

LOS ÓRDENES REGIONALES EN ORIENTE MEDIO
Y EL NORTE DE ÁFRICA (1945-2011)

ADDENDUM

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**TRADUCCIÓN AL INGLÉS DE LAS
CONCLUSIONES**

CONCLUSIONS

After examining the relations among the Middle East and North Africa's regional subsystem's actors it can be asserted that these relations are really intense, regular and highly consistent over time. The actors (both, states and non-state actors) have articulated norms and institutions which establish precepts on correct and legitimate behavior. As a consequence, shared expectations arise which, in turn, ultimately order their relations. The undertaken research allows us to suggest thirteen main conclusions outlined here. Firstly, this section presents the conclusions directly linked with the hypotheses formulated in the second chapter and which refer to the object of study of this dissertation, namely the regional subsystem of the Middle East and North Africa as well as its regional orders and the functioning of its primary institutions and its norms -conclusions one to nine. Secondly, this section outlines the conclusions linked with the theoretical implications about the notions of order and actorness, and about the interdisciplinary relations. This set of conclusions emanate from contrasting the initial theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation with the analysis on the subsystem's orders carried out in the framework of the research presented here -conclusions ten to thirteen.

ON THE ORDERS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL SUBSYSTEM

FIRST: The Middle East and North Africa can be legitimately considered a sub-regional system in its own right, and Israel and Iran are part of it. On the one hand, it is a subsystem as the relations among its members are especially intense in comparison with those among them and third parties outside the subsystem. This reality is concomitant with the fact that its members developed their own norms and primary institutions regulating their relations and differentiated, and with a large level of autonomy, from those associated with the global system. The institutions and norms analyzed here talk about overcoming any ontological limitation on the scientific discussion about whether the Middle East represents a differentiated reality. Any historical, social or cultural difference among its actors is not enough to discredit the existence of a regional

subsystem articulated around the external convergence of their behavior through standardized patterns and norms. On the other hand, it seems pointless to exclude Israel and Iran as members of the subsystem: their relations with the rest of the members are intense, they follow consistent norm-based patterns, and both of them have a great deal of impact over regional politics. Being them excluded from intra-Arab norms and institutions does not entangle that they do not put forward their own norms and institutions for managing their relations with the rest of the members of the subsystem.

SECOND: Three different overlapping regional orders have lived side by side at the Middle East and North Africa during the analyzed period, namely the intra-Arab order, the Arab-Israeli order and the Arab-Iranian order. Furthermore, they are connected with the global order (see ninth conclusion). This overlap indeed orders their relations. The intra-Arab order includes a set of institutions and norms codifying the correct and legitimate behavior affecting the relations among Arab actors and among them and extra-regional superpowers part of the subsystem. The Arab-Israeli and the Arab-Iranian orders mimicked this reality in this case for those relations among Israel and Iran with the rest of the same actors just mentioned. Every one of these orders, thus, integrates its own institutions, some of which coincide among orders and some not. Additionally, the regional actors order their relations in light of the global order's institutions and norms, either directly or after a normative localization process. The existence of multiple norms applicable to the same context or specific behavior does not undermine the ordering effects of norms. Even in situations where norms corresponding to different orders are in essence incompatible the overlapping orders still arrange social behaviors. This is the case as, no matter what, the number of potential behavioral options is reduced and social expectations are constructed accordingly.

THIRD: Sovereignty is one the institutions integrated in every regional order in the Middle East sub-system yet its normative content is different among them. The result is a whole-encompassing but heterogenous institutions, marked by tensions between the narrative and the factual levels. In the intra-Arab order, sovereignty has eventually clashed with the intra-Arab solidarity institution and Pan-

Arabism, affecting the imposed limits of non-interference and sovereign equality principles. Its heterogenous -and sometimes incomplete- nature has also manifested itself in the case of “hybrid actors”. In the Arab-Israeli order, the limitations of sovereignty could be grasped in the continuous Arab questioning of Israel’s sovereignty -omnipresent at least until 1979-, and in the Israeli discrepancies over the limits of its own sovereign territory, of a potential Palestinian State’s and of some its neighbors’. In the Arab-Iranian order, Iran has selectively questioned the principle of non-intervention, and consequently sovereignty. This was especially the case during the historical periods when its foreign policy distanced itself from pragmatism along with revolutionary Islamist dominance of internal political institutions.

FOURTH: Diplomacy is one the institutions part of every regional order analyzed here but, nevertheless, it is shaped in myriad ways depending on the nature of the actors involved and the specific context. The regional recurrence to alternative, non-classic diplomatic channels stands outs especially amid events associated with the amity/enmity patterns. “Backchannel diplomacy”, “peripheral diplomacy” and “minority diplomacy” within the Arab-Israeli order are the result of the lack of diplomatic recognition of Israel by many of the actors participating in it. In the Arab-Iranian order, “substitution diplomacy” and “reinsertion diplomacy” take an outstanding position as consequence of the general ostracism Iran has been subjected to after 1979. In both orders these non-traditional diplomatic mechanisms have been useful to secretly explore cooperation and negotiations adventures among hostile actors. This in turn reinforced the idea that there is a division between the narrative and the factual levels in regional politics mentioned in our third conclusion.

FIFTH: The institution about extra-regional superpowers’ penetration -especially the United States- has been so continuous and central that, as consequence, it has sanctioned expected and legitimate behaviors among sub-regional actors. In the intra-Arab order, the effects of penetration were twofold: regional allies of the superpowers free-ridged and further externalized overseas their security responsibilities; and the articulation of transnational resistance

networks targeting extra-regional penetration. The analysis corroborates the paradox suggested by G. John Ikenberry which claimed that regional actors have been concomitantly worried by global superpowers domination and desertion. In the Arab-Israeli order, American penetration entangled the establishment of political and military cover of Israel in front of the rest of the regional actors. This triggered progressively more restrained Arab actors vis-à-vis Tel Aviv who ultimately became more prone to recognize Israel and not harm their relations with Washington due to this portfolio. Finally, in the Arab-Iranian order the US penetration was the cornerstone of the Shah's regional aspirations until 1979. After the revolution, the superpower helped to socialize and consolidate patterns of hostility towards Iran and it provided a security umbrella for regional actors who felt threatened by Tehran -including managing the nuclear program problem. These actions created and consolidated the institution of the revolutionary solidarity integrated in this order. All this justifies the consideration of extra-regional actors as an integral part of the sub-system and as participants in every order, and not as mere exogenous elements.

SIXTH: The institution of "balance of power" in the overlapping orders of the Middle East and North Africa does not conform to the explanations and predictions of mainstream realist theories, which have traditionally defined the institution. As for the intra-Arab order, the institution of "balance of power policies" manifests itself as a recurring intersubjective idea, based on the perception that political regimes have of who represents a threat to their survival, and not on mechanical responses to changes in power distribution. Power shifts are not always considered a threat and there are many other threats apart from power shifts. Thus, there will be discrepancies on what constitutes a threat based on different perceptions among the Arab actors. This same intersubjectivity manifests itself in the institutions of "amity/enmity patterns" in the Arab-Israeli and Arab-Iranian orders. Both are intersubjective social constructs that condition expected and considered legitimate behavior. The determination and permanence of the idea that Israel or Iran pose a threat, regardless of their relative capabilities, is an apriorism that also denies the systemic effects generated by changes in power. It is true, even so, that the amity/enmity patterns have not remained static and that changes may occur in the social perception of who is a threat. The changes from

1967 in the Arab-Israeli order and from 1979 in the Arab-Iranian order give good account of this. But, in any case, they corroborate the centrality of the perceptions to explain the amity/enmity patterns at the cost of accepting that mechanical reactions such as those proposed by classical theories of the balance of power always take place.

SEVENTH: Each of the regional orders discussed also integrates unique primary institutions without replication in the rest of the sub-system orders. In the case of the intra-Arab order, we find the privileged management of regional power-poles, intra-regional solidarity and Arabism, and the controlled crises. The first standardizes special behaviors and responsibilities for certain actors based on perceptions (own and social) about who should exercise leadership in collective action. The second institutionalizes enhanced cooperation mechanisms among a specific group of regional actors based on a shared conception of what it means to be an Arab and the existence of a shared destiny. The concrete normative content of intra-regional solidarity and Arabism, in parallel, represented a point of contention among Arabs as different opinions coexisted on whether or not it was necessary to leave behind sovereignty among Arab States in the interest of furthering an integration process. The third describes behind-the-curtains venues for collaboration as exercises of regularized overreaction in international crises for the exclusive benefit of political leaders (and to guarantee their continuity in power). In the case of the Arab-Israeli order, we find limited agreements for the management of armed conflict, the policies derived from Israel's nuclear deterrence and the controlled crises. In the first case, the institution refers to a set of rules, not necessarily explicit, that establish a *modus vivendi* between Israel and Jordan, Syria and Egypt that, as least, established precepts on how it was expected that force would be used. In the second case, the Israeli possession of nuclear weapons has generated the repetition of a specific behavior by the rest of the actors in the sub-system: in essence, it could be summarized in a lack of appetite for direct high-intensity conflicts from 1973 onwards. In the third case, the effects of the controlled crises are practically equal to those stated in the case of the intra-Arab order. In the case of the Arab-Iranian order, the institution of revolutionary solidarity has standardized enhanced cooperation between Iran, Syria and non-state actors such as

Hezbollah, Hamas or Islamic Jihad in Palestine. Based on this institution, specific roles are configured for the participants and their interests are constrained and shaped based on logics of resistance against extra-regional powers, Israel and regional *status quo* supporters.

EIGHTH: "Proxy wars" are a primary institution of all the analyzed orders and, therefore, it fulfills an ordering function, although state and non-state actors participate in it in different ways. On the one hand, these wars have served a systemic objective, whether premeditated or not by the participants: proxy wars have functioned as an escape valve from the hostilities of the actors in the sub-system. They have also served to articulate some sort of zones of influence around the regional poles of power in their quest to prevent warfare close to their borders (Israel is an exception in this sense). On the other hand, the actors have demonstrated with their behavior the existence of behavioral guidelines on how it is used and what is expected and legitimate in its framework. The most notable example has been that of not considering the attack on military resources deployed by foreign participants as justification for a declaration of war against the actor responsible for the aggression.

NINTH: As pointed out in the second conclusion, the relations between regional actors, in addition to the different regional orders, are also determined by institutions and norms of the global order that integrate the regional order in two different ways. In the first place, regional actors directly incorporate regimes and treaties of universal scope thus guiding how regional relations take shape. This is generally the case in technical areas and with treaties of a functional nature. Second, the global order is manifested in intra-systemic relations through the localization of norms. Actors decide to implement an adaptation exercise whereby they incorporate or transpose global norms in their own relationships after introducing modifications. The spectrum of these changes can range from merely cosmological modifications to true variations on normative precepts or fundamental principles. The theoretical tool proposed in this dissertation on "normative syncretism" helps us to classify and analyze the different ways in which global norms are located (autonomation, isolation, identification, metamorphosis,

amalgamation and symbiosis).

ON THE THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH ON REGIONAL ORDERS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA SUB-SYSTEM

TENTH: International orders, at global or regional level, do not require the existence of shared objectives among the participants. The institutions and norms that compose them can be promoted, accepted and put into practice by each actor participating for different reasons. Not even minimum objectives such as those assumed by Hedley Bull in his description of the three purposes of any social order are necessary. The institutions regarding the amity/enmity patterns analyzed for the Arab-Israeli and Arab-Iranian orders are a clear example in that respect: it is difficult to sustain the existence of shared objectives on the basis of such orders – even more to be based on shared ideas about the importance of preserving life, fulfilling commitments and respecting property, as stated by Bull's proposal. Alternatively, we propose to understand that orders can be the result of adaptations to other actor's behavior, that generate expectations through repetition. They could not only be the result of an implicit or tacit agreement between actors to establish a *modus vivendi* that grants certain objectives (not even the survival of all its participants). This last idea allows us to reaffirm the validity of a conception of order in which the main element is the repetition of scientifically observed behavior, which is opposed to contractualist views based on the promotion of shared objectives among the participants as a *sine qua non* condition.

ELEVENTH: International orders, at global or regional level, are immersed in a process of continuous change that causes the specific content of their primary institutions and norms to mutate progressively over time. In part, this dynamism is due to the fact that its institutions and norms are the result of intersubjective agreements between actors that operate fundamentally at the ideas domain or that, at least, this particular domain greatly determines its structural-material dimension. Continuous learning, interpretation and implementation reshape the normative content of the orders and they demonstrate that changes do not necessarily have to be as abrupt as

suggested by part of the literature. In line with the second wave of studies on the processes of norm creation and evolution, the examined regional orders show that orders tend to be less static than expected if the theoretical premises here suggested were not taken into account. The evolution of sovereignty, intra-Arab solidarity and Arabism, or extra-regional penetration in the intra-Arab order or even the most abrupt evolution of the amity/enmity patterns in the Arab-Israeli and Arab-Iranian orders are clear examples. On some occasions, the definition of the normative content of the institutions and their possible modification can become a matter of dispute in itself, as demonstrated by the case of the debate between sovereignty and Arabism in the intra-Arab order. The perennial fluidity of norms and their implementation recommends paying attention to evolutionary and incremental changes, rather than focusing on changes of orders and changes within orders narrowing the scope of research to the few rupturing moments that an international system experiences.

TWELFTH: The role that non-state actors play in the evolution of certain norms and institutions in specific contexts proves their centrality in the construction of order and, therefore, they must be integral part in any rigorous scientific analysis. Their participation and interaction with the norms and institutions of the different orders has though peculiarities stemming from their nature. Although attention has been paid to their role as international actors since the irruption of transnationalism, a leftover continues to exist among theorists and practitioners of international relations for which they are systematically relegated to a secondary explanatory role. They are usually accepted as a mere recipient of or as a part impacted by the actions and decisions of state actors. But real and consistent recognition of their agency as, for example, shapers of global norms through their behavior and relationships with other actors remains uncommon. The study of the Middle East sub-system shows that some non-state actors have great capacities, in some cases even greater than those of some states. Their conduct affects, and is affected by, the institutions and norms created by the repetition of their interactions with state actors or with other non-state actors. Its exclusion harms any reliable analysis of international orders.

THIRTEENTH: The analysis and knowledge of the subsystem of the Middle East and North Africa requires overcoming the interdisciplinary division and the reductionist approaches that might go hand in hand with it. Contrary to the exceptionality suggested by many specialists in Area Studies, the international political reality of the sub-system of the Middle East and North Africa is fully valid both to generate and to test International Relations' theoretical approaches. Any alleged peculiarity about the region or its members does not mean an unfathomable limit to the illative vocation of international theory. This, in addition, contributes to the understanding of what happens in the sub-system. The application that this dissertation makes of the theoretical frameworks of the English School and constructivism in its analysis of the norms and institutions of the regional orders is intended to be a test of the validity of international theory to understand regional politics. Approaches, such as those from the Area Studies, aspiring only to describe the specificities of the sub-system can and must be overcome without this implying that theories are not endowed with sufficient flexibility to maintain their explanatory capacity in diverse contexts. Alternatively, there is still enough room for the inclusion of the international reality of the Middle East in the construction of theories of International Relations. A supposed *ex-ante* exceptionality should not be taken for granted to avoid contrasting theories with the regional reality or justifying that the theories of International Relations are not capable of explaining the international reality of the region. The theoretical reformulation of the balance of power logics proposed in this dissertation for the intra-Arab order shows that the reality of the region allows us to rethink and refine the theoretical underpinnings of the discipline. Exceptionality begins and ends in the observation that specialists make of any reality that we decide to treat as alien.