukturierung des türkischen staates”, 2008, pp. 114-15.

54 Bedirhanoglu, “Restrukturierung des türkischen staates”, 2008, p. 119.

55 *Het Parool*, April 14th 2012.

The paradox here is that the dislocations caused by the popular uprisings have led to economic losses to such an extent that the post-revolutionary governments have had to make drastic cutbacks while calling for foreign aid and investment. According to the estimates of the Tunisian Central Bank and the Egyptian Ministry of the Economy, \$20-30 billion will be needed by the two countries to improve the lives of the people through opening up entire regions by new transport and energy infrastructure. Western countries have responded by promising some \$14.7 billion at the Deauville G8 meeting in May 2011, but on closer inspection this turned out to be loans already granted to the regimes toppled by the revolts.⁵⁶

In the absence of real new money, the successor governments – a secular one in Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood presidency in Egypt – have been forced to heed the urgent advice of the IMF and World Bank to accelerate the liberalisation of their economies. Thus we are faced with the perplexing reality that the ousted dictators (Ben Ali and Mubarak, respectively) resisted this advice and restrained the full impact of neoliberal reform for fear of popular revolt (while, as noted earlier, operating a crony capitalism for the benefit of a small coterie among the state class), while the new regimes embraced it through force of circumstance. Under the heading of "public-private partnerships", vast slices of public service infrastructure are being effectively privatised as companies – domestic and foreign – bid for the operation of water and energy utilities and health services "for" the government.

In this respect the Muslim Brotherhood has gone furthest in embracing neoliberal doctrine. As Samir Amin argues, it has been sold on an economic system based on the market and totally dependent on the outside world. It has also taken sides against working-class strikes and the struggles of peasants to retain possession of their land, which have been going on for a decade.

The Muslim Brothers are therefore only "moderate" in the double sense that they have always refused to formulate any economic or social programme (and in fact have not called reactionary neoliberal

policies into question) and by their de facto acceptance of the projected exercise of U.S. control over the region. They are therefore useful allies for Washington, which has awarded them a "certificate of democracy".⁵⁷

This assessment may underrate the extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood may be using its newfound power to slowly subvert the structures of U.S. and Israeli control over Egyptian affairs. Also, the question must be raised that if the inequalities provoked by the selective, "crony" neoliberalism of the dictators have already triggered a mass movement, what if their forays into the free market for the few become the framework for the running of entire economies – in a global setting fraught with imbalances already?

In this respect, Jordan, so far largely shielded from the revolt, at the time of writing may be taken as a microcosm of what is looming for the wider Middle East. On the one hand, the country faces the consequences of neoliberal privatisation. Water, telecommunications and electricity have been privatised and the cost of living has ballooned as a result. On the other hand, the receipts of the state have been reduced both by the creation of free economic zones at low or zero tax rates and by the drying up of remittances from the Gulf Arab states where Arab workers (Palestinians especially) have been replaced by Asians. In addition, however, a range of phenomena resemble the causes of the current crises in Ireland and Spain, notably the influx of capital seeking investment in the booming real estate market. And yet Jordan is a typical late-modernising country in which the political homogenisation of a civil society is still way off – thus the south of the country, notably Karak, Tafilah and Maan, is still a tribal area that resists the authority of the (generally unpopular) King Abdullah II. The ability of the Hashemite monarchy to balance the different components of Jordanian society has been prejudiced by its lack of money, and the prospects for a compromise with the opposition are dim. The Muslim Brotherhood has called for a boycott of the elections to be held before the end of 2012 in protest against the conditions of the vote.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Akram Belkaid, "En Tunisie et en Egypte, l'ivresse des possibles: après les révolutions, les privatisations ...", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 2011.

⁵⁷ Samir Amin, quoted in Belkaid, "En Tunisie et en Egypte", 2011.

⁵⁸ Hana Jaber, "A l'écart des soulèvements régionaux: vers un printemps jordanien?", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 2012, p. 10.

Clearly, the prospect of instability continues to dominate, as the crisis of global capital undermines any attempt to sustain the fragile economies in the region. As the forces for a showdown with Iran are gathering strength, the question of whether “moderate Islam” after the Turkish model will survive the next round of conflict and revolt remains open.