



MANAGING PEACEFUL TRANSITIONS: EVIDENCE AND EXPERIENCE

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Introduction: How can recent Bank-led research on development, security and conflict inform policy choices in MENA? The ‘Arab spring’ has presented a level of protest and political transition in the region not seen since the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the colonization period in the middle of the twentieth century. However, research shows that leadership changes in MENA have often been followed for a couple of years by the heightened risk of conflict and violence as newly-arrived regimes and citizenries attempt to assert their authority and rights. Recent transitions therefore pose a challenge to national reformers and development institutions alike: what development measures are most likely to support peaceful recovery and transformation?

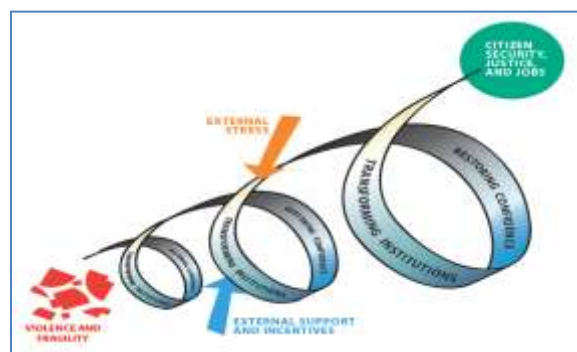
This Quick Note considers that question from the perspective of the 2011 World Development Report (WDR) on “Conflict, Security, and Development” and a complementary regional Bank study.² When the WDR conducted its regional launch in Cairo in May 2011, experts recounting the ‘proven experience’ of transition countries elsewhere gave the research findings an added level of reality. This

note summarises that combination of research and experience with suggestions for new approaches.

The Lessons of Transitions - what the research tells us: Political transitions—ranging from elections to peace agreements after civil wars—have often been followed by repeated cycles of violence. During transitions, new forms of conflict and violence such as crime and communal violence can be a major threat to the sustainability of development activities. Grievances that are not addressed during transitions can escalate into acute demands for change and risks of violent conflict.

To break repeated cycles of violence, political transitions need to (1) build confidence by building “inclusive enough coalitions” and (2) transform the institutions that provide citizen security, justice, and jobs. As noted in the WDR 2011, as violence repeats, efforts to build confidence and transform institutions typically follow a repeated spiral. Countries that moved away from fragility and violence often do so not through one decisive “make or break” moment—but through many transitional moments (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Moving from fragility and violence to institutional resilience in citizen security, and jobs



Source: WDR 2011 on “conflict, security, and development”

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² World Development Report Overview, “Conflict, security, and development”, World Bank, April 2011, and Regional study on Conflict, Fragility, and development, “Reducing Conflict Risk: conflict, security, and development in the Middle East and North Africa”, World Bank, expected October 2011

For each loop of the spiral, the same two phases recur: building confidence that positive change is possible, prior to deepening the institutional transformation and strengthening governance.

Creating the legitimate institutions that can prevent repeated violence is slow. The fastest transforming countries have taken about a generation, between 15-30 years, to raise their institutional performance. This process of transforming institutions accelerated considerably in the 20th century with increases in citizens' demands for good governance and in the technologies that can help supply it. (Table 1)

Table 1. Fastest progress in institutional transformation – an estimate of realistic ranges

Indicator	Years to threshold	
	Fastest 20	Fastest over the threshold
Bureaucratic quality	20	12
Corruption	27	14
Military in politics	17	10
Government effectiveness	36	13
Rule of law	41	17

Source: Pritchett and de Weijer 2010

National reformers and their international partners need to assess transitions circumstances and adapt lessons from others to the local political context. For instance, in middle income countries that are known to have strong institutions, they often face issues of accountability and exclusion during transitions. Hence, national reformers and their international partners need to think through the political economy of interventions and adapt program design to that context drawing upon lessons from countries that faced similar challenges such as Indonesia, Eastern Europe, Latin American, and South Africa.

Managing Transitions: Non-MENA Experiences:

First steps: the importance of confidence building during transitions: Confidence building in

situations of transitions requires deliberate efforts (1) to build inclusive-enough coalitions through collaboration between the government and other sectors of the society and (2) to identify local community priorities to deliver early results programs.

The success of political transition in South Africa in 1994 required shifting the “mindset” of the different parties to be more inclusive. The African National Congress (ANC) Alliance had to adopt a broader and more inclusive approach to ensure the needs and incentives of the National Party and the white population. On the other hand, the National Party had to shift its thinking from group rights and protection of minorities to individual rights and majority rule. Inclusive strategies were used for security, social and economic issues, not just political: for example, South Africa had participatory forums to debate economic, labor and housing policy and “peace committees” at national, provincial and local level which helped minimize violence during the pre and post electoral periods.³

Quick results can help build confidence. After the 1994 elections in South Africa, delivering a few early results—including maternal and infant healthcare and using community structures to improve water supply—were important to maintain confidence in the new government. Similarly, in Argentina and Indonesia, rapid action on social protection programs helped build confidence in the new government’s ability to care for citizens. As transitions take time, bottom up processes through decentralization reforms and community driven development that enable citizen participation and improvement of services can yield to quick results as was effectively done in Indonesia.⁴

Confidence-building measures can include removing sources of harassment as well as providing new services. In Indonesia, the reform agenda was as much a list of what people did not like (military domination, corruption, human rights

³ Input on South Africa is provided by Jay Naidoo, Chairman of Global Alliance for Improved nutrition; former General Secretary Congress of South African Trade Unions, Minister for Reconstruction and Development, South Africa; and Chairman of the Development Bank of South Africa

⁴ World Bank, “Supporting Social Accountability in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons Learned from Past Political and Economic Transitions”, October, 2011

abuses and centralization of power) as an expression of peoples' positive demands. Following the Rose revolution in Georgia, the newly formed government had to adopt immediate measures to enhance quality of services in order to fight corruption and restore confidence in the transitional process. The first step came in the abolition of the traffic police and, over time, their replacement with a professional force that was focused on serving the public rather than bribe-taking. Also, the government put into action a national entrance examination for higher education that eliminated corruption in university placement and prevented 'the rich from buying their way in'.⁵

Government outreach to civil society is critical to building confidence and trust. In post-revolutionary environments of raised expectations, new governments have opportunities to engage citizens and stakeholders from all segments of society at every level of decision-making: civil society organizations, local communities, representatives of the poor and vulnerable, religious groups, and women's groups. Such engagement should be supported by mechanisms for genuine dialogue. Political and economic transitions in countries such as Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Turkey, Spain, and Portugal show how crises can lead to democratic transitions, strengthen relationship between citizens and government, and create new opportunities for reform and economic growth. Providing mechanisms for participation in policy dialogue could also reduce the risk of political instability.⁶

Following through: the importance of institutional transformation during transitions:

Creating the legitimate institutions that can build confidence and prevent repeated violence is slow and takes a generation. There is a limit to the amount of change societies can absorb, and reforms need to get the right amount of time to ensure successful transformation.

⁵ Input on Georgia provided by Vato Lejaba, Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister of Georgia, Nikoloz Gilori, on Economic and Governance Affairs

⁶ World Bank, "Supporting Social Accountability in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons Learned from Past Political and Economic Transitions", October, 2011

Institutional transformation in the political and security areas has generally started early but taken time to complete. In Chile, civilian oversight and elimination of the most abusive security units and redeployment of senior personnel within the security services were undertaken quickly. Rapid action on civilian oversight of the Carbinieri was combined with procedures on the promotion and the confirmation processes of judges which encouraged lower-level prosecutorial independence. However, initial processes of accountability for past human rights abuses were limited in scope, and investigations proceeded in a paced manner for over 20 years following the initial transition. Equally, in Indonesia, new laws on the military and the police were only introduced several years after the initial transition. Many laws introduced during the early transitional period, such as the electoral and regional autonomy laws underwent subsequent revision. Surveys and polls emerged as an important tool for gauging popular perceptions.⁷

In addition to political and security reforms, job creation, capacity building, and strengthening local governance are necessary for supporting institutional transformation. In Indonesia, the end of Suharto's autocratic regime in May 1998 was precipitated by the Asian Financial crisis that led to the collapse of the Indonesian economy and caused mass riots primarily led by youth. In this context, the transitional government had to adopt reforms to show its commitment to transformation. The Kecamatan Development Program (KDP), a national Government of Indonesia program, implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Community Development Office, was launched in 1998 to alleviate poverty, strengthen local government and community institutions, and improve local governance. KDP focused on engaging local communities in decision-making, emphasizing transparency and information sharing, and supporting broad based participation in the various activities especially by youth and women.⁸ In Georgia, targeting the poorest 10 percent of families in social assistance was important to create confidence in the transition and a longer-term sense

⁷ Input on Chile provided by General Juan Emilio Cheyre, Founder and Director of the Center for International Studies at the Catholic University of Chile; Commander in Chief of the Army 2002-2006

⁸ Input on Indonesia provided by Professor Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Associate Director for Research, The Habibie Center

of institutional legitimacy. Chile, Argentina, Georgia, Indonesia and Colombia all adopted measures that balanced macroeconomic stability with maintaining popular support for social investments.

Selected Recommendations: As the 2011 WDR and regional study move into a longer term dissemination phase, the following recommendations appear most relevant to MENA. First, to prevent large-scale political or criminal violence and to ensure peaceful transitions, development partners need to broaden the traditional development paradigm. Building confidence and strengthening the institutions that provide security, justice, and jobs are crucial to changing the probabilities of violence and to continuous risk reduction. Development approaches needed to support these measures would include:

- **Moving from sporadic early warning to continuous risk assessment:** development organizations need to assess wherever weak institutional legitimacy and internal or external stresses indicate a need for attention prevention and to capacities for peaceful reform processes.⁹
- **Providing budget support and technical assistance for citizen security and justice in joint teams and supporting financing collaborative and mediated agreements:** development organizations need to support a joint process supporting national planning that covers the political, justice, security, humanitarian, and development areas. For example, the Bank can support measures that address budget and expenditure processes in security and justice, while partners with security and justice expertise can contribute to technical capacity-building.
- **Supporting state community, state-NGOs, state-private sector programs for service delivery and multi-sectoral violence prevention:** multisectoral programs involved in policing, justice, and development can provide local dispute resolution and justice services, community policing, employment and training, safe public and trading spaces, and social and cultural programs promoting tolerance.
- **Considering when humanitarian aid can be integrated into national programs without compromising humanitarian principles.** During transitions, there is a big reliance on humanitarian

aid to deliver early results. These programs led by organizations such as the UNDP and UN Children's fund, can offer best practices to the Bank and other development organizations in combining humanitarian delivery with capacity-building using local personnel and community structures.

Box1: Adapting community-level program design to country context

Community Development programs, implemented during transitions, require contextual analysis of the type of transition and the impacts of the alignment between community decision-making structures and formal government administration. In many countries emerging from conflict, and where development programs are under state auspices, aligning community programs with emergent government structures that are undergoing reforms may be difficult and might de-legitimize these programs.

Source: WDR 2011 on "conflict, security, and development"

Conclusion: Political transitions in the MENA region are still playing out in different ways in different countries with unpredictable outcomes. The development prognosis for each country is different and will depend upon case-by-case analysis and remedies in line with local demands and international capabilities. This note does not imply generic solutions for the region, but a clear sense that evidence and experience from countries who have successfully managed transitions is a positive example to countries in MENA struggling with rapid change.

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⁹ World Development Report Overview, "Conflict, security, and Development", World Bank, April 2011