

National Research University Higher School of Economics

*As a manuscript*

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**THE EFFECT OF THE ARAB SPRING ON  
THE POLITICAL STABILITY OF ARAB MONARCHIES**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION**

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## Statement of research problem

After 2010, the Arab world has experienced a series of destabilization processes that changed the course of socio-political development, at least in the entire region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In 2011, the Arab Spring had a significant destabilizing effect on a number of Arab republics, leading to the fall of regimes<sup>1</sup> in four of them in one year, namely in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, as well as to a full-scale civil war in Syria. Despite the high level of regional socio-political instability, the monarchical countries have demonstrated resilience for more than a decade after the Arab Spring<sup>2</sup>.

On the one hand, some experts in the field of the survival of non-democratic regimes foreshadowed the imminent end of the regimes of the monarchical countries of the MENA after the fall of "Arab presidents for life"<sup>3</sup> in the republics<sup>4</sup>, others are still confident that these events are inevitable even a decade after the inception of the Arab Spring<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, even before 2011, researchers paid attention to the surprising socio-political stability of the MENA monarchies<sup>6</sup>, while the monarchical form of government as a factor of socio-political stability of the states of the region was not a subject to pay attention to<sup>7</sup>. In the research of the socio-political stability of certain political systems, as well as the mechanisms for maintaining the power of certain non-democratic rulers, experts in the field of the

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<sup>1</sup> In the research we use "regime" to describe 1) social nature and order of the relations between the rulers and the ruled as long as methods and efficiency of the rule itself; 2) non-democratic ruling political group in power.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr M.H. Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the Arab Uprisings // Carnegie Middle East Center. – 2021. URL: <https://carnegie-mec.org/2021/04/07/commemorating-10th-anniversary-of-arab-uprisings-event-7600> (date of access: 26.05.2022).

<sup>3</sup> Owen R. The rise and fall of Arab presidents for life. Harvard University Press, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> In the beginning of the Arab Spring and practically after 2013 the researchers tended to predict the fall of the monarchies in the nearest future (with 5 years long period as maximum, see Davidson C. After the Sheikhs: the coming collapse of the Gulf monarchies. Hurst, London, 2013), others predicted a serious socio-political crisis for MENA monarchies in the nearest future see: Al-Rasheed M. Saudi regime resilience after the 2011 Arab popular uprisings // Contemporary Arab Affairs. – 2016. – Vol. 9, № 1. – P. 13-26).

<sup>5</sup> Elkahout G., Hadid A. Stable Jordan: How a monarchy survived disorder // Asian Affairs. – 2021. – Vol. 52, № 4. – P. 852-871.

<sup>6</sup> In this research, "monarchy", "monarchical form of government", and "monarchical countries" notions are used as interchangeable notions. They all are defined as a form of government with the inherent head of the state who possesses life time authority according to the accepted practice and / or constitution (it is prohibited for anyone to declare oneself as a monarch), where his authority is either limited or unlimited.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Byman D., Green J. The enigma of political stability in the Persian Gulf monarchies // Middle East Review of International Affairs. – 1999. – Vol. 3, № 3. – P. 20-37; Herb M. All in the family: absolutism, revolution, and democracy in Middle Eastern monarchies. Suny Press, 1999.

survival of non-democratic regimes first of all focus on such political indicators as state capacity level or a type of political regime. The events of 2011 and subsequent years have shown that the fall or survival of non-democracies, particularly the MENA states, after the Arab Spring depends not so much on the type of political regime or the level of state capacity of the region countries, but on the form of government of the MENA states<sup>8</sup>.

In connection with the socio-political instability of 2011 in MENA and the polarity of its results in terms of the form of government, the first quantitative cross-national studies began to appear in the literature, which investigated the effect of monarchy on the level of socio-political destabilization in the region on a time sample limited mainly 2006 and 2010 – i.e. till the socio-political destabilization processes of the Arab Spring<sup>9</sup>. The provided studies argue that a monarchy in MENA possesses stabilization capacity, while what happens to this indicator over time, whether it persists, weakens or strengthens, remains unclear.

The proposed study solves a theoretical problem, on the one hand, by introducing the concept of "stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies", highlighting its main parameters (attributes) derived from a critical analysis of scientific academic papers in the field of survival of non-democratic regimes in the region with an emphasis on the factors of this survival.

The practical significance of the study lies in the characteristics and causes investigation of the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies over time (taking into account the destabilization years of the Arab Spring and after them).

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<sup>8</sup> In his dissertation research, Russian political scientist Issaev stresses that the occurrence of socio-political turbulence in the nearest past (1970s-2000s) could also be evaluated as socio-political stabilization factor for MENA countries during the Arab Spring and after it (like 2003 political events in Iraq, civil war in Lebanon of 1975-1990, civil war in Algeria of 1991-2002), see Issaev L. M. Political crisis in Arab countries: evaluation and typologisation experience (Политический кризис в арабских странах: опыт оценки и типологизации); dissertation thesis. M., 2014. (In Russ)

<sup>9</sup> See Menaldo V. The Middle East and North Africa's resilient monarchs // *The Journal of Politics*. – 2012. – Vol. 74, № 3. – P. 707-722; Bischof D. Fink S. Repression as a double-edged sword: resilient monarchs, repression and revolution in the Arab world // *Swiss Political Science Review*. – 2015. – Vol. 21, № 3. – P. 377-395; Guillen M. Symbolic unity, dynastic continuity, and countervailing power: monarchies, republics, and the economy // *Social Forces*. – 2018. – Vol. 97, № 2. – P. 607-648.

The results obtained and the proposed approaches may deepen the understanding of political analysts and political decision makers of the survival factors of non-democratic regimes, in particular of the MENA region, and in situation of regional socio-political instability. The test results may be useful in developing scenarios of socio-political instability in the long term pertaining to the region.

### **State of the field**

The proposed study is focused on the influence of the monarchy on the survival of the regimes of the MENA countries after the Arab Spring and the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the region's monarchies over time. To implement this project, we find it compulsory to consider the following two literature layers: on the survival of autocracies, including the most important sections on the institutional features of the survival of autocracies and the political economy of non-democratic regimes, as well as the regional direction on the features of the political regimes of MENA, where the main attention will be paid to the academic publications on the survival factors of non-democratic regimes of the region.

Investigating the literature on our topic may be challenging from the perspective of the thesis interdisciplinary nature and some conventionality of the boundaries between the indicated layers of literature, as well as a huge number of studies that may be evaluated as "classic" in domestic and western political, historical and Asian studies literature fields. In this regard, we are forced to emphasize that the review proposed below is very incomplete and includes only a small number of the researchers and their publications which have contributed to the study of the problem of the survival of authoritarian regimes in general, as well as the MENA monarchical autocracies in particular.

In his monograph "Political Order in Changing Societies" Huntington determined the "king's dilemma" which means that the traditional monarchical regime<sup>10</sup> is incompatible with the process of political development and

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<sup>10</sup> In the publications of 1990s-2010s monarchy is identified as a type of political regime. Here it is important to notice that the monarchical regime is proved to be one of the most stable among authoritarian regimes in the modern

modernization<sup>11</sup>. He stressed that the authoritarian monarch, sooner or later, faces the choice between either maintaining the full power, or requirement of socio-political development of the state which would lead to his voluntary limitation of power, the second option is rarely preferable in terms of the absence of an outside threat<sup>12</sup>. The same ideas, as applied to the region, were shared by Halpern, who wrote that the MENA monarchical regimes had a chance of modernization only under condition of constitutional restrictions on the ruling power, although he was pessimistic about the likelihood of such an event<sup>13</sup>.

An important idea on the survival of political regimes for the provided thesis which has been repeatedly cited and proven, is that the type of regime established in a particular state is not that important as the state capacity. The most appropriate definition of state potential sounds as following: « the ability of a state to choose and effectively implement its own decisions, among them on external politics and policy »<sup>14</sup>. Huntington wrote in the aforementioned monograph that democratic countries and dictatorships differ from each other no less than those countries which political life is characterized by consent, the strength of social ties, legitimacy, organization, efficiency, and stability differ from those where all those features were lacking<sup>15</sup>. The same idea was expressed in Tilly's monograph "Democracy"<sup>16</sup>. On the example of Kazakhstan and Jamaica of the early 2000s he showed how in a society with a high level of state potential, but an authoritarian type of regime (Kazakhstan), the level of crime was minimal, and in a country with a democratic regime, but a low level of state potential (Jamaica) one could notice a

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world (see Kailitz S., Stockemer D. Regime legitimation, elite cohesion and the durability of autocratic regime types // *International Political Science Review*. – 2017. – Vol. 38, № 3. – P. 332-348.). It is important to note in advance that one of the main parameters of stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies turns out to be monarchical elites peculiarities.

<sup>11</sup> Huntington S. P. *Political order in changing societies*. Yale university press, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Halpern M. *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1963.

<sup>13</sup> Huntington S. P. *Op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Ахременко А.С., Горельский И.Е., Мельвиль А.Ю. Как и зачем измерять и сравнивать государственную состоятельность разных стран мира? Теоретико-методологические основания // *Polis: Journal of Political Studies*. – 2019. - № 2. – С. 8.

<sup>15</sup> Tilly C. *Democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

high level of internal instability, as well as the inability of the central apparatus to control these dynamics<sup>17</sup>.

With the help of literature analysis Gerschewski came up with the next three stages of the research trends in the field of autocratic regimes survival: 1) the paradigm of totalitarianism until the mid-1960s, which highlighted the importance of ideology and terror; 2) the rise in the study of authoritarian regimes until the 1980s with more attention paid to the socio-economic factors for the survival of autocracies; and, starting with Geddes' paper of 1999, 3) a resurgence of research on autocracies that highlight the factors (or even mechanisms) such as strategic repression and co-optation. In his work, the author identifies three pillars of the stabilization of authoritarian regimes: legitimation, repression and co-optation. Although the pillars operate interdependently, not all three may be present but tend to emerge over time.

Geddes' paper stresses that authoritarian regimes differ from each other no less than they differ from democracies<sup>18</sup>. She tended to analyze authoritarian regimes in terms of key decision-making actors: the party in one-party regimes, the army in the military regimes, the authoritarian leader in personalist dictatorships<sup>19</sup>.

The classic papers on the institutional factors for the survival of autocracies include the publications of Brownlee<sup>20</sup>, Ezrow and Frantz<sup>21</sup>, Gandhi<sup>22</sup>, Gandhi and Przeworski<sup>23</sup>, Magaloni<sup>24</sup>, Melville<sup>25</sup>, Slovik<sup>26</sup>, Smith<sup>27</sup>, Wintrobe<sup>28</sup>. An extensive

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<sup>17</sup> Gerschewski J. The three pillars of stability: Legitimation, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes // Democratization. – 2013. – Vol. 20, № 1. – P. 13-38.

<sup>18</sup> Geddes B. What do we know about democratization after twenty years? // Annual review in political science. Palo Alto, CA. – 1999. – Vol. 2. – P. 115-144.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> Brownlee J. Authoritarianism in the age of democratization. N.Y., Cambridge University Press, 2007; Ibid. And yet they persist: explaining survival and transition in neopatrimonial regimes // Studies in comparative international development. – 2002. – Vol. 37, № 3. – P. 35–63; Ibid. Portents of pluralism: how hybrid regimes affect democratic transitions // American journal of political science. – 2009. – Vol. 53, № 3. – P. 515–532.

<sup>21</sup> Ezrow N., Frantz E. The politics of dictatorship: institutions and outcomes in authoritarian regimes. Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Gandhi J. Political institutions under dictatorship. N.Y., Cambridge University Press, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Gandhi J., Przeworski A. Cooperation, cooptation, and rebellion under dictatorship // Economics & politics. – 2006. – Vol. 18, № 1. – P. 1–26; Ibid. Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats // Comparative political studies. – 2007. – Vol. 40, № 11. – P. 1279–1301.

<sup>24</sup> Magaloni B. Voting for autocracy: hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006; Ibid. Credible power-sharing and the longevity of authoritarian rule // Comparative political studies. – 2008. – Vol. 41, № 4-5. – P. 715–741; Ibid. The game of electoral fraud and the ousting of authoritarian rule // American journal of political science. – 2010. – Vol. 54, № 3. – P. 751–765.

literature is devoted to the processes and mechanisms by which dictators gain and maintain the loyalty of their supporters after coming to power, as well as stabilize their presence in power on case studies in the regional framework<sup>29</sup>.

Most of the publications concerning the problem of the political economy of non-democratic regimes can be subsumed under the literature layer on the survival of autocracies. In these papers quantitative methods on cross-national samples are used, which gives the broadest and most complete picture of the links between institutions, economic factors, and the political survival of autocracies, but little has been explained about the mechanisms of this effect. Among the researches who contributed to the above-mentioned field, one could name Akhremenko<sup>30</sup>, Acemoglu and Robinson<sup>31</sup>, Bader<sup>32</sup>, Greene<sup>33</sup>, Wright<sup>34</sup> and Escriba-Folch<sup>35</sup>. It is worth mentioning numerous studies on the impact of resources on the survival of political regimes and their stability due to the peculiarities of the economies of the

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<sup>25</sup> Melville A., Stukal D., Mironiuk M. "King of the Mountain," or why postcommunist autocracies have bad institutions // *Russian Politics & Law*. – 2014. – Vol. 52, № 2. – P. 7-29; Ibid. Trajectories of regime transformation and types of stateness in post-communist countries // *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*. – 2013. – Vol. 14, № 4. – P. 431-459.

<sup>26</sup> Svolik M. Power sharing and leadership dynamics in authoritarian regimes // *American journal of political science*. – 2009. – Vol. 53, № 2. – P. 477-494; Ibid. *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Smith B. Life of the party: The origins of regime breakdown and persistence under single-party rule // *World politics*. – 2005. – Vol. 57, № 3. – P. 421-451.

<sup>28</sup> Wintrobe R. Dictatorship: analytical approaches // *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics* / C. Boix, S.C. Stokes (Eds.). N.Y., Oxford University Press, 2007. P. 363– 394.

<sup>29</sup> Kamrava M. Non-democratic states and political liberalization in the Middle East: a structural analysis // *Third World Quarterly*. – 1998. – Vol. 19, № 1. – P. 63-85; Schlumberger O. (Ed.). *Debating Arab authoritarianism: dynamics and durability in nondemocratic regimes*. Stanford University Press, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Akhremenko A. Toward the Political Economy of Autocratic Regimes: A Dynamic Mathematical Model // *Rossiyskaya politicheskaya nauka: Idei, kontseptsii, metody* / (Ed) O. Gaman-Golutvin, L. Smorgunov. Moscow, Aspekt Press, 2015. P. 307-324 (In Russ); Akhremenko A., Lokshin I, Yureskul E. Economic Growth and Policy Choice in Authoritarian Regimes: The Missing Link // *Zhurnal politicheskoy filosofii i sotsiologii politiki «Politiya. Analiz. Khronika. Prognoz»*. – 2015. – Vol. 3, No. 78. – P. 50-74 (In Russ).

<sup>31</sup> Robinson J., Acemoglu D. *Why nations fail: the origins of power, prosperity and poverty*. London, Profile, 2012; Acemoglu D., Robinson J. A. *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Bader J. Propping up dictators? Economic cooperation from China and its impact on authoritarian persistence in party and non-party regimes // *European Journal of Political Research*. – 2015. – Vol. 54, № 4. – P. 655-672; Bader J., Faust J. Foreign aid, democratization, and autocratic survival // *International Studies Review*. – 2014. – Vol. 16, № 4. – P. 575-595.

<sup>33</sup> Greene K. The political economy of authoritarian single-party dominance // *Comparative political studies*. –2010. – Vol. 43, № 7. – P. 807–834.

<sup>34</sup> Wright J. Do authoritarian institutions constrain? How legislatures affect economic growth and investment // *American Journal of Political Science*. – 2008. – Vol. 52, № 2. – P. 322-343. Geddes B., Wright J., Frantz E. Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: a new data set // *Perspectives on politics*. – 2014. – Vol. 12, № 2. – P. 313-331.

<sup>35</sup> Wright J., Escribà-Folch A. Authoritarian institutions and regime survival: transitions to democracy and subsequent autocracy // *British Journal of Political Science*. – 2012. – Vol. 42, № 2. – P. 283-309.

Arabian monarchies and some Arab republics, like those of Albertus and Menaldo<sup>36</sup>, Auty<sup>37</sup>, Haber and Menaldo<sup>38</sup>, Ross<sup>39</sup> and Tsui<sup>40</sup>.

Studies on the socio-economic and political factors of the Arab Spring, as well as on the cause of the synchronization of destabilization processes since 2011 in the MENA, belong to political scientists, sociologists, historians, specialists in Arab studies and many other representatives of various areas of social science.

A particularly significant layer of papers written on the topic of the factors of the Arab Spring is the result broad-scaled academic project in the field of studying the phenomenon of the Arab Spring by a group of researchers from the Laboratory for Monitoring the Risks of Socio-Political Destabilization of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, led by Korotayev<sup>41</sup>. His most convincing thesis sounds as following: that most of the MENA countries found themselves in the “trap at the escape of the trap” at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>42</sup>.

Studies on the socio-economic and political factors of the Arab Spring, as well as on the cause of the synchronization of destabilization processes since 2011 in the MENA, are of the authorship of political scientists, sociologists, historians, specialists in Asian studies and many other representatives of various areas of social science research. It has been established that the Arab Spring was a result of a whole set of factors<sup>43</sup>. Such factors as the role of the media, the weakness of the

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<sup>36</sup> Albertus M., Menaldo V. The political economy of autocratic constitutions // *Constitutions in Authoritarian Regimes* / T. Ginsburg, A. Simpser (Eds). N.Y., Cambridge University Press, 2014. P. 53-82.

<sup>37</sup> Auty R. Natural resources and civil strife: a two-stage process // *Geopolitics*. – 2004. – Vol. 9, № 1. – P. 29-49; Ibid. The political economy of resource-driven growth // *European economic review*. – 2001. – Vol. 45, № 4-6. – P. 839-846.

<sup>38</sup> Haber S., Menaldo V. Do natural resources fuel authoritarianism? A reappraisal of the resource curse // *American Political Science Review*. – 2011. – Vol. 105, № 1. – P. 1-26.

<sup>39</sup> Ross M. Blood barrels -Why oil wealth fuels conflict // *Foreign Affairs*. – 2008. – Vol. 87, № 3. – P. 2-8; Ibid. Does oil hinder democracy? // *World politics*. – 2001. – Vol. 53, № 3. – P. 325-361; Ibid. The political economy of the resource curse // *World politics*. – 1999. – Vol. 51, № 2. – P. 297-322.

<sup>40</sup> Tsui K. More oil, less democracy: Evidence from worldwide crude oil discoveries // *The Economic Journal*. – 2011. – Vol. 121, № 551. – P. 89-115.

<sup>41</sup> Korotayev A., Issaev L., Malkov S., Shishkina A. The Arab spring: a quantitative analysis // *Arab Studies Quarterly*. – 2014. – Vol. 36, № 2. – P. 149-169; Korotayev A., Zinkina J. Egyptian revolution: a demographic structural analysis // *Entelequia. Revista Interdisciplinar*. – 2011. – Vol. 13. – P. 139-169.

<sup>42</sup> Korotayev A. et al. A trap at the escape from the trap? Demographic-structural factors of political instability in modern Africa and West Asia // *Cliodynamics*. – 2011. – T. 2. – №. 2. P. 45-88.

<sup>43</sup> Fituni L. Blizhniy Vostok: tekhnologii upravleniya protestnum potentsialom // *Aziya I Afrika Segodnya*. – 2011. – Vol. 12, No. 8. – P. 8-16; Campante F., Chor D. Why was the Arab world poised for revolution? Schooling, economic opportunities, and the Arab Spring // *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. – 2012. – Vol. 26, № 2. – P. 167-188.



private sector in the Arab countries<sup>44</sup> and the wave of rising food prices in 2010-2011<sup>45</sup> were highlighted in academic publications.

Other studies have shown that the variety of factors, like political (type of regime, intra-elite conflict, ineffective instruments for the transfer of power, legalization of the political activities of Islamist movements), social (tribal, inter-confessional conflicts and contradictions), demographic (demographic structural risks, for example, "youth bulge", unemployment of the youth with higher education, etc.), historical (large-scale conflicts in the past and in the near future), economic (for example, the second wave of inflation) and some socio-psychological factors, provoked the turbulence of 2011 in the Arab region<sup>46</sup>.

Among Russian researchers who studied the socio-political destabilization of the Arab countries in 2011-2020, it is important to name Fituni<sup>47</sup>, Grinin<sup>48</sup>, Issaev<sup>49</sup>, Kosach<sup>50</sup>, Kuznetsov<sup>51</sup>, Landa<sup>52</sup>, Melkumyan<sup>53</sup>, Sapronova<sup>54</sup>, Shishkina<sup>55</sup>, Shults<sup>56</sup>, Truyevtsev<sup>57</sup>, Tsaregorodtseva<sup>58</sup>, Vasielev<sup>59</sup>, Zinkina<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Malik A., Awadallah B. The economics of the Arab Spring // *World Development*. – 2013. – Vol. 45. – P. 296-313.

<sup>45</sup> Rosenberg D. Food and the Arab Spring // *Meria Journal*. – 2011. – Vol. 15, № 3. – P. 1-16.

<sup>46</sup> Biluga S.E. Tip rezhima i indeksu sotsialno-politicheskoy nestabilnosti: opyt kolichestvennogo analiza [Regime type and indexes of socio-political destabilization: quantitative analysis experience] // *Sravnitel'naya politika*. – 2017. – Vol. 8, No. 4. – P. 95-112; Grinin L., Korotayev A. Does "Arab Spring" mean the beginning of world system reconfiguration? // *World futures*. – 2012. – Vol. 68, № 7. – P. 471-505; Grinin L., Korotayev A., Tausch A. Islamism, Arab spring, and the future of democracy. Cham: Springer, 2018; Hussain M., Howard P. What best explains successful protest cascades? ICTs and the fuzzy causes of the Arab Spring // *International Studies Review*. – 2013. – Vol. 15, № 1. – P. 48-66; Korotayev A.V., Khodunov A.S., Burova A.N., Malkov S.Yu., Khalturina D.A., Zinkina Yu.V. Sotsial'no-demograficheskiy analiz Arabskoy vesnu [Socio-demographic analysis of the Arab spring]. In A.V. Korotayev., Yu.V. Zinkina, A.S. Khodunova. System monitoring of global and regional risks: Arab Spring of 2011. Moscow, LKI/URSS, 2012. P. 28-76; Korotayev A.V., Zinkina Yu.V. Egipetskaya revolyutsiya 2011 goda: sotsio-demograficheskiy analiz (Egyptian revolution of 2011: socio-demographic analysis // *Istoricheskaya prikhologiya i sotsiologiya istorii*. – 2011. – Vol. 4, No. 2. – P. 5-29; Malik A., Awadallah B. Op. cit.; Slinko E., Bilyuga S., Zinkina J., Korotayev A. Regime type and political destabilization in cross-national perspective: a re-analysis // *Cross-Cultural Research*. – 2017. – Vol. 51, № 1. – P. 26-50; Steinert-Threlkeld Z. Spontaneous collective action: Peripheral mobilization during the Arab Spring // *American Political Science Review*. – 2017. – Vol. 111, № 2. – P. 379-403.

<sup>47</sup> Fituni L. "Arab spring": transformation of political paradigms in the context of international relations // *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya*. – 2012. – No 1. – P. 3-14. (In Russ)

<sup>48</sup> Grinin L. World order, the Arab Spring and the coming period of global turbulence // *Systemnyy monitoring globalnykh i regionalnykh riskov* / (Eds) L. Grinin, A. Korotayev, L. Issaev, K. Meshcherina. Volgograd: Uhetel, 2016. P. 191-239. (In Russ)

<sup>49</sup> Issaev L. The generals are gone, the generals are back: the Egyptian revolution is three years old // *Neprikosnovennyy zapas. Debaty o politike i kulture*. – 2014. – No. 1. – P. 123-132. (In Russ)

<sup>50</sup> Kosach G. Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring // *Svobodnaya musul*. – 2012. – No. 5-6. – P. 91-101; (In Russ)

<sup>51</sup> See, for instance: Kuznetsov A., Zvyagelskaya I. Problems of Statehood in the Middle East // *Rissey i musulmanskiy mir*. – 2016. – No. 3 (285) – P. 133-149. (In Russ)

<sup>52</sup> Landa R. Islamism i Arabskaya politicheskaya vesna // *Vostok. Afro-aziatskiye obshchestva: istoriya i sovremennost*. – 2014. – No 1. – C. 53-65. (In Russ)

The papers published since the Arab Spring on the socio-political stability of the MENA monarchies could be divided into seven groups of explanations: monarchy as an organic form of organization of MENA societies<sup>61</sup>, traditional and religious legitimacy of the ruling royal families in monarchies<sup>62</sup>, Islamic ideology of the regimes of the MENA monarchies<sup>63</sup>, optimal level of repression used by the ruling monarchical regimes<sup>64</sup>, external patronage of MENA monarchies<sup>65</sup>, "oil blessing" that most of the monarchies of the region are endowed with<sup>66</sup> and stabilization factors which are unique for each MENA monarchy<sup>67</sup>.

In general, on the basis of published quantitative studies on the topic, it seems possible to state a consensus among researchers that the monarchical form

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<sup>53</sup> Melkumyan E. Kuwait: internal political situation after the Arab Spring // *Vostok. Afro-Aziatskiye obshchestva: istoriya i sovremennost.* – 2021. – No. 3. – P. 74-84. (In Russ)

<sup>54</sup> Sapronova M. Features of constitutional construction in Tunisia and Egypt after the "Arab Spring" // *Vestnik rossiyskogo universiteta družbu narodov. Seriya: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya.* – 2014. – No 3. – P. 30-38. (In Russ)

<sup>55</sup> Shishkina A. "Arab spring": scenarios, main actors, driving forces // *Politicheskaya nauka.* – 2014. – No 4. – P. 116-130. (In Russ)

<sup>56</sup> Shults E. Management of social protest as technology and content of the "Arab Spring" // *Mezhdunarodnyye protsessy.* – 2015. – Vol. 13, No 1. – C. 89-96. (In Russ)

<sup>57</sup> Truyevtsev K. "Arab Spring" - the course, actors, technology and intermediate results // *Zhurnal politicheskoy filosofii i sotsiologii politiki* «Politiya. Analiz. Khronika. Prognoz». – 2012. – No 1 (64). – P. 21-32. (In Russ)

<sup>58</sup> Tsaregorodtseva I. Islamists in the politics of Egypt and Tunisia after the "Arab spring" // *Islamology.* – 2017. – Vol. 7, No 1. – P. 122-137. (In Russ)

<sup>59</sup> Vasiliev A, Zherlitsina N. Internet revolutions or just fitna: on the tenth anniversary of the "Arab Spring" // *Vestnik rossiyskogo universiteta družbu narodov. Seriya: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya.* – 2021. – Vol. 21, No 3. – P. 529-542. (In Russ)

<sup>60</sup> Korotayev A., Zinkina J. Op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Berti B., Guzansky Y. Gulf monarchies in a changing Middle East: is spring far behind? // *Orbis.* – 2015. – Vol. 59, № 1. – P. 35-48; Derichs C., Demmelhuber T. Monarchies and republics, state and regime, durability and fragility in view of the Arab Spring // *Journal of Arabian Studies.* – 2014. – Vol. 4, № 2. – P. 180-194; Lawrence A. Kings in a Democratic Age: Collective Protest and the Institutional Promise of Monarchy // *APSA Annual Meeting Paper.* – 2014. URL: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2454601](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2454601) (date of access: 02.12.2020); Stavestrand E. Freedom and stability in contemporary monarchies: testing the theory of monarchical exceptionalism: dissertation thesis. The University of Bergen, 2013; Stenslie S. Regime stability in Saudi Arabia: the challenge of succession. Routledge, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Bank A., Richter T., Sunik A. Durable, yet different: monarchies in the Arab Spring // *Journal of Arabian Studies.* – 2014. – Vol. 4, № 2. – P. 163-179; Mednicoff D. Arab monarchical stability and political liberalization: connections between Morocco and Jordan // *Jordan in Transition, 1990–2000* / G. Joffé (Ed.). London: Hurst, 2002. P. 91-110.

<sup>63</sup> Sparkes J. Morocco as a hub of globalised traditional Islam // *Religions.* – 2022. URL: <file:///Users/alinakhokhlova/Downloads/religions-13-00392-v2.pdf> (date of access 03.03.2022); Švedkauskas Ž. Facilitating Political Stability: Cohabitation of non-legalistic Islam and the Moroccan monarchy // *Studia Orientalia Electronica.* – 2017. – Vol. 5. – P. 1-26.

<sup>64</sup> Bischof D., Fink S. Op. cit.

<sup>65</sup> Yom S., Gause III F. Resilient royals: how Arab monarchies hang on // *Journal of Democracy.* – 2012. – Vol. 23, № 4. – P. 74-88.

<sup>66</sup> Bank A., Richter T., Sunik A. Durable, yet different...; Beck M., Hüser S. Jordan and the 'Arab spring': no challenge, no change? // *Middle East Critique.* – 2015. – Vol. 24, № 1. – P. 83-97; Ryan C. R. The armed forces and the Arab uprisings: the case of Jordan // *Middle East Law and Governance.* – 2012. – Vol. 4, № 1. – P. 153-167.

<sup>67</sup> See, for instance, factors of the political stability of Jordan within relatively high level of destabilization (practically equal to the turbulence level in Egypt and Tunis in 2011, in Beck M., Hüser S. Op. cit.).

of government in the MENA region, within a chronological framework limited mainly by 2006 and 2010, i.e. by the destabilization processes of the Arab Spring, possesses stabilization capacity<sup>68</sup>. The purpose of this study is to measure the same indicator within the chronological framework, including destabilization events after 2011, as well as its dynamics over time.

### **Research question**

What is the effect of the Arab Spring on the political stability of Arab monarchies?

### **The aim and objectives of the study**

The provided dissertation research aims to study the characteristics and causes of the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies over time, including the period of the Arab Spring and years after it. To achieve this goal, it is proposed to perform the following tasks:

- 1) to conceptualize and operationalize the concept of "stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies";
- 2) to identify the features of the dynamics of the average level of socio-political destabilization of the MENA monarchies by comparing the indicators with those for the MENA republics before and after 2010, to range the monarchies of the region according to their levels of socio-political destabilization;
- 3) determine the impact of the Arab Spring on the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies, taking into account the destabilization period of the Arab Spring and subsequent years (i.e., in 1950-2017);
- 4) to measure and compare the dynamics of the “stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies” before and after the Arab Spring (1950-2010 and 2011-2017) and identify the reasons / triggers of the observed dynamics;

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<sup>68</sup> See, for instance: Menaldo V. *The Middle East and North...*; Bischof D. Fink S. *Op. cit.*; Guillen M. F. *Op.cit.*

- 5) to identify the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies during the Arab Spring and the years after it (since 2010) and to determine the causes for the observed dynamics.

### **Theoretical foundations and hypotheses**

In this paper, three key research hypotheses are tested.

The first hypothesis should determine the relationship between the monarchy and the socio-political stability of the MENA countries in the period, including the years after 2010. We follow Menaldo (2012) argument on the stabilization effect of MENA monarchical political culture<sup>69</sup> and put forward the first research hypothesis as follows (**H#1**): the Arab Spring has not negatively affected the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies, therefore, for the time sample of 1950–2017 the correlation between the binary variable of the monarchy and the CNTS integral index of socio-political destabilization will be either at the same level or even stronger than in Menaldo's tests<sup>70</sup> limited by 2006 or 2010.

The second hypothesis should determine the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies over time, particularly before and after the Arab Spring. The theoretical construction used is based on peculiarities of the MENA monarchical states, whose elites are much smaller than those in the MENA republics, and which, unlike the non-monarchies, are more ideologically united, since they tend, first of all, to defend their exclusive monarchical ideology, which highlights, in general terms, the God-given exclusive rights to the transfer of power by inheritance, regardless of the effectiveness of the royal family rule<sup>71</sup>. It is assumed that they were these characteristics of the elites of the MENA monarchies that distinguished these countries from the republics of the region and contributed

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<sup>69</sup> In this research the monarchical political culture, generally speaking, may be defined as a special socio-political contract between the ruling elites and the populations of the MENA monarchical countries, formed by formal political institutions, Islamic principles and informal norms, continues to maintain a stabilization effect. The extended explanation is provided in Menaldo V. The Middle East and North Africa's...

<sup>70</sup> Menaldo V. Op.cit...

<sup>71</sup> Lust-Okar E., Jamal A. A. Rulers and rules: reassessing the influence of regime type on electoral law formation // Comparative Political Studies. – 2002. – Vol. 35, № 3. – P. 353; Richards A., Waterbury J. A Political Economy of the Middle East. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

to their strengthening during the threats of the Arab Spring and, consequently, the growth of socio-political stabilization after 2010.

We formulate the second hypothesis as follows (**H#2**): the stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies will be stronger in the post-Arab Spring period than before 2010. Its growth is explained by the peculiarities of the ruling elites (their smaller coalitions and ideological cohesion) whereas during mass protest destabilization high level of instability they face the threat of their enormous birthright privileges repeal which distinguish this population group from the rest, so they tend to be more integrated into regime.

The third theoretical construction of the study is used to formulate a hypothesis on the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies after 2010 and its reasons. It is assumed that Islamists opposition forces in Arab monarchies are not that strong as in the republics, as long as they cannot blame the ruling regimes of the monarchies of the region in non-Islamic rule (as long as all the MENA monarchies are Islamic, the narratives of the ruling elites are Islamist to a certain extent and they claim their rule is organized according to *sharia*). Thus, the growth of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies falls on the period of the growth of the level of "armed violent" destabilization presented by the growth of the level of Islamist extremism in the region (i.e. territorial extension of the extremist groups like Al-Qaeda and IS).

The third hypothesis of this study which explains the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies after 2010 may be formulated as following (**H#3**): the growth of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies coincides with the escalation of the socio-political destabilization level in the region triggered by the extension activities of radical Islamists (operated under the flags of IS and al-Qaeda in 2013-2015).

Regarding the limitations of the proposed dissertation research, first of all we emphasize the following ones:

*terminological*: although we use a universal definition of "monarchy" which may be applied to the monarchies of all of the world regions, the concept of "stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies" has a narrow regional specificity,

limited by MENA, it is based on a comparison with non-monarchical countries of the region. Thus, the problem of conceptualizing the universal concept of the stabilization capacity of monarchies remains the subject of further research;

*chronological:* tests conducted to study the impact of the Arab Spring on the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies and the dynamics of this indicator before and after 2010 are limited to 2017, thus the empirical part does not include the time periods of the turbulent processes of the third destabilization wave (mass protest destabilization) that affected those countries that managed to avoid any serious socio-political instability during the beginning of the turbulent decade. The most striking case studies of the mass protest destabilization after 2017 include Algeria (2019-2021 Smile Revolution), Iraq (2019-2021 protests) and many other region cases.

At the same time, we consider that given that by the end of 2022 all the monarchical states of the region retained their ruling regimes in power, the results obtained using the time sample until 2017 still may be qualified as relatively relevant.

*methodical:* the proposed in this study operationalization of the introduced concept of “stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies” through an unstandardized coefficient  $\beta$  is only one of the myriads of possible options for its measurement. The proposed operationalization a priori requires many units of observations and, preferably, on a macro sample, it also depends on a set of control variables and does not imply the possibility of comparing different models, as well as the possibility of conducting other quantitative or qualitative research methods, except for regression analysis.

However, it is quite possible that within the framework of a separate research it is possible to create an “index of monarchical stability”, universal for all of the monarchies of the world, based on the parameters of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchy proposed in the dissertation.

## Empirical base of the research

The underlining empirical data for the formation of independent variables was taken from the databases of the World Bank<sup>72</sup>, the Maddison Project<sup>73</sup>, UN Population Division<sup>74</sup> and Pew Research Center<sup>75</sup>. The main sources of data on the levels of socio-political destabilization are, first of all, CNTS<sup>76</sup>, as well as Global Terrorism Database<sup>77</sup>, Mass Mobilization in Autocracies Database<sup>78</sup> and Mass Mobilization Protests Database<sup>79</sup>.

Statistical analysis is used as the key **method** in the empirical part of the dissertation research, particularly description statistics, regression analysis and Chow test are involved.

## Contribution to the field

The scientific novelty of the proposed research may be formulated as following:

1. the study introduces into academic discourse and operationalizes the concept of “stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies”;
2. the thesis critically evaluates the relevance of «Middle East monarchical authoritarianism” concept use after the Arab Spring and provides the argument to get rid of using it in the academic discourse after 2010;
3. it is the first time when the critical analysis of the factors of socio-political stability of the MENA monarchies are reviewed and critically analyzed from the perspective of their relevance after the ArabSpring;

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<sup>72</sup> World Development Indicators Online. Washington DC: World Bank. URL: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/> (date of access: 20.11.2020).

<sup>73</sup> Maddison Database. University of Groningen. 2020. URL: <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-project-database-2018> (date of access: 20.11.2020).

<sup>74</sup> UN Population Division. United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division Database. 2020. URL: <http://www.un.org/esa/population> (date of access: 20.11.2020).

<sup>75</sup> Muslim Population by Country. Pew Research Center. 2017. URL: <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/table-muslim-population-by-country/>. (date of access: 20.11.2020).

<sup>76</sup> Banks A.S., Wilson K.A. Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive. 2020. URL: <https://www.cntsdata.com/> (date of access: 20.11.2020).

<sup>77</sup> Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Global Terrorism Database. 2020. URL: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/> (date of access: 07.07.2022).

<sup>78</sup> Croicu M., Weidmann N. Improving the selection of news reports for event coding using ensemble classification // Research & Politics. – 2015. – Vol. 2, № 4. – P. 1-8; Weidmann N. B., Rød E. G. The Internet and political protest in autocracies. Oxford University Press, 2019.

<sup>79</sup> Mass Mobilization Protests Data. Binghamton University. 2020. URL: <http://www.binghamton.edu/massmobilization/> (date of access: 21.10.2020).

4. the paper provides a statistical comparison of the dynamics of the levels of socio-political destabilization in the Arab monarchies and republics before and after 2011 turbulence and the description of this dynamics, the monarchies are ranged by the destabilization levels;
5. the study provides a periodization of socio-political turbulence after the Arab Spring by types of destabilization, namely two periods of mass protests destabilization (2011-2013 and since 2016), as well as the period of "bloody" destabilization (2014-2016);
6. the study theoretically substantiates and empirically tests a new hypothesis that the Arab Spring have not weaken the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies; the effect of the monarchical form of government on the political stability of the MENA monarchies is studied for the first time in a period that includes years of destabilization processes, so the period embraces from 1950 (or from the independence) till 2017;;
7. the study theoretically substantiates and empirically tests a new hypothesis about the dynamics of the stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies over time: namely, before and after the Arab Spring, as well as since 2011. A possible explanation is provided for the revealed dynamics of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies over time for the period of 2011-2017 through the behavior of the monarchical elites during crises and the importance of the role of the Islamic ideology of the regimes of this group of countries that restrains Islamist extremism.

### **Statements to be defended**

1. The “stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies” is defined as the regional function of a monarchy to guarantee a lower level of socio-political destabilization compared to non-MENA monarchies, subjected to a region-wide socio-political destabilization impulse at the same time. This stabilization effect is provided by the following parameters, driven from the literature on stabilization factors of MENA monarchies:

- the monarchist political culture;



- the peculiarities of the MENA monarchical elites (which are the small size of the ruling coalition and its ideologically united character, as well as the Islamist ideology of the ruling regimes).

2. After 2010, the criteria highlighted by Lucas in his paper<sup>80</sup> for distinguishing the MENA monarchies into one subtype of the non-democratic regime which is called “Middle East monarchical authoritarianism” turn out to be insufficient, namely: firstly, they are no longer characterized by the “limited mass mobilization”, noted by Lucas; secondly, the above criteria are also relevant for the non-democratic monarchies of Southeast Asia.

Thus, we consider that the unification of the MENA monarchies into one subtype of a non-democratic regime is irrelevant after 2010.

3. Statistical analysis of the dynamics of the average level of socio-political destabilization of the two subgroups of the MENA countries demonstrates that the Arab monarchies are generally more stable than the non-monarchies of the region.

The most unstable monarchical countries of the MENA after 2010 turn out to be those with acute Sunni-Shia confessional conflicts, they are Bahrain and KSA, in which the highest level of armed violent destabilization is observed among the countries of the subgroup.

In Oman, acts of armed violent destabilization are not recorded at all for the entire period under consideration, which starts after the beginning of the Arab Spring.

In Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE, their total number is ten times less than in Bahrain and KSA in 2011-2018. Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco experienced the highest levels of mass protest destabilization among the countries of the observed subgroup over the period compared to other monarchical countries. The overall level of socio-political destabilization in these countries is significantly lower than in Bahrain and KSA, but significantly higher than in the UAE, Qatar and Oman, which make up the third group of countries that actually managed to avoid serious socio-political destabilization in 2011-2018.

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<sup>80</sup> Lucas R. Op. cit.

The period of destabilization, which began in 2011 in MENA, is conditionally divided into three stages: the first stage is the mass protest destabilization of 2011-2013, the second stage is the armed violent destabilization due to the expansion of IS and Al-Qaeda in 2013-2015, the third stage - a new wave of mass protest destabilization since 2016.

4. The Arab Spring did not weaken the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies, which is explained by the preservation of the stabilization effect of one of the stabilizing parameters of the MENA monarchy, namely, the monarchist political culture.

5. Stabilization capacity of MENA monarchies in 2011-2017 stronger than in 1950-2010. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, there has been an increase in the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies. After the Arab Spring, the regimes of the MENA monarchies were able to stay in power thanks to the parameters of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies, which are reduced to the characteristics of the monarchical elites.

In 2013-2015, during the growth of armed violent destabilization in the region, one could observe the escalation of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies, which confirms the importance of the role of the Islamist ideology of the ruling MENA monarchies in restraining the risks of socio-political instability emanating from Islamist political formations.

### **Conferences**

- A report "Factors of Political Sustainability in Middle Eastern Monarchies: A Literature Review" was presented on November 25, 2020 at the XIX Conference of the School of Young Africanists, held by the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences;
- The report "Middle East Monarchist Authoritarianism: The Problem of Concept Relevance" was presented on December 2, 2020 at the Conference "Prospects for Destabilization Processes in the Middle East and North Africa: Before and After the Pandemic", held by the Center

for Civilizational and Regional Studies of the African Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences;

— A report "Islamic Monarchies, Youth Bump and Socio-Political Destabilization: A Cross-National Analysis" was presented in co-authorship with Prof. A.V. Korotayev at the "April Conference" held by the National Research University "Higher School of Economics" on April 21, 2021 (Section M-21-3. Comparative studies - 1).

### **Publications**

The key results of the proposed dissertation research were published in the leading international peer-reviewed scientific journals, including those recommended by the National Research University "Higher School of Economics":

1. Khokhlova A.A. *Socio-political destabilization dynamics features in MENA monarchies before and after the Arab spring* // *Aziya i Afrika Segodnya*. 2022. №. 3. P. 50-58. (In Russ)
2. Korotayev A.V., Khokhlova A.A. Effect of the Arab Spring on Stabilization Capacity of the MENA Monarchies // *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. 2022. Vol. 57, № 2. P. 289-307.
3. Khokhlova A. A. *Middle Eastern monarchical authoritarianism. Is this concept relevant after Arab spring?* // *Aziya i Afrika Segodnya*. 2020. No. 9. P. 64-70. (In Russ),

as well as in other publications:

4. Khokhlova A., Korotayev A. *Islamic monarchies, youth bulge and socio-political destabilization. Cross-national analysis* // In *Systemnyy monitoring globalnykh i regionalnykh riskov* (Eds) L. Grinin, A. Korotayev, D. Bukanova. Izdatelstvo "Uchitel", 2020. Pp. 239-264. (In Russ)
5. Khokhlova A.A. *Factors of Political Sustainability of the Middle East Monarchies: literature review*). In *Materials of the 19th Inter-Russian conference of School of Young Specialists in African Studies «Russian-*

*African relationships: history, achievements, challenges and new horizons for cooperation».* 25. 11. 2020. URL: [https://www.inafran.ru/sites/default/files/news\\_file/materialy\\_xix\\_vshma.pdf](https://www.inafran.ru/sites/default/files/news_file/materialy_xix_vshma.pdf) (date of access: 02.12.2020). (In Russ)

## **Summary of the data and findings**

In 2011, the Arab Spring had a significant destabilizing effect on a number of Arab countries. Despite the high level of regional socio-political instability, all the monarchies of the region managed to survive after the Arab Spring.

The events of 2011 and subsequent years have shown that the fall or survival of the governments in MENA depends not so much on the type of political regime or the level of state potential, but on the form of government of the states in the region.

Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, attention to the monarchy has become more intense, it has been proven that the monarchy possesses a stabilizing effect on a sample of MENA countries and in the time frame limited by the beginning of the Arab Spring. At the same time, does this stabilization capacity persist over time, does its level escalate or, on the contrary, fall? The provided research presents an attempt to study the nature of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies and the reasons for its dynamics over time.

The paper proposes to introduce into the academic discourse the concept of "stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies", which is conceptualized as the regional ability of the monarchy to guarantee a lower level of socio-political destabilization compared to what takes place in non-monarchies under the conditions of a common socio-political destabilization impulse for the region. The formulation of a new concept derives from the critical analysis of the sustainability factors of the MENA countries, identified in the amount of the published literature. Critical analysis of seven groups of explanations for the socio-political stability of the monarchies of the region leads us to the conclusion that the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies is determined by the following parameters:

- monarchical political culture;
- Islamist ideology of the ruling regimes;
- the peculiarities inherent in the monarchical elites, consisting in the relative scarcity of these elites and their ideological unity.

The above mentioned seven groups of explanations of the special and peculiar socio-political stability of the MENA monarchies, classified with the help of a broad literature review, are the following:

- the institutional characteristics of the monarchy;
- traditional and religious legitimacy;
- Islamist ideology;
- the “optimal level of repression” characteristic of the MENA monarchical states, according to a number of authors;
- the features of external patronage;
- the hydrocarbon rent factor;
- factors specific to individual monarchies.

The results of the analysis of the processes launched by the Arab Spring show that only several of the above-mentioned groups of explanations remain relevant to 2022, they are the institutional features of the monarchy, the role of the Islamist ideology of the monarchical elites and the “optimal level of repression”.

We analyzed a number of graphs of the dynamics of the average levels of socio-political destabilization of the MENA monarchies and republics, including the dynamics of the armed violent destabilization and mass protest destabilization separately. The drawn conclusions on the nature of the dynamics of socio-political instability in the MENA monarchies and its key differences from stabilization processes in the republics of this region are the following.

We observed the fact that MENA monarchies are generally more socio-politically stable than non-monarchies of the region.

It seems possible to highlight the following features of the dynamics of socio-political destabilization of monarchies after 2010:

- the dynamics of the socio-political destabilization of the MENA monarchies after 2010 is undulating, which proves the ability of this form of government in the region to “restrain” destabilization risks;
- at the moments of destabilization peaks of the monarchies of the region (2011, 2015 and 2017), socio-political destabilization is recorded only

in individual MENA states with a monarchical form of government, while during destabilization peaks in the MENA republics (2011, 2014, 2016 and 2018) quite pronounced socio-political instability is recorded in all non-monarchies of the region without exception;

- the most unstable MENA monarchies after 2010 were countries with acute Sunni-Shia confessional conflicts, these are Bahrain and KSA, which is due to the highest level of armed violent destabilization recorded in these countries among the subgroup of the region's monarchies. Jordan, Kuwait and Morocco experienced the highest levels of mass protest destabilization among the countries of the subgroup during the specified period. The overall level of socio-political destabilization in these countries is significantly lower than in Bahrain and KSA, but higher than in the UAE, Qatar and Oman, which make up the third group of countries with minimal average levels of socio-political instability in 2011-2018.

Our study is based on the next three main research hypotheses.

The first hypothesis assumes that the correlation between the monarchy and the logarithm of the CNTS integral index of socio-political destabilization in the period, including the Arab Spring and the years after it, will be in the same direction and just as strong as in tests conducted on a sample before the Arab Spring (due to the assumption of the continuation of the deterrent destabilization parameter of the monarchical political culture).

As a result of the replication of Menaldo's test on the sample, including destabilization events after 2010, we have confirmed our first hypothesis. It turns out that the Arab Spring has not negatively affected the stabilization capacity of the monarchies. On the sample for 1950–2017 the indicator of the unstandardized coefficient  $\beta$  for the monarchy variable in 1950-2017 with a fixed effect for years is (–3.707) with a high level of significance ( $<0.001$ ), which is higher than the unstandardized coefficient  $\beta$  obtained by Menaldo which amounts to (–2.116) (with fixed effect for year) with an equal level of significance ( $<0.001$ ) for 1950-2006.

The results obtained show that the monarchical political culture, which, generally speaking, represents a special socio-political contract between the ruling elites and the general populations of these countries, formed by formal political institutions, Islamic principles and informal norms, restrains the possibility of socio-political destabilization escalation till the critical level.

The second theoretical framework is based on the assumption that an ideologically united and small size of the monarchical elites with common values and beliefs, as well as shared monarchical ideology, strongly integrated into the regime, may be more resilient than other non-democratic elites in the MENA during socio-political upheavals, especially mass protests, which may indicate an increase in stabilization capacity of the monarchies of the region after 2010.

Comparison of unstandardized coefficients  $\beta$  of the categorical variable of the monarchy on two different time samples, namely before and after 2010, shows that the stabilization capacity level of the MENA monarchy after the events of the Arab Spring is one and a half times higher than before 2010. Chow test confirms the structural shift after 2011 for a model that demonstrates the influence of the monarchy on the level of sociopolitical instability in MENA ( $F$  value  $>$   $F$  crit by more than 8 times).

The result confirms our hypothesis about the growth of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies after 2010 due to another stabilizing attribute of the MENA monarchies – the peculiarities of the monarchical elites in these countries, namely the ideologically united nature of the elite coalition and the relatively small number of its members.

Finally, within the theoretical framework, the importance of the Islamist nature of the ruling elites of the MENA monarchies in the matter of containing the Islamist opposition on the intra-national arenas was discussed. We assumed that the period of growth of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies after the beginning of the Arab Spring coincided with the period of the growth of the Islamist terrorist threat expansion in the region in 2013-2015.



As we have observed, the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies have grown up after 2010, but what are its reasons? We found a difference in the dynamics of socio-political instability and the number of those killed in terrorist attacks in the monarchies and republics of the MENA after 2010, particularly in 2013-2014: at that time, as the dynamics of the number of those killed in terrorist attacks for both groups of countries is expectedly growing in the indicated period, the dynamics of the mean levels of socio-political destabilization (which is reflected by the mean levels of the CNTS integral index of socio-political instability) for the both country groups is different, namely, there is an increase in its dynamics for the republics in 2013-2014, whereas for the MENA monarchies the trend remains at the previous low level.

The obtained result suggests that the growth of the stabilization capacity of the MENA monarchies after 2010 coincides with the period of expansionist activity of Islamist terrorist groups operating under the flags of IS and al-Qaeda in the region. Thus, the importance of the role of the Islamist ideology of the ruling MENA monarchies in restraining the risks of socio-political instability posed by Islamist formations is confirmed.

We consider it important to note the undesirability of using the concept of “Middle Eastern monarchical authoritarianism”, which is widely used in academic discourse after 2010, due to its irrelevance after the Arab Spring. The four criteria for the uniqueness of the MENA monarchical regimes proposed by Lucas<sup>81</sup> turn out to be outdated for the MENA monarchies after the Arab Spring (in particular, in terms of “the limited mass mobilization” criteria). Moreover, the four of them may be applied to other world monarchies, for example, monarchies of Southeast Asia.

Also, we found out that the period of destabilization that started in 2010 in the MENA is conditionally divided into the next three periods:

- the first stage is the mass protests destabilization period of 2011-2013 (Arab Spring itself);

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<sup>81</sup> Lucas R. Op.cit....

- the second stage is armed violent destabilization stage due to the expansion of Islamist terrorist movements in 2013-2015;
- the third stage is a new wave of mass protests destabilization period (since 2016).