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# Seismic Shift:

## Understanding Change in the Middle East

**Project Director**

Ellen Laipson

**Contributing Authors**

Richard Cincotta

James C. Clad

F. Gregory Gause, III

Robert Grenier

Andrew Houk

Andrew Marshall

David Michel

Courtney C. Radsch

Corey Sobel

Mona Yacoubian

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Stimson Center  
1111 19<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202.223.5956  
Fax: 202.238.9604  
[www.stimson.org](http://www.stimson.org)

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## Socioeconomic Studies

Richard Cincotta

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### Explanatory Note

**T**he following section covers a range of socio-economic studies produced by international organizations or academic research institutes that may have held the potential to pre-indicate, to some degree, the pro-democracy demonstrations and regime changes that began in December 2010 in North Africa. These studies cover research on: food insecurity; youth unemployment; state vulnerability; popular opinion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (gathered in formal, social surveys); and the social history of dissent in the MENA region. The section's sample studies, which will be identified in the following sub-sections, were drawn from published sources, and located by keyword searches on the web and on disciplinary literature databases, or by recommendations of scholars in the field.

*The conditions investigated by these fields of research have been identified, either theoretically or empirically, by sub-disciplines within political science, as predictors of political conflict. For example, upward surges in international food prices have been statistically associated with the popular uprisings in some low-income countries, while other studies have concluded that indications of high levels of institutional capacity or effective governance – the focus of state vulnerability analyses – tend to dampen these risks.<sup>1</sup>*

*The academic studies reviewed in this section were funded largely through foundation and government-supported grants. The studies obtained from international organizations (the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization), and agencies with international mandates (USDA/Economic Research Service) were produced as part of their public reporting mandate, and relied on internal sources of funding.*

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<sup>1</sup> Rabah Arezki and Markus Brückner. *Food Prices and Political Instability*. IMF Working Paper WP/11/62. (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2011); World Bank. *Conflict, Security and Development World Development Report, 2011* (Washington, DC: IBRD, 2011).

## Summary

- No author or publication explicitly predicted the likelihood of a regime change or pro-democracy transition in either Tunisia or Egypt during the 2010 to 2015 period.
- None of the four vulnerability indices (also known as state fragility indices) that were reviewed provided a pre-indication of the December 2010 events. Two broader analyses of regime types, however, suggested that current regime types were a general source of instability in the North African region. One analysis (*African Futures 2050*) identified an unusual gap between a model's expectations for democracy among North African regimes and existing regime types.<sup>2</sup> This glaring anomaly was nevertheless insufficient, by itself, to lead the authors to further examine the prospects for democratic transformations over the next 40 years.
- Two types of sociological research focused on the Middle East and North African region – the historical sociology of dissent, and social survey research – could have suggested a trend toward reduced regime control over media in Egypt, starting in 2006.<sup>3</sup> A 2006 Arab Barometer study called attention to similar preferences for democracy expressed by both secular and Islamic groups polled in Morocco and Algeria (Tunisia and Egypt were not surveyed).<sup>4</sup> However, the means by which analysts might have integrated these cues to produce an accurate forecast of the nature and timing of the North African events is not apparent.
- Published analyses of food prices and youth unemployment did not produce unusual signals that were likely to have alerted analysts in the months preceding the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. While high international prices of wheat helped boost Egyptian market prices in 2008, monthly Food and Agriculture Organization price reports suggest that staple prices held relatively steady in Tunisia and Egypt during the late months of 2010. Similarly, though the International Labour Organization (ILO) found youth unemployment to be well above 20 percent in North Africa, it reported that levels had remained fairly constant in the region since the late 1990s (the ILO study groups Egypt in North Africa, rather than in the Middle East). Meanwhile, youth unemployment in the Middle East has risen by about 25 percent over the same period. If anything, such evidence would have drawn analysts' attention to the Middle East, rather than North Africa, as the potential ignition point for popular protest.

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<sup>2</sup> Jakkie Cilliers, Barry Hughes, and Jonathan Moyer. *African Futures 2050: The Next Forty Years*. Institute for Security Studies and the Pardee Center for International Futures. 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Shaazka Beyerle and Arwa Hassan. "Popular Resistance Against Corruption in Turkey and Egypt" in Maria J. Stephan, (ed.) *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*. (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2009.) pp. 265-279.

<sup>4</sup> Amaney A. Jamal and Mark A. Tessler. "Attitudes in the Arab World" *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 2008). pp. 97-110.

## Food Insecurity

While there is substantial evidence that international food price volatility can transmit volatility to local food prices, providing a grievance that helps instigate anti-regime demonstrations and political violence in low-income countries (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa),<sup>5</sup> evidence for its involvement in recent North African events is lacking.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) produces periodic country reports and the monthly *Global Food Price Monitor*, a comprehensive web-available assessment of international food prices and highlights of local prices.<sup>6</sup> A retrospective analysis of these publications suggests that increases in the international food price index during late 2010 had relatively minor effects on local staple food prices in North Africa.

During the two months before the demonstrations, the FAO reported that in Tunisia high international food prices did not translate into a high inflation rate for food at the national level.<sup>7</sup> For Egypt, the world's largest importer of wheat, the picture is more complex. Government subsidies for bread production shielded most consumers. However, the price of other wheat products and non-wheat food products were allowed to rise.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of 2010, the FAO's food price (aggregate) index had nearly reached the record levels that had been attained in 2008. International wheat prices, the most critical food-price consideration for North African populations, began their rise in July 2010 at about USD \$210 per tonne, and increased by 70 percent by the end of the first week of December. Nonetheless, the international price of wheat in December 2010, USD \$327 per tonne, was still far from its March 2008 level of USD \$482 per tonne.

Neither of the most credible medium-range assessments of food insecurity, FAO's *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* (2009), nor the USDA Economic Research Service's *Food Security Assessment 2010-2020* indicated that any of the Mediterranean North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, or Egypt) was at risk.<sup>9</sup> Although they are all importers of wheat, they have adequate foreign exchange to purchase grain on the market, and most are self-sufficient (or exporters) of oils and fats.

<sup>5</sup> Rabah Arezki and Markus Brückner. *Food Prices and Political Instability* IMF Working Paper WP/11/62. (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2011); World Bank. *Conflict, Security and Development World Development Report, 2011*. (Washington, DC, IBRD, 2011). Ch. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization. *Global Food Price Monitor* (Issues: July-December). (Rome: FAO, 2010)..

<sup>7</sup> The FAO country report on Tunisia is available at: <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=TUN>

<sup>8</sup> The FAO country report on Egypt is available at: <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=EGY>

<sup>9</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization. *State of Food Insecurity in the World*. (FAO: Rome, 2009); USDA/ERS. *Food Security Assessment, 2010-2020*. GFA-12, July 2010.

## Youth Unemployment

High youth unemployment has been identified as a factor in political instability, via increased recruitment into insurgencies and criminal gangs, for example.<sup>10</sup> The ILO special report on *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, published in 2010,<sup>11</sup> reveals that more than 20 percent of the youth labor force (ages 15 to 24) across the MENA region was unable to find jobs in 2008. High rates of youth unemployment have been persistent in this region, however, making them difficult to associate with any particular event, and rates by themselves do not necessarily signal political change. Indeed, a close reading of the ILO report paints a rather mixed picture at the sub-regional level, and likely would have turned analysts' concern toward the states in the Middle East, rather than North Africa.

The ILO analysis also examines North Africa separately from the Middle East, and places Egypt within North Africa. Consequently, because Egypt's youth represents 50 percent of North Africa's youth population, Egyptian employment and population dynamics are responsible for much of the dynamics in the region that the ILO labels "North Africa." With this caveat in mind, the ILO reports that during the 1998 to 2008 period (focusing on impacts from the global recession), total numbers of unemployed youth in the Middle East increased by 25 percent. For North Africa, in contrast, the numbers of unemployed youth declined by 1.5 percent during the same period.

During the recent recession in particular, youth unemployment in the Middle East increased well above that in North Africa. Even so, given the chronic nature of youth unemployment in the Middle East, the number of young adults without jobs increased by only 0.5 percent as a proportion of the total youth population since 1998. In North Africa, youth unemployment as a proportion of the youth population actually declined slightly. In addition, young women's employment in the MENA region has been negatively impacted much more during the recent recession than that of young men, who are the youth group typically thought more likely to participate in political insurgencies or illegal activities. This suggests that, despite high youth unemployment in Egypt and Tunisia and long wait times until employment, an analyst trying to predict unrest from ILO reports may have looked more toward the Middle East, and away from North Africa, to discern a turning point after which youth might more readily mobilize.

## State Vulnerability Indices

Four state vulnerability indices (state fragility indices) were reviewed.<sup>12</sup> None of these four provided particular insights that would have aided in predicting the December 2010 events. Neither Tunisia's nor Egypt's rating in any of the indices, nor their trends over the past several years, suggested impending regime change. To be fair, three of the four

<sup>10</sup> World Bank. "Conflict, Security, and Development" *World Development Report, 2011* (Washington, DC: IBRD, 2010), Ch. 2.

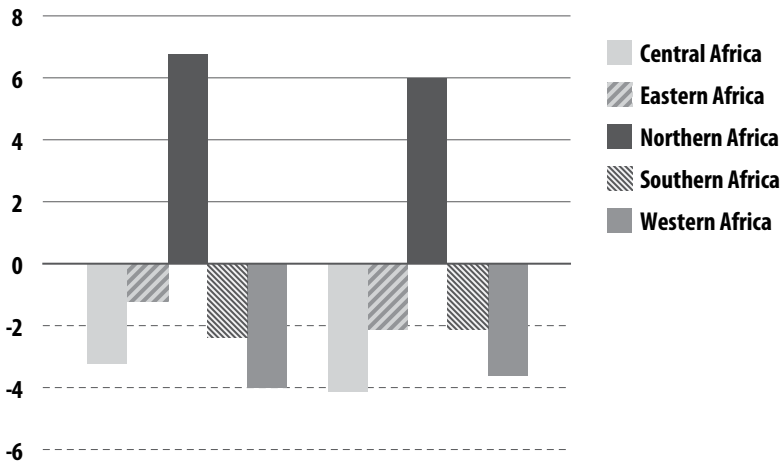
<sup>11</sup> International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth, August 2010* (Geneva: ILO, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> For each index, the country vulnerability scores and recent trends in those scores were compared. Each index's vulnerability score reflects the results of a multi-variable analysis that statistically predicts a type of destabilizing event. Each index has its own criterion for an event, each uses its own method of analysis, and each employs its own choice of variables.

indices considered were not designed to reflect the risk of a very low-intensity conflict, or regime changes trending toward democracy, which characterize the pro-democracy demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt. The single index that was constructed to pick up the risk of a popular uprising was generated by the Economist Intelligence Unit. That index rated Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya at lower risk levels than the remaining three indices (see Table 1).

Two reports that separately categorized countries on governance, economics, and stability were also reviewed. *African Futures 2050*<sup>13</sup> identified a large inconsistency between their model's expectations for democracy in the North Africa region and the existing regimes. Even so, the authors did not conclude that this gap predicted coming regime change, instead anticipating that this disparity would continue.<sup>14</sup> In *Global Report 2009*, the authors' made no specific reference to potential turmoil in North Africa or the threat of popular uprising. Their analysis did identify Egypt and Tunisia as two of 44 regimes worldwide deemed "anocracies," a category between democracy and autocracy. Yet though it labeled anocracies typically unstable, the report did not provide any judgments or methodologies for forecasting the timing or direction – toward democracy or toward autocracy – any of political changes these regimes might experience.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 1: Democratic Deficit in African Regions**



*The model employed by the authors of African Futures 2050 (Cilliers et al. 2011, p. 69) expected much more democracy than North African regimes exhibited. Yet the analysts forecast that this tension would continue.*

<sup>13</sup> Jakkie Cilliers, Barry Hughes, and Jonathan Moyer. *African Futures 2050: The Next Forty Years*. Institute for Security Studies and the Pardee Center for International Futures, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Cilliers, Hughes and Moyer wrote that "both extensive democratic deficits and 'surpluses' may give rise to episodes of sociopolitical disruption and change."

<sup>15</sup> Monty G. Marshall, and Benjamin R. Cole. *Global Report 2009: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility*. Center for Systemic Peace and Center for Global Policy. (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University, 2009). Marshall and Cole classified Libya as an autocracy, a regime type typically more stable than anocracies.

**Table 1: Comparison of the Ratings of Tunisia and Egypt by Four Published State Vulnerability Indices**

Index	State Fragility Index <sup>16</sup>	Failed States Index <sup>17</sup>	Index of State Weakness <sup>18</sup>	Political Instability Index <sup>19</sup>
Year	2009	2010	2008	2009/10
<b>Tunisia</b>	Rank: 96 of 163* states (*least fragile)	Rank: 118 of 177* states (*most stable)  Trend: Virtually unchanged from 2009 to 2010; Risk declines significantly from 2005 to 2010	Rank: 112 of 141* states (*least weak)	Rank: 134 of 165* states (*least threatened by social protest)  Trend: Unchanged from 2007 to 2009/10
<b>Egypt</b>	Rank: 48 of 163* states (*least fragile)	Rank: 49 of 177* states (*most stable)  Trend: Risk declines slightly from 2005 to 2010;	Rank: 78 of 141* states (*least weak)	Rank: 106 of 165* states (*least threatened by social protest)  Trend: Risk increases from 2007 to 2009/10

*Comparison of the ratings of Tunisia and Egypt by four published state vulnerability indices.*

<sup>16</sup> Monty G. Marshall, Jack A. Goldstone, and Benjamin R. Cole. *State Fragility Index and Matrix*. Center for Systemic Peace and Center for Global Policy. (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University, 2009). The State Fragility Index and Matrix (SFI) rates state effectiveness and legitimacy across four dimensions: security, governance, economic development, and social development. The SFI places states into six fragility categories: extreme (8 states in this category), high (20 states), serious (30), moderate (31), low (29), little or no (43). Tunisia's fragility rating is "low", as is Libya's. Egypt is rated "serious".

<sup>17</sup> Fund for Peace. *The Failed State Index*. 2010. [http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=452&Itemid=900](http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=452&Itemid=900). (versions from 2005 to 2010 are available on the Fund for Peace website). The Failed States Index (FSI) uses the Fund for Peace's Conflict Assessment System Tool to generate its index from twelve social, economic, and political indicators. In the 2010 FSI (Fund for Peace website version), both Tunisia and Egypt are placed into "warning", the second of four categories: alert, the most likely to experience an internal conflict (37 states in this category); warning, the next conflict-likely group (92 states); moderate (35); and sustainable (13).

<sup>18</sup> Susan Rice and Stewart Patrick. *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2008). [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/02\\_weak\\_states\\_index.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/02_weak_states_index.aspx). The Index of State Weakness assesses 141 developing states according to measures of their performance on economic, political, security, and social welfare criteria, establishing composite scores on a scale from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Egypt scored 6.50, ranking in the 3rd quintile with marks higher than India (6.28) or China (6.41). Tunisia (7.61) ranked in the 4th quintile, together with countries such as Brazil (7.22) and Turkey (7.18).

<sup>19</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit. *Political Instability Index*. (London: *The Economist*, 2009). [http://viewswire.eiu.com/site\\_info.asp?info\\_name=social\\_unrest\\_table&page=noads&rf=0](http://viewswire.eiu.com/site_info.asp?info_name=social_unrest_table&page=noads&rf=0). The Political Instability Index combines three measures of economic distress - GDP growth, GDP per capita, and unemployment - together with a dozen indicators of underlying vulnerability such as corruption and ethnic fragmentation, to score countries on a scale from 8.8 (most risk) to 1.2 (least risk), and classify each state as very high, high, moderate, or low risk. In 2009, Egypt scored 5.4, slightly safer than Spain (5.5) in the "moderate" risk category. Tunisia, also in the "moderate" risk category, scored 4.6, the same as Ireland, and just above Singapore (4.7).

## Public Opinion Surveys

The Arab Barometer Survey (ABS) produced reports showing consistent support for democracy across the Arab world. Data underlying the series of ABS reports<sup>20</sup> and published papers<sup>21</sup> focus on questions from surveys using the World Value Surveys instruments, principally in five Arab countries: Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and the Palestinian Authority. The data make it clear that there is broad support for democracy in the Arab world – although, the authors admit, support may be bolstered by the allure of a political system of which the Arab populace lacks experience. Responses in the ABS suggest that those who favor democracy would prefer to have it replace the current autocracy gradually, rather than abruptly.

The authors noted that prior surveys also showed broad support for democracy, and that such preferences existed in the absence of signs of democratic reform. Thus, the survey offered no perspective on the timing and probability of regime change. Further, the absence of three North African countries (Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt) from the survey limited the possibility of comparisons. The ABS highlighted the lack of differences between religious and secular citizens in their preference for democracy. Thus, the Arab populace, though divided by religiosity, was not divided over democracy along this fracture line.

## Historical Sociology: Dissent in the Middle East – North Africa Region

The search for an appropriate sample of research on Arab dissent sought research on youth movements, as well as the more high-profile cases of labor dissent. Among the sample reviewed, there were no direct predictions or sudden shifts that alone would suggest impending pro-democracy demonstrations and regime change in North Africa. Nonetheless, some experts did identify breakthroughs in strategies by small, woman-run protest organizations, labor groups, and social media activists in Egypt that had successfully undermined the monopoly on power held by Mubarak's National Democratic Party.

Shorbagy's chronicle of the Kefaya Movement's evolution in Egypt and its ability to draw Leftists and Islamists together to oppose succession leadership is suggestive of the crucial convergence of Islamist and secular goals that was later witnessed in Cairo's Tahrir Square. However, Shorbagy concedes that the movement had been weakened by 2006.<sup>22</sup> That weakening is not the case for the Egyptian Labor Movement, which grew as Kefaya faded from the scene. While studies portray the growth of the Egyptian Labor Movement as ongoing and open-ended, the analysis does not suggest a short timeline that ends in popular demonstrations and regime change.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.arabbarometer.org/reports/reports.html>

<sup>21</sup> Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler. "Attitudes in the Arab World" *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (January, 2008). pp 97-110.

<sup>22</sup> Manar Shorbagy. "The Egyptian Movement for Change — Kefaya: Redefining Politics in Egypt" *Public Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2006)..

<sup>23</sup> Solidarity Center. *Justice for All: The Struggle for Worker Rights in Egypt*. (Washington, DC: Solidarity Center, 2010).

Indications of ascending youth-led political organizations can be drawn from an essay by Shaazka Beyerle and Arwa Hassan in a volume entitled Civilian Jihad, edited by Maria Stephan (2009).<sup>24</sup> The authors chronicled the activities of two small Egyptian protest organizations: Shayfeen.com, an informal election-monitoring organization founded by three Egyptian women in 2005; and Egyptians Against Corruption (EAC), also founded by women. The essay describes these organizations' use of logos, new media (including YouTube), text messaging, and cell phones to disseminate their messages and mobilize supporters. The narrative notes the inclusive nature of EAC, its ability to sidestep regime censorship, and even its success to recruit supporters from the ruling National Democratic Party.

An article by Rudy Jaafar and Maria Stephan (in the same volume) suggested an even longer history of Arab youth organization that connects to protest strategies tested during the Lebanese Cedar Revolution. Jaafar and Stephan chronicled the activities of the Lebanese "March 14 Coalition," which used cell phones and email-distribution lists to mobilize nonviolent demonstrations and counter-demonstrations that ultimately pressured Syria to withdraw its troops.<sup>25</sup>

The March 14 Coalition was also able to unite disparate Lebanese political and religious factions by banning flags other than the national flag – a strategy that was followed in Tunisia and Egypt.

This literature follows a progression of strategies and tactics that organizations involved in popular, political protest have been developing in the MENA region. However, these studies do not explicitly suggest likely future political outcomes or a timeline for their political objectives.

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<sup>24</sup> Shaazka Beyerle and Arwa Hassan. "Popular Resistance Against Corruption in Turkey and Egypt" in Maria J. Stephan (ed.) Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East. (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2009). pp. 265-279.

<sup>25</sup> Rudy Jaafar and Maria J. Stephan. "Lebanon's Independence Intifada: How an Unarmed Insurrection Expelled Syrian Forces." In Maria J. Stephan (ed.) Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East. (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2009). pp. 169-182.

## Political Demography

The countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) display a distinctive demographic profile in the age structure of their populations. Like many developing nations, they exhibit a high fraction of young adults (defined as ages 15 to 29, although sometimes the 15 to 24 bracket is used) as a proportion of the total working-age population (ages 15 to 64). For a country with 35-million young adults in a working-age population of 100 million, for example, the young adult fraction is 0.35. In 2009, the world's most youthful populations showed youth proportions of 0.5 and above in countries such as Afghanistan (0.53) and Zimbabwe (0.62), while the youth fraction stood below 0.3 in demographically mature countries, such as Japan (0.24).

Students of political demography frequently argue that particularly sizable youth cohorts relative to the adult population, so-called “youth bulges,” render countries more vulnerable to political instability.<sup>1</sup> Youth bulges, they suggest, increase both the motives and the means for political violence. Large youth cohorts exacerbate competition for resources, especially employment; and youth bulges expand the supply of young adults available to be recruited into rebel groups, criminal gangs, etc.

While no demographic analysis deemed the MENA region bound for imminent civil strife, some experts did delve into the potential political repercussions of the youth bulge pressures confronting autocratic Arab states. As early as 2002, Winckler asserted that alleviating rising youth unemployment would demand economic reforms to promote higher growth, but that implementing such reforms would also increase democratization that could threaten the existing power structures of many Arab regimes. The Center for International Private Enterprise – an affiliate of the US Chamber of Commerce – similarly maintained that the challenges of creating 100 million positions for new entrants into the MENA job markets only could be met by democratic reforms, without which political violence could erupt. So too, the 2009 *Arab Human Development Report* worried that youth unemployment rates in the Arab region – double those of the world average – could contribute to an “alienation of jobless youth that can translate rapidly into protest, and in some cases may lead to radicalization.”<sup>2</sup>

Less remarked, however, some MENA countries have begun a demographic transition that is seeing their youth bulges diminish as their young adult populations mature and are followed by smaller youth cohorts. Work done by demographer Richard Cincotta suggests that this shift may hold significant political ramifications. Cincotta argues that the politics

<sup>1</sup> Jack A. Goldstone. “Demography, Environment, and Security” in Paul F. Diehl and Nils Petter Gleditsch (eds). *Environmental Conflict*. (Boulder: Westview, 2001); Henrik Urdal, “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence” *International Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 50, No. 3 (2006); Elizabeth Leahy et al. *The Shape of Things to Come: Why Age Structure Matters to a Safer, More Equitable World* (Washington, DC: Population Action International, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Onn Winckler. “The Demographic Dilemma of the Arab World: The Employment Aspect” *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 37, No. 4 (2002); Center for International Private Enterprise. *Middle East and North Africa Reform: Rooted in Economic and Political Ground*. Issue Paper No. 0804 (Washington, DC: CIPE, February 2008); UNDP. *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries* (New York: UNDP, 2009). p.111.

of authoritarian regimes in youth bulge states rest on a “Hobbesian bargain.” Citizens will exchange liberties for security when their lives and property face the threats of violence and instability associated with large youth bulges. As these youth bulges ultimately shrink, however, so too do the risks they pose to political order. Citizens (particularly economic elites) then find the authoritarian regime’s controls on communication, commerce, civil society, etc., both more oppressive and less necessary. At this stage, the possibilities for political reform and potential democratic transition rise.

Cincotta and colleagues developed this analysis to identify a demographic turning point at which nations with youthful age structures hit a “half-a-chance” benchmark for becoming a stable liberal democracy. By examining the demographic and political trajectories of countries worldwide since 1975, they found that a given country has a 50 percent chance of becoming a liberal democracy within 10 years (plus or minus) of the time at which the young adult proportion of its population reaches about 0.40. Based on this approach, Cincotta noted that several countries in the MENA region – Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia – were projected to cross the 0.40 threshold by 2020, judging that “analysts should expect one or more liberal democracies arising in [this region] by 2020 or before.”<sup>3</sup>

The conclusions advanced by Cincotta and company are probabilistic; they do not pretend to predict precisely when individual countries will experience political reform. Nor do they specify the nature or course of any democratic transition – whether it will be elite initiated or broad-based, peaceful or turbulent, rapid or gradual. Other analysts have argued that, even as youth bulges fade, democratization and development processes themselves may give rise to new conflict risks, undermining demographic “peace dividends.”<sup>4</sup> Demography, needless to say, is not destiny. It can, however, furnish important indicators that may turn analysts’ attention in fruitful new directions.

—David Michel

<sup>3</sup> Richard P. Cincotta. “Half a Chance: Youth Bulges and Transitions to Liberal Democracy” *Environmental Change and Security Report 13* (2008-2009). p.15. For a fuller discussion and explication of the methodology, see Richard P. Cincotta and John Doces. “The Age-structural Maturity Thesis: The Impact of the Youth Bulge Proportion on the Advent and Stability of Liberal Democracy” in J.A. Goldstone, Eric Kaufman, and Monica Duffy Toft (eds.) Political Demography: Identity, Conflict, and Institutions. (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Neil Howe and Richard Jackson. “Battle of the (Youth) Bulge” *The National Interest*. July/August 2008.