The perennial outsider: Israel and regional order change post-2011

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THE PERENNIAL OUTSIDER: ISRAEL AND REGIONAL ORDER CHANGE POST-2011

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A series of popular protests broke out across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) a decade ago. The uprisings were quickly hailed a game changer for MENA politics and dubbed the 'Arab Spring', but the vision of authoritarian regimes collapsing in rapid succession proved a mirage.[1] If the uprisings' effect on intrastate politics has been overestimated, their impact on the region's interstate politics is still considered deeply transformative. Raymond Hinnebusch asserted that the uprisings have 'wrought major change in the . . . regional order'.[2] Louise Fawcett observed that 'the entire fabric of the regional system has been rocked by the consequences of the popular uprisings', throwing MENA's fragile order into sharp relief.[3] Marc Lynch argued that regional politics were reshaped to the point that 'the new order is fundamentally one of disorder.'[4]

Observers tend to agree on the downhill direction of change, but opinions diverge over its extent: are we witnessing major change *within* regional order, or a change *of* the order itself? A consortium of fourteen research institutes from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa collaborated between 2016 and 2019 under the framework of the MENARA project to answer this question.[5] They concluded that shifts in the region's geopolitical dynamics amount to changes *within* order, and suggested that researchers tend to overestimate order change because they focus on regional and global levels of analysis while 'ignoring important changes at the intersection between domestic and regional politics'.[6]

MENARA's project is unprecedented for its comprehensive approach,

but I find this explanation overstates the case and misses the point.[7] Disagreement over the extent of order change is better explained, in the first place, by the cross-wired nature of the conversation. Assessments vary primarily because scholars diverge in conceiving the object of inquiry: 'international order'.[8] Fundamental as the concept of 'order' is to social inquiry, it is inherently diffuse,[9] and scholars' tendency to employ it intuitively and offhandedly goes a long way to explain their differences over order change.[10] My argument goes a step further: studies of MENA order tend to misestimate change in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings because they systematically disregard an important actor in regional order-making and a key driver of order change: Israel.

The following section surveys the post-2011 literature to demonstrate the wide variation among studies in approach to 'regional order' and point to one commonality: none seriously factors Israel into their analyses. The difficulty in taking Israel into account is explained, and the ways in which Israel partakes in shaping regional order are explored. The chapter argues that Israel's role is by no means negligible: Israel offers more than an external or a mere bystander perspective on regional order. The paper defines Israel as an outsider-member of the regional society of states, and its primary social boundary marker at that. As such, Israel plays a unique and essential role in constituting both the region and its social order. In general terms, I posit that to fully grasp social order change we must turn our gaze to relations evolving with society's liminal members. In the context of social order, societal outsiders offer more than just peripheral perspectives on core affairs. They are not merely passive objects of threat and opportunity beheld by core members; they are interactants that meaningfully partake in the ongoing process of societal order-making, and their relations of amity or enmity shape that order in a singular and significant way.

Cross-wired Conversation over Regional Order Post-2011

The debate over international order muddies rather quickly when conversation carries across theoretical schools of thought. Working from an IR-realist approach, Erzsébet Rózsa highlights the proliferation of 'weak states' in the region and US withdrawal from the region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. In consequence, she observes, Saudi Arabia and Egypt assumed 'a leadership role', positioning themselves alongside three regional power centres whose ascent pre-dated 2011: the non-Arab states of Israel, Iran and Turkey. Rózsa

concludes that 'the post-colonial regional order in the Middle East', which has been eroding since the end of the Cold War, is now 'finally and definitively reshaping' into a five-power multipolar system.[11] Rózsa's analysis boils 'order' down to the power structure among interdependent units in a geopolitical state system. She sees order change in terms of the consolidation and disintegration of units, and shifting distribution of relative power among them. Rózsa uses the concept descriptively, assigning order as such no particular functional end or normative value. Order as power structure matters insofar as it gives rise to (transiently) converging interests that shape regional patterns of rivalry and alliance among states.

Rózsa's unit of analysis, 'the Middle East', takes into account both Arab and non-Arab states. Israel factors into the relative power analysis but is quickly set apart from the region's other four emerging power poles on account of its cultural and economic disconnect from neighbouring states. Rózsa urges us to understand Israel's regional relevance only in terms of 'its capacity [to militarily] defend itself, rather than as a "core-state" in any political or civilizational (à la Huntington) sense'. Whereas other regional powers are analysed in terms of their interaction patterns (that is, leadership bids, axes of alliance and expanding spheres of influence), Israel matters only as a counterweight object. Rózsa explores how Israel's own threat perception shifted in light of the uprisings but precludes it from engaging in geostrategic relations that interactively shape regional order.[12] This leads her to conclude that Israel's increased isolation and disinterest in solving the Palestine issue make it 'impossible for the Gulf Arab states to join Israel in its attempt to curb the perceived Iranian threat of the nuclear program'.[13]

Lynch, too, approaches the question of regional order in realist terms. He observes that the uprisings' 'fallout fundamentally altered the regional balance of power':[14] while traditional powers such as Egypt and Syria, consumed with domestic conflict, were no longer able to project power abroad, wealthy Gulf states successfully employed their robust repressive capacity and central position in transnational networks of business, media and ideology to expand their regional influence.[15] As profound regime insecurity afflicted all Arab regimes, classic 'security dilemmas' proliferated, and regional dynamics grew ever more turbulent:[16] 'formal alliances and conventional conflicts between major states' gave way to a disarray of destructive proxy conflicts among 'influence peddling' regional powers, sowing chaos throughout the region.[17] The region's 'new order is fundamentally one of disorder',[18] Lynch concludes: the power

balance among Arab states post-2011 can no longer sustain order from within the region, while the United States had lost its hegemonic 'power or the standing to impose a regional order' from the outside.[19]

Whereas for Rózsa order denotes the structure of *power* among units of a state system, Lynch conceives order as a pattern of *interaction* among them. For him, order signifies specifically a *settled* dynamic, a modicum of stability in the inescapable anarchy of international relations. Insofar as Lynch associates order with a particular pattern of interaction, his concept is not merely descriptive, but functional.[20] In his framework, balanced distributions of power are sources of order; they are of interest as solutions to the problem of turbulent interaction dynamics. How does Israel factor into the settling or unsettling of regional interaction dynamics post-2011? Lynch refers to 'Middle Eastern order'[21] as his object of inquiry. In practice, however, he focuses on interactions among, and the balance of power between, Arab states. Turkey and Iran are mentioned as partaking in regional interaction dynamics,[22] but ultimately Lynch brings analysis to the conclusion that the upheaval gave rise to 'a new *Arab* order'[23] (my emphasis). Non-Arab Turkey and Iran factor tangentially, insofar as Arab states perceive them as objects of threat and opportunity. When it comes to the dynamics of interstate relations, Israel entirely falls off Lynch's analytical radar.

Helle Malmvig calls for analyses of regional order to move beyond 'realist perspectives based on materialist understanding of power'.[24] In her assessment, the Arab uprisings have not changed the system's material power structure: the balance of power remains multipolar. Therefore, she argues, 'If we are to capture how regional order is changing as a result of the Arab Uprisings', our understanding of power must 'broaden to include normative power'.[25] Employing a constructivist securitisation approach, Malmvig concludes that regional order has changed insofar as the substance of regional norms and the balance of normative power have shifted since 2011. She observes that regional politics post-2011 revolve less around 'traditional issues of Palestine, Israel and the West', while the Sunni–Shi'a sectarian divide has deepened, broadened and grown securitised by multiple state and non-state actors. Furthermore, the Resistance Front (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas) that had gained 'widespread popularity in Arab societies' at the turn of the century saw its normative power diminish following the war in Syria.[26] Malmvig's approach mirrors Rózsa's in using order to describe the system's power structure, though she stirs ideational power resources into the analytical mix, together with material ones.

Non-Arab Iran factors prominently in Malmvig's analysis of the changing 'Middle East' normative order, but neither Israel nor Turkey is mentioned in this context. This may well be due to the brevity of her think piece; nonetheless, it indicates she does not consider Israel as holding a notable stake in the region's normative power structuring process. Israel is not analysed as a securitising actor, only as an object of other actors' securitisation acts.

Hinnebusch's theoretically eclectic approach is, in some ways, close to Malmvig's.[27] His engagement with the question of regional order is longer ranging and more elaborate, but underlying it is a similar premise that 'what order exists in MENA rests largely on a power balance' that hinges as much on ideational as on material factors.[28] Historically, he writes, Arab state interactions 'approximated a Lockean order' that was built on a sense of shared identity and Egyptian near-hegemony. 'Nasser's pan-Arab regime' (1955–70) cultivated identity-based norms that effectively constrained the use of violence in inter-Arab power struggles: conflicts were mostly limited to ideological rivalry, discourse wars and regime subversion in a period that came to be known as the 'Arab Cold War'. Though counterbalancing swiftly curtailed Egypt's hegemonic bid,[29] pan-Arab norms still worked to confine the use of military means primarily to conflicts across the Arab–non-Arab fault line (vis-à-vis Israel and Iran). The 1990 Gulf War established American hegemony in the region, which temporarily muted military conflicts. But in the long run, Washington failed to impose pax-Americana in the region. Its interventions gave rise to a new discourse war between the anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist 'resistance axis', and the Western-aligned 'moderate bloc'.[30]

According to Hinnebush, the uprisings profoundly altered the distribution of power among states, transforming in consequence the regional identity field wherein the interstate power struggle plays out. Hinnebush describes how the uprisings debilitated the historically central secular Arab republics (Egypt, Iraq, Syria), draining power 'away to the periphery of the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, and to the non-Arab powers, Turkey and Iran . . .'[31] The region remained as insecure and multipolar as ever, but the proliferation of weak and failed states 'forced [people] to fall back on their primordial [identity] communities for protection'.[32] The Islamism of the periphery states, increasingly fractured along Sunni–Shi'a sectarian lines, came to displace the long-wounded Arabism as the primary trans-state identity out of which shared norms can be constructed.[33] Hinnebusch argues that whereas secular pan-Arab identity gave rise to a set of norms that constrained the use of violence in inter-Arab

power struggles, religious sectarian identities 'prescribed uncompromising jihad *within* the Islamic umma against heresy', intense enmity that demonises opponents as infidels, and intractable conflict.[34] Consequently, the interstate power struggle 'has taken new, more violent and intense forms',[35] shifting from discourse wars and financial backing of clients to massively violent proxy wars through the provision of arms, fighters and even military incursions.[36] By 2014, regional conflict came to assume 'features of an unrestrained Hobbesian struggle for power'.[37]

Like Lynch, Hinnebusch speaks of order as a pattern of interaction among states locked in a perpetual power struggle.[38] Both scholars place value on a particular pattern, though Lynch associates order with a settled, stable dynamic, whereas Hinnebusch associates order with restrained violence (in terms of its intensity and means). Hinnebusch offers an elaborate narrative of a Middle Eastern 'slide towards a Hobbesian order'[39] of unrestrained violence post-2011, which he lays out with barely a reference to Israel. At the outset, he identifies the MENA[40] as his unit of analysis: a system of states bound together by security interdependence and a conflictual pattern of interaction. Formally, Israel is considered 'an integral part of the region's conflicts and its balance of power'.[41] Yet, as his impressively wide-ranging narrative unfolds, it systematically overlooks Israel as an actor with the potential to shape regional order, even in the most rudimentary, 'realist' of ways: the distribution of power among states. When discussing shifts in the regional system post-2011, Hinnebusch counts Israel only once among the relative power-gainers.[42] As he proceeds to consider how the 'peripheral' power-gainers could shape regional order, in terms of expanding or protecting their spheres of influence and launching hegemonic bids, he refers to Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey; Israel drops off the list.[43] Hinnebusch brings Israel into his account of regional order only through the eyes of other regional actors: as a source of chronic grievance that galvanises the masses and as an object of threat against which states counterbalance. Israel is not seriously considered as a social interactant whose relations, above and beyond its power position and unilateral actions, may play a role in constructing and shaping the MENA regional order.

The Misfit: Shoehorning Israel into Regional Society

The studies reviewed are diverse in terms of their theoretical approaches and conceptual frameworks. Interestingly, even though each conceives 'interna-

tional order' differently, all converge in concluding that the MENA region is dramatically less ordered post-2011. The literature survey highlights a further (and I propose, related) commonality, a consistent blindspot: none of the studies takes Israel seriously into account when examining processes of regional ordering.[44] All identified the ME(NA) state system as their unit of analysis and demarcated it primarily by degree of security interdependence among states. In principle, therefore, all see Israel as part of this state system. In fact, they generally recognise it as one of the system's most powerful units, continually and even increasingly so. None is likely to contest the claim that Israel regularly interacts with other states in the system, albeit in limited spheres of activity and often on adversarial terms. Yet, explicitly or implicitly, studies end up treating Israel as an external factor rather than an integral actor in regional order-making. Is it reasonable to think that a regional power of Israel's magnitude would have but a negligible, incidental effect on regional order? Is it reasonable to think we could fully grasp MENA regional order, let alone assess its shifting state, while overlooking a key stakeholder in it?

It is worth mentioning here that even studies that focus on Israel and set out to explore its foreign relations post-2011 are disinclined to consider it a regional order-shaper. Studies describe how the uprisings changed Israel's geostrategic environment and thereby heightened the country's threat perception, affected its domestic politics and shaped its foreign policy reaction.[45] The few who undertake to locate 'Israel's Place in a Changing Regional Order' do not in fact go far beyond the aspects above: they too are interested in Israel's perspective on the region, essentially in isolated, non-relational terms.[46] Israel remains a bystander, an 'external actor' whose 'posture' and (unilateral) actions are 'essentially designed to insulate itself from the regional upheaval'.[47] Left unasked are questions of whether and how Israel's interactions and relations of amity and enmity are shaping regional order.

Why is Israel omitted from analyses of regional ordering? The difficulty could be traced to the classic conception of 'international order' that was put forward in the most widely cited work on the subject: *The Anarchical Society*, published by Hedley Bull in 1977. For Bull, order entails society; indeed, Bull conceptualised international order as the property that distinguishes state societies from state systems. This fundamental distinction underlies the difficulty in analysing MENA order: recognising Israel as a unit of the regional state system is straightforward, the challenge lies in coming to terms with it as a member of the regional society of states.

Bull defines 'international system' as a group of states (or more generally a group of independent political communities) wherein 'the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others.'[48] Such a group of interdependent states can come to form a society when they 'perceive common interests in a structure of coexistence' among them, and on that basis 'conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions'.[49] In other words, Bull posits that when a preponderance of a system's states recognises coexistence as a common interest,[50] these states may 'tacitly or explicitly . . . consent to common rules and institutions' that prescribe how their 'interaction should proceed',[51] and thereby form a society. Bull defines 'international order' as a societal state of affairs wherein interdependent states tend to conform to the rules and institutions that sustain their coexistence,[52] and the emergence of such a pattern of conduct among states constitutes them as a *functioning* society.

Thus conceived, order is potential, functional and intentional. Potential in that it is a condition that emerges if and when states' behaviour towards one another overall conforms to rules and institutions that sustain their primary goal of coexistence.[53] Importantly, Bull recognises here that order is inherently precarious, and requires only that 'most states at most times pay some respect to the basic rules of coexistence in international society.'[54] Functional in that order is a pattern of social activity that (at least to some degree) enables states to attain common goals, primary and secondary.[55] Often overlooked is the point that Bull's concept of 'order' is also intentional: pattern is not any regularity discerned in the aggregated behaviour of society's members towards one another; Bull emphasises that such regularity must be 'brought about at least partly by contrivance', as opposed to emerging spontaneously, in a purely fortuitous way.[56] Thus, states bound into the social form of a system might feature 'some elements of order' derived from a haphazardly balanced distribution of power (as distinguished from the deliberate adherence to the evolved institution of power-balancing that is the provenance of state societies). Ultimately, he writes, 'An international system of this kind would be disorderly in the extreme, and would in fact exemplify the Hobbesian state of nature.'[57] Finally, Bull's conception of order does *not* require peaceful, amicable or even dialogic relations among the states, only a pattern of activity undertaken *deliberately* in pursuit of a coexistence structure. Indeed, enemy states can just as well see themselves as bound by a common set of rules and effectively cooperate

in the working of common institutions in a conscious effort to sustain an international structure of coexistence (even if they contest the legitimacy of any particular state's claim to exist). Nor does Bull's conception of order presuppose ties of identity and shared culture binding interstate societies. Bull conceived international societies as bound together only by common consent to rules and institutions that sustain a structure of coexistence, and while he recognised that affinities of value, identity, or culture may enhance states' commitment to coexistence, for him 'the role of culture is an empirical question to be investigated, not an analytic assumption.'[58]

Bull's conceptual framework allows us to think of the MENA system of states, Israel included, as a society wherein states' conduct can sustain a degree of order that shifts across time. Hinnebusch is one of the many scholars who explicitly builds on Bull's work when analysing the MENA regional order.[59] All MENA states, he writes, 'tied together by conflict . . . constitute a "security complex" but only the thinnest of international societies';[60] the MENA is a state system 'embraced by a rather dysfunctional [and fractured] form of international society'.[61] Hinnebusch recognises a minimal set of global institutions, 'understood practices such as sovereignty, diplomacy and power-balancing', as operating in this regional society, and concludes that what order exists in MENA rests largely on power-balancing, an institution that can preserve pluralism in systems of states, but not durable peace among them. But, he hastens to add, one of the region's 'enduring and distinctive features' is that balancing is as much against legitimacy threats as military ones.[62] This is explained by the arbitrary borders imposed on Arab states by European imperialism. As a result, citizen loyalty is continually undercut by allegiance to Arab and Islamic 'supra-state communities', leaving Arab states 'debilitated by enduring legitimacy deficits'.[63] Consequently, Hinnebusch argues, the MENA interstate power struggle is particularly prone to being 'muted or exacerbated' by norms constructed out of 'powerful' identities that are widely shared at the region's inter-human relational domain. Hinnebusch ascribes to such identity-based norms a very strong, even primary, effect in shaping the MENA regional order overall and across time. Specifically, he brings his analysis to the conclusion that

> insofar as the Arab states enjoyed a common Arab identity, the system approximated a Lockean order in which shared norms muted conflict. The change in the normative structure since the Arab uprising, in which Arabism

> has been displaced by Sunni–Shia sectarianism, has precipitated a slide toward a Hobbesian order [of unrestrained interstate violence].[64]

This is the move that leaves Israel largely outside the frame of Hinnebusch's regional order analysis. Israel is the only state in the region that belongs to neither identity-based 'supra-state community'; indeed, antagonism towards it is the key issue that traditionally unites the two, largely overlapping, communities. As ordering principles, both pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism have precluded collaborating with Israel so long as there is no just solution to the Palestinian plight. In this sense working with Israel is a critical liability to the legitimacy claims of states in the region. Insofar as Hinnebusch sees the MENA as a region where 'the most typical balancing dynamic has been "soft balancing"',[65] Israel – an actor endowed with ample military 'hard power' but singularly devoid of 'soft ideational power' – is rendered largely irrelevant to the regional institution of power-balancing. Much to the same effect, Malmvig foregrounds 'normative power'[66] structuring as key to understanding regional order change. Rózsa follows this line of thought when she explicitly rules Israel out as partaker in MENA balancing: Israel's cultural disconnect from neighbouring states and its hardline stance towards the Palestinians, she writes, make it 'impossible for the Gulf Arab states to join Israel in its attempt to curb the perceived Iran threat of the nuclear program'.[67]

First, I question Hinnebusch's assumption that an enduring feature of the MENA as a whole is that states balance against legitimacy/ideational threats as much as against military/material ones. The generalisation certainly holds for some states, some of the time, but as Hinnebusch's own narrative makes clear, it does not easily extend beyond the Arab states' society 'nested' within the MENA, and properly only applies there up to the 1980s.[68] Second, to the extent that domestic legitimacy considerations do factor into MENA states' balancing conduct, pan-Arabism/-Islamism principles did not altogether prevent the practice of sharing with Israel in the common institution of power-balancing. Hinnebusch rightly notes that Arab alliances with Israel 'tend to be excluded by ideological norms . . . even if these would serve the security interests of regimes/states . . .'[69] But, short of forging open alliances, many regional states have long coordinated and collaborated with Israel in shaping regional order away from the public eye, by way of informal alignments, tacit security regimes and implicit understandings. Examples abound of significant and long-term security coordination and cooperation between Israel and Arab

states, such that is non-contractual and comes into existence when 'signals and subtleties are exchanged more often than not behind the scenes, between the lines, and under the table, via back channels involving indirect but also direct communication.'[70] Among them we find Israel's relations with Jordan, Egypt and the Gulf states in the decades prior to the signing of peace treaties.[71] Another notable example is the consolidation of a Periphery Pact grouping of the non-Arab regional states around Israel in the late 1950s and 1960s, which yielded close if covert relations with Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia.[72] At times, some Arab states' need to balance against external legitimacy threats certainly accounts for key regional ordering practices, but too much is overlooked if we therefore altogether rule Israel out of partaking in the regional institution of power-balancing.

Fawcett too sees Israel as a state 'that has not, so far, contributed to a viable regional order'.[73] In her analysis, order can be brought about from within the region either through frameworks of regionalist security governance (that is, formal and multilateral 'secondary institutions'[74]) or regional power leadership (order as a public good provided by an authoritative hegemon employing both hard and soft power resources).[75] Insofar as these two paths to order are premised on legitimacy, they are effectively foreclosed to Israel. Fawcett and others are, of course, right to observe that Israel has long been excluded from the MENA's 'secondary institutions' – those formal regionalist frameworks that bring order-making interactions aboveground and to the fore.[76] However, we should not overestimate the role such frameworks play in regional ordering. As Simon Murdon put it when reviewing the proliferation of secondary institutions in the region since 1945: 'The "thickening" of international society in the Middle East would ultimately embody a great deal of insubstantial frothing.'[77] Mark Heller rightly proceeds to point out that Israel's exclusion from regional organisations, which 'of course . . . do not have a truly significant impact on developments in the Middle East . . . has not, in the past, precluded interaction with other regional parties to promote interests that converge with theirs'.[78]

Beyond forging open alliances and membership in regionalist organisations, regional power leadership is another conspicuous mode of regional ordering through the workings of the power-balancing institution. Studies broadly concur that Israel stands among five 'potential regional powers' post-2011 (along with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran and Turkey), but that it is far from attaining hegemonic leadership status.[79] Leadership entails acceptance –

cross-regional appeal and the ability to 'instrumentalize trans-state legitimacy discourses'.[80] Heller reflects a common stance when he writes that

> as the quintessential 'other' in an environment increasingly dominated by identity politics . . . [Israel] lacks the ability to translate its [hard] power assets into usable political currency . . . As a result, it cannot reasonably aspire to a leadership role in the region, even if it were inclined to do so.[81]

Again, we must not overwork this limitation: in the MENA, order was never really sustained by a regional hegemonic power, and presently no other regional power aspirants stands a chance of attaining such status.[82] As Fawcett herself concludes: the MENA 'has been, and still is, effectively closed to aspiring regional powers', and their overall absence 'provides a useful explanatory variable . . . to current regional [dis]order'.[83]

A final reason why studies often overlook Israel as a member of the MENA society can be linked to the fact that Israel's own policymakers tend to see the state as external to the region. In public discourse the prevailing notion that 'Israel may be in the region but not of the region' comes across in common expressions that self-identify the Jewish state as 'a villa in the jungle' or 'an island of democratic stability in a sea of instability'.[84] Avi Shlaim identifies a persistent streak of aloofness and isolationism in the attitude of Israeli policymakers towards the region.[85] Indeed, while Israel long pursued a qualitative military edge (QME) over its environment, it never sought a leadership role in regional affairs, and though 'the goal of ending the conflict with the Arab world has been a permanent feature of Israel's foreign policy, integration within the Middle East was never an appealing objective'.[86] Yet, self-understanding is not necessarily the most insightful. Israel's record of engagement with the regional society of states is not one of an external 'bystander' actor, a non-member located outside the realm of regional society. Rather, I posit, it is one of an outsider: a member of the MENA society of states that is engaged in a gamut of social relations of amity and enmity and has a clear stake in a structure of societal coexistence, yet one who deviates from core social norms.

Drawing on Social Psychology, 'outsider' is used here as a status category *within* the social structure: it marks those who occupy an outcast or alienated position to (some or all of) society's rules, norms, institutions, rather than occupying an external position to the entire complex of social relations (a position marking non-members of society itself).[87] Unbound by society's norms, deviants and rule breakers are nonetheless integral members of any

society. On the one hand, they are curtailed actors: outsiders are excluded from directly participating in the process of societal rule-making (those rules that define them as outsiders). On the other hand, they play a crucial role in societal change. Their structural non-conformity challenges and undermines societal norms, and in so doing they continually demarcate the edges of social appropriateness. Often, the effect of such challenge is to uphold and reinforce the established social order, but they can also stretch and shape it.

The studies cited above conclude that Israel's lack of 'normative/soft power' renders it largely irrelevant to regional ordering. They overlook the counterpoint: though Israel's scope for order-shaping interactions is curtailed, it is uniquely and exceptionally empowered to affect change through the modes of interaction that are open to it. Insofar as Israel has no legitimacy to confer it also has none to lose, and while identity-based norms do not buttress it from 'hot wars', nor is it constrained by them. In these respects, Israel has exceptional and unique freedom of (inter)action in the region, which, alongside its prominent hard power position (both militarily and economically) and strong partnership with the region's long-standing external great power, the United States, renders it an exceptionally agile and valuable strategic (inter) actor. Israel's reputation for unleashing its military power, uninhibited by the identity-based norms that constrain its tacit allies, is a major factor in regional balancing. Notable in this regard, of course, is Israel's practice of raids that destroy or set back the nuclear aspirations of Iraq, Iran and Syria.

Heller's study concluded that, without soft power at its disposal, Israel only has the 'power to block, not to shape' regional order.[88] In certain respects, Israel is a highly curtailed regional order-shaper, but by no means an irrelevant one, and as a perennial outsider it is uniquely empowered to influence the regional order. Rather than striving to 'fit in', Israel has traditionally sought for itself the position of outsider to the regional society of states, and was long content to remain its outsider. This 'perennial outsider' position, adopted by choice as much as by circumstance, frees Israel from the costly demands of conforming to regional identity-based norms, and leaves it immune to the region's fierce regime-subverting 'discourse wars'. Of course it also excludes it from the insider practices of rule-making and formal institution-building. In consequence, Israel does not seek to 'manage' regional order nor lead regional society, but rather successfully works to shape the regional order to its needs. Like all other regional society members, Israel is both an actor (whose power stance and unilateral moves are taken into strategic account by other actors in

the system) and an interactant, engaged in relations of amity and enmity. In both respects, Israel has the capacity to shape regional order.

The Perennial Outsider in Regional Ordering Post-2011

Does our assessment of regional order change once we factor Israel into our analysis? I argue that only when we take Israel into account, recognising its societal role as a perennial outsider, can we properly grasp regional order change post-2011. What then comes into view is a picture of greater, not lesser, degree of order in the aftermath of the uprisings. In what follows I advance this argument by focusing on power-balancing. Following Bull, I consider it a fundamental ordering mechanism that works to sustain a societal structure of coexistence by protecting the plurality of membership against the threat of hegemony. Insofar as states' practice of balancing remains deliberate while growing more elaborate and binding, we can say that the degree of order within their international society has increased in a key respect. In this context, I will trace Israel's interactions with Gulf states, showing that the parties have been working together, with increasing vigour and visibility since the turn of the century, to effectively bolster the region's master institution: power-balancing.

Relations between Israel and several Gulf states have developed slowly but surely and essentially out of sight over the past two decades to the point that by 2019 Ian Black asserted: 'They have transformed the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.'[89] While the 2011 uprisings did not bring this tectonic shift about, they were among the factors that brought that shift to light. Sporadic contacts between Israel and Gulf states can be traced back decades, but up to the 1990s they were bare minimal, strictly indirect and clandestine in nature.[90] Publicly committed to the Palestinian cause, the Saudis seem to have made a rare exception for tacit coordination with Israel when a critical shared security interest was at stake: in 1964–6, during the Yemen civil war, Saudi Arabia overlooked occasional encroachments into its airspace, as Israel airlifted weapons and supplies to royalist forces fighting the republicans, who were sustained by an Egyptian military intervention. Such tacit coordination, facilitated through British mediation, was brought about by a strong shared interest in blocking Nasser's expansionism in the region.[91] Yet, when a similar occasion arose during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Saudis refused to allow Israeli use of their airspace for a preventive strike that would batter their shared enemy Saddam Hussein. King Fahd let Washington know that Saudi Arabia 'would remain stalwart if Israel struck back after being attacked first

by Saddam', but the Americans had little interest in sharing such information with the Israelis, whom they were keen to restrain.[92]

In the long run, 1990 did emerge as a turning point in the Gulf states' approach towards Israel.[93] The morning after the Gulf War, Saudi Arabia stepped out into a post-Cold War world. Yielding to American pressure, it sent Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, as Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) observer to the Madrid Peace Conference. The 1991 conference occasioned the first public meeting of Israeli and Saudi officials, opening the door to further informal meetings, private and public, with Gulf officials.[94] The Saudis have long played a significant role, mostly behind the scenes, in promoting efforts to peacefully resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. While in 1979 they condemned Egypt's bilateral peace treaty with Israel that sidelined the Palestinians, they continued to offer quiet support for peace efforts on the Palestinian and Syrian channels throughout the 1990s, working on the expectation that the Oslo process would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state.[95] By 1994, along with their GCC colleagues, the Saudis were ready to lift the secondary economic boycott against Israel. Later that year Bahrain received an official delegation headed by the Israeli minister of environment, while Sultan Qaboos of Oman received an official visit by the Israeli prime minister. In 1996 Oman and Qatar allowed Israel to open trade missions in their capitals. Such developments – consisting of open and formal, if mostly low-level, relations essentially in the realm of trade – remained explicitly contingent on expected realisation of full statehood for Palestinians and fluctuated with the periodic outbreak of violence in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. But the Oslo Accords did not create a Palestinian state, and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada in September 2000 brought matters to a head. Two months later Qatar shut the Israeli trade mission. Public connections were severed, though some discreet ties continued.[96]

The collapse of the Oslo process and the second intifada marked but a setback in the development of Israel–Gulf relations. The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 reshuffled the regional deck of cards: it created a power vacuum at the heart of the region, drawing Iran into the regional power game and significantly strengthening its position. Iran's growing influence in the region clearly manifested in 2006, when it backed its Hezbollah proxy in the Lebanon war against Israel. In this context, 2006 marked a step change in Israel–Gulf relations: shared concern over Iran's regional ambitions brought Israel and the Gulf states to consider treading a common strategic path. Before the war,

Podeh observes, 'Arab leaders expressed their concerns about Iran's expansionist policy only behind closed doors, [in its aftermath] they were . . . willing to openly admit their desire to see Israel cause a painful blow to Hizbullah so as to damage Iranian prestige.'[97] Behind the scenes, meetings between Israeli and Saudi officials secretly commenced in an effort to set up a framework for intelligence exchanges. The highly clandestine nature of such contacts makes it impossible to trace them in full, but it is clear that a significant shift has taken place towards direct, high-level and routine contacts. According to foreign reports, shortly after the war Prince Bandar bin Sultan, now head of Saudi National Security Council, met in Jordan with Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert and/or with Meir Dagan, head of the Mossad.[98] The reports were strongly denied by Riyadh. During Operation Cast Lead in December 2008, Israel is reported to have given Saudi Arabia prior notification before carrying out air raids along the Red Sea in an effort to block arms delivery to Gaza through Sudan. By 2009 'senior professionals in the intelligence and security fields from Israel and Gulf countries were collaborating', according to the deputy head of Israel's National Security Council.[99] A report in *The Times* claimed that a secret meeting in early 2009 between Dagan and Saudi officials resulted in Saudi tacit consent 'to the Israel air force flying through their airspace on a mission which is supposed to be in the common interests of both Israel and Saudi Arabia'.[100] The reports were denied by both Riyadh and Jerusalem. At the same time Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni was said to have developed a 'good and personal relationship' with UAE foreign minister Abdullah Ibn Zayed, sustaining quiet periodic dialogue between the two governments. Documents made public through Wikileaks also exposed regular contacts with Qatar up to early 2009.[101] At the close of the decade Israeli presence in Gulf markets was growing noticeable. In the absence of official relations, business operated under the thin veil of second passports and EU-registered companies, active primarily in the export of communication and irrigation, as well as civilian and national security technologies, diamond trade and real estate deals. Links with the UAE were the most extensive, with bilateral trade between 2006 and 2009 reportedly exceeding US$1 billion.[102]

Over the next decade, relations between Israel and Gulf states continued to develop 'in light of what both parties considered to be a feeble American response to the Iranian challenge'.[103] Gulf leaders were equally unimpressed by the Obama administration's hesitant and ultimately acquiescent response to the 2011 uprisings. Obama's years in office finally brought home the message

that Washington was now ready to carry out its long-standing intention of pivoting away from the Middle East. For years both Israel and the Gulf states had founded their separate security strategies on the premise of American willingness to exercise leadership in the region.[104] Left to their own devices they now gravitated towards each other in an effort to undercut Iran's regional aspirations. Different sources confirm that Saudi and Emirati cooperation with Israel in the fields of intelligence-sharing and strategic analysis increased markedly during Obama's second term in office, while the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal was negotiated and later signed with Iran in 2015.[105] Relations with Israel were certainly boosted also by the change of guard in Saudi Arabia, as King Salman ascended the throne in 2015, bringing Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman into an unprecedented position of power.

High-level contacts became routine from 2006, but early on they were almost entirely clandestine. The Obama years cemented and substantiated strategic cooperation. At the same time, contacts began to cautiously shift above ground: in late 2013 the Israeli president Shimon Peres addressed via satellite the Gulf Security Conference in Abu Dhabi; in 2014 Israel's energy minister visited Abu Dhabi; a series of secret meetings between former Saudi general Anwar Eshki and Dore Gold, director general of Israel's Foreign Affairs Ministry, was capped in June 2015 by a public meeting in Washington. The following year Eshki was accompanied by a delegation of Saudi businessmen and academics on a visit to Israel; by 2016 Emirati and Israeli forces were openly participating in joint military exercises in the US.[106]

The trend of shifting Israel–Gulf relations above ground was clearly boosted by the entry of President Donald Trump into the White House in January 2017, followed six months later by Washington's withdrawal from the JCPOA. Social media analysts observe that since 2017 the Saudi 'regime has embarked on an aggressive media campaign that is paving the way for the normalisation of ties with Israel, using the country's most renowned cult producers'.[107] In November 2017 Israeli chief of staff Gadi Eizenkot gave an unprecedented interview to Saudi media, where he noted that both countries were 'in complete agreement about Iran's intentions'. With President Trump, he added:

> There is an opportunity to build a new international coalition in the region. We need to carry out a large and inclusive strategic plan to stop the Iranian

> danger. We are willing to exchange information with moderate Arab countries, including intelligence information in order to deal with Iran.[108]

The following year, it was reported that Saudi Arabia's top intelligence officer Khalid bin Ali al-Humaidan met in Jordan with his Israeli, Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts, as well as Trump's envoys Jason Greenblatt and Jared Kushner, to discuss regional security.[109] By October 2018 Eizenkot had met with his Saudi counterpart, General Fayyad bin Hamid al-Ruwayli, on the sidelines of the Counter Violent Extremist Organizations Conference in Washington DC, making it 'the first-ever publicized meeting between high-ranking Israeli and Saudi officials'.[110] Shortly thereafter Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu was accompanied by the Mossad head on a visit to Oman where he held talks with Sultan Qaboos bin Said, while opposition leader Avi Gabbay, chairman of the Labor Party, held talks with senior officials in Abu Dhabi.[111] The US-sponsored Middle East conference in Warsaw, organised to focus attention on 'Iran's influence and terrorism in the region',[112] offered Netanyahu the opportunity to share a stage with leaders and ministers from the Gulf states and Arab world at large.

In the past, the periodic convergence of security interests between Israel and the Gulf states gave rise only to limited episodes of tacit coordination, but the impasse over the question of Palestine long stood as an insurmountable block to strategic cooperation, let alone the forging of alliances. In the 1990s we see such episodes of tacit coordination articulating into a more regular modicum of tentative engagement, one that is now premised on commitment to progress towards a Palestinian state. At the turn of the century, from 2006 onwards, a strategic relationship progressively begins to emerge between Israel and the Gulf states. In terms of the regional order, if hitherto Israel was regarded by the Gulf states as contributing to the system's equilibrium merely by virtue of its existence, in 2006 it came to be seen 'as a possible partner in the Middle East balance of power'.[113]

It is important to realise that this ground-breaking shift comes about despite the fact that in 2006 prospects for the resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict were as slim as ever, if not slimmer. Indeed, to make sense of this shift we must see it in light of another long-term process: the long-term marginalisation of the Palestinian question in Arab political discourse. Most observers agree that 'regional events have detracted attention from the Palestinian issue.'[114] From the perspective of Arab state elites, the salience of the

Palestinian cause has been steadily declining since the 1970s. In Gulf politics in particular, the year 1990 again marks a key turning point: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's decision to come out in support of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait was received with incredulity and outrage in the Gulf states.[115] The move constituted a blow from which Palestinian–Gulf relations never fully recovered. In the short term, through the Oslo years, support for the Palestinian cause remained the key obstacle for progression in Gulf–Israeli relations. In the long run, the sting of betrayal absolved Gulf elites from the burden of responsibility for the Palestinians, allowing them to prioritise the looming Iranian threat over Palestine. Indeed, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted with surprise that when she brought up the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in a meeting with the GCC ministers in January 2007, 'The GCC ministers were pleased, but there wasn't a lot of discussion. This is pretty interesting, I thought. The Israeli–Palestinian issue has fallen down the list of priorities. Iran is number one, two, three, and four.'[116]

While in practice the Palestine question was no longer a hindrance to security collaborations with Israel, Gulf leaders insisted the relationship remained tacit and kept away from the public eye. This began to change following the outbreak of the uprisings in 2011. As many studies point out, the immediate effect of the uprisings was a shifting of the power structure in the system: draining power away from the historically central secular Arab republics (Egypt, Iraq, Syria), onto 'the periphery of the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, and to the non-Arab powers, Turkey and Iran . . .'[117] From this relatively stronger power position, the Gulf states enjoyed greater leeway to reassert and reinvent themselves. Those state elites that clung to power after 2011 – largely those in the conservative and pro-Western camp – found themselves in need of external sources of support to buttress them from domestic upheaval. Unbridled by the region's societal norms, Israel proved a willing and able partner to such endeavours.

In 2020 these long-term processes came to an axiom-shattering point: the absence of a just solution for the Palestinian plight is no longer a hindrance to normalisation of Israeli–Arab state relations. In August and September, the UAE and Bahrain formally committed themselves to full normalisation of relations with Israel under the framework of the US-sponsored 'Abraham Accords'. In this phase, Israel completed the shift from balancing object to interactant, fully and openly engaged in the regional institution of power-balancing: working through coalition-building moves to the emergence of

overt counter-balancing alignments with core members of the system – Arab states in the Gulf and beyond – in which Israel is key, but not lynchpin.

News of Israel's quietly budding relations with a host of Gulf Arab states that hitherto refused to openly engage with it began breaking not long after the uprisings. Over the next few years, a steady news trickle informed us of relations proliferating, deepening and increasingly coming to light. Today, Israel is welcomed openly into regional power-balancing alignments, the way to which is paved by the signing of normalisation accords, in rapid succession. Israel as a societal boundary marker plays a key ordering role, as its hitherto tacit security collaborations progressively grow in scope, depth and visibility, recently reaching the ground-breaking point of diplomatic formalisation. It is tempting to look at recent normalisation accords and argue that we are now seeing Israel shifting from an external actor to an integral member of MENA society. In my view, Israel has long been and remains an integral society member. It is not in the process of shifting from outsider to insider. From Israel's perspective, the aim of rapprochement with Gulf states was not to craft a new regional order, but to sustain the old, with an Israel content to remain its perennial outsider.

Notes

1 The term 'Arab Spring' is now widely regarded a misnomer. Asher Susser, 'The "Arab Spring": Competing Analytical Paradigms', *Bustan: The Middle East Book Review* 3, no. 2 (2012): 109–30; Michael Totten, David Schenker, and Hussain Abdul-Hussain, 'Arab Spring or Islamist Winter? Three Views', *World Affairs* 174, no. 5 (2012): 23–42; Richard Falk, 'Rethinking the Arab Spring: Uprisings, Counterrevolution, Chaos and Global Reverberations', *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 12 (2016): 2322–34. The term 'Arab Spring' is used hereon only when citing other authors. I prefer the term 'Arab uprisings'.

2 Raymond Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising and Regional Power Struggle', in Shahram Azbarzadeh, ed., *Routledge Handbook of International Relations in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2019), 110.

3 Louise Fawcett, 'Regionalizing Security in the Middle East: Connecting the Regional and the Global', in Elizabeth Monier, ed., *Regional Insecurity after the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 42, 47.

4 Marc Lynch, 'The New Arab Order: Power and Violence in Today's Middle East', *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 5 (2018): 116–17, 132. Paul Salem, too, saw 'the collapse of regional order': if hitherto the Middle East enjoyed a 'stable and

less conflictual regional order', post-2011 there is no longer 'regional order in any positive sense'. Paul Salem, 'Working Toward a Stable Regional Order', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 668, no. 1 (2016): 45; Paul Salem, 'The Middle East in 2015 and Beyond: Trends and Drivers', The Middle East Institute (MEI) Policy Focus Series (2014): 6. See also Bülent Aras and Emirhan Yorulmazlar, 'Mideast Geopolitics: The Struggle for a New Order', *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 2 (2017): 57–69; Philipp Amour, 'Israel, the Arab Spring, and the Unfolding Regional Order in the Middle East: A Strategic Assessment', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 3 (2017): 293, 294; Martin Beck and Thomas Richter, 'Fluctuating Regional (Dis-) Order in the Post-Arab Uprising Middle East', *Global Policy* 11, no. 1 (2020): 68; Christina Lassen, 'A Changing Regional Order: The Arab Uprisings, the West and the BRICS', Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs Working Paper Series 18 (2013): 16; Erzsébet Rózsa, 'Geo-Strategic Consequences of the Arab Spring', *PapersIEMed* 19 (2013): 16. For the minority view, assessing the uprisings' effect on regional order in more subtle or tentative terms, see Rasmus Boserup et al., 'Introduction', in Rasmus Boserup et al., eds, *New Conflict Dynamics: Between Regional Autonomy and Intervention in the Middle East and North Africa* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017), 7; William Zartman, 'States, Boundaries and Sovereignty in the Middle East: Unsteady but Unchanging', *International Affairs* 93, no. 4 (2017): 947–8; Steven Heydemann and Emelie Chace-Donahue, 'Sovereignty versus Sectarianism: Contested Norms and the Logic of Regional Conflict in the Greater Levant', *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 15, no. 60 (2018): 19.

5 The three-year EU-funded MENARA Project ('Middle East and North Africa Regional Architecture: Mapping Geopolitical Shifts, Regional Order and Domestic Transformations', available at <http://menara.iai.it/menara-project/> (last accessed 13 October 2022)), led by Eduard Soler i Lecha of the Barcelona Center for International Affairs (CIDOB), assessed the quality, extent and intensity of geopolitical shifts in the region over the past decade, and their implications for the regional order, seeking to account for 'fragmentation or integration dynamics in this region' and so capture 'geopolitical order in the making'. Eduard Soler i Lecha et al., 'Re-conceptualizing Orders in the MENA Region: The Analytical Framework of the MENARA Project' (2016), 4–5, 42; Raffaella Del Sarto et al., 'Interregnum: The Regional Order in the Middle East and North Africa after 2011' MENARA Final Reports 1 (February 2019).

6 The region has 'entered a period in which the existing order is increasingly challenged while an alternative one is still to be framed'. Del Sarto et al., 'Interregnum', 3, 5, 11, 42.

7 Most analyses seriously engage with domestic-level factors (though perhaps less comprehensively than the studies produced by the MENARA consortium). For example Ewan Stein, 'Ideological Codependency and Regional Order: Iran, Syria, and the Axis of Refusal', *Political Science* 50, no. 3 (2017): 676–80; Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising'; Lynch, 'The New Arab Order'; Salem, 'The Middle East'; Mohammed Ayoob, 'Subaltern Realism Meets the Arab World', in Shahram Akbarzadeh, ed., *Routledge Handbook of International Relations in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2019), 59–68; Fawcett, 'Regionalizing Security'. Studies focusing on the nexus of the domestic and international in regional order pre-2011 include: Imad Mansour, 'The Domestic Sources of Regional Orders: Explaining Instability in the Middle East' (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2009); Benjamin Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers: The Sources of Regional War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

8 The term 'international' in this context indicates interstate, as well as supra- and trans-state phenomena. It does not imply global scope, and in this text indeed refers mostly to phenomena whose scope is regional.

9 See Dennis Wrong, *The Problem of Order: What Unites and Divides Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); Nicholas Rengger, *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order: Beyond International Relations Theory?* (London: Routledge, 2000).

10 All studies of MENA order post-2011 cited in this chapter, bar MENARA's, fall under this generalisation. In reviewing their findings, I deduced their conceptualisations of 'order' from the term's usage in their text.

11 Rózsa, 'Geo-Strategic Consequences', 16, 29.

12 Ibid. 7.

13 Ibid. 7, 19.

14 Lynch, 'The New Arab Order', 120.

15 Ibid. 120.

16 Ibid. 124.

17 Ibid. 116–18.

18 Ibid. 116–17.

19 Ibid., 116–17, 126. Other examples of IR-realist accounts of regional order post-2011 include Aras and Yorulmazlar, 'Mideast Geopolitics'; Amour, 'Israel, the Arab Spring'.

20 On the distinction between normative, descriptive, and intentional/functional conceptions of order, see Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), xii–xiiv, 3–4.

21 Lynch, 'The New Arab Order', 116, 119.

22 Ibid. 121, 125.
23 Ibid. 116.
24 The constructivist gauntlet thrown down by Malmvig was picked up by Beck and Richter, 'Fluctuating Regional (Dis-)Order'; Heydemann and Chace-Donahue, 'Sovereignty versus Sectarianism', 19; Zartman, 'States, Boundaries'; Elizabeth Monier, 'The Arabness of Middle East Regionalism: The Arab Spring and Competition for Discursive Hegemony between Egypt, Iran and Turkey', *Contemporary Politics* 20, no. 4 (2014): 421–34. For a historical sociology approach that favours ideology over identity as key analytical category, see Stein, 'Ideological Codependency'. In contrast with Malmvig, Heydemann and Chace-Donahue see 'continuity rather than change in the structure of the regional order' post-2011 insofar as the conflicts that 'roil the [Levant and the] greater Arab east' have not caused 'significant changes in the internal borders of current states' nor replaced sovereignty for sectarianism as the region's hegemonic norm. Heydemann and Chace-Donahue, 'Sovereignty versus Sectarianism', 19.
25 Helle Malmvig, 'Power, Identity and Securitization in Middle East: Regional Order after the Arab Uprisings', *Mediterranean Politics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 145.
26 Ibid. 146.
27 Which Hinnebusch dubs 'complex realism', see Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 1.
28 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 110–11.
29 Ibid., 111–12, 118; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 9, 18.
30 The Iran-led Resistance Axis included Syria, Lebanese Hezbollah and Palestinian Hamas, and for a time drew support from Turkey and Qatar. It confronted the Moderate Bloc of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the remaining GCC states. The brutality of the Assad regime against Syrian citizens drove Hamas to break away from the Axis by late 2011. Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 113–14, 116, 120.
31 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 114–15, 122.
32 Ibid. 110, 118.
33 Ibid. 111, 118, 122.; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 276. Throughout the text, Hinnebusch often uses the terms identity, ideology, and discourse interchangeably. The explanation, perhaps, is that he conceives of them all essentially as ideational factors that give rise to norms that can 'constrain and shape the pursuit of state interests.' Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 110.
34 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 117–18, 122.
35 Ibid. 110.

36 Ibid. 111, 114, 117–18.

37 Ibid. 117. In Hinnebusch's analysis, order slides along a scale between two ideal-types: 'Hobbesian' in which violence in the interstate power struggle is entirely unrestricted, or restricted merely by a balanced distribution of power among states, and 'Lockean' in which states' resort to violence is restricted by a more elaborate range of solutions, such as trans-state identity-based norms, collective institutions, complex economic interdependence, concert and/or contractual international regimes. Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 111, 117, 118; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 10, 20. To an extent, this approach builds on Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 246–312.

38 'Order' is a key object of analysis across Hinnebusch's work, yet he does not put forward a definition of the concept at the outset, and furthermore uses it in several different ways across and within his texts (for example, juxtaposed with fragmentation of the state system, in Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 7; juxtaposed with conflict, war, lack of peace, or insecurity, in Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 10, 16, 20, 175, 222, 292; interchanged with anarchy, in Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', Chapter 10; or describing the systemic power structure, in Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 120; in reference to domestic political order or public order, in Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 119; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 274; and finally 'normative order' as the framework of negotiated transnational norms that limit interstate violence, in Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 73; Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 110, 111.) Therefore, my understanding of Hinnebusch's concept of order is deduced from his most frequent reference to it, as for example in Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 111; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 10, 16–19.

39 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 110–11.

40 Hinnebusch interchangeably uses 'Middle East' and 'MENA', defining the latter as 'constituted around an Arab core, with a shared identity but fragmented into multiple territorial states; the core is flanked by a periphery of non-Arab states – Turkey, Iran and Israel – which are an integral part of the region's conflicts and its balance of power'. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 1. The region's core is distinguished as constituting an 'overarching Arab polity . . . [made up] of semi-permeable autonomous units' rather than a system of self-contained, bordered nation states. In fact for this reason the Arab core is perceived as a globally 'unique' type of state system. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 69, 72, 75.

41 Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 1.

42 Ibid. 275.

43 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 122–3, 277; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 277. It could be argued that Hinnebusch takes it for granted that Israel is precluded from launching a hegemonic bid because it so obviously lacks the soft-power resources essential for leadership, yet elsewhere he does consider an earlier Israeli bid for regional hegemony (that was counterbalanced by the Syrian–Iranian alliance). Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 309; Raymond Hinnebusch, 'Historical Context of State Formation in the Middle East: Structure and Agency', in Raymond Hinnebusch and Jasmine Gani, eds, *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and States System* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019), 33.

44 Beyond studies reviewed above, the point applies also to Aras and Yorulmazlar, 'Mideast Geopolitics'; Zartman, 'States, Boundaries'; Monier, 'The Arabness of Middle East Regionalism'; Jordi Quero and Eduard Soler i Lecha, 'Regional Order and Regional Powers in the Middle East and North Africa', in Immaculada Szmolka, ed., *Political Change in the Middle East and North Africa: After the Arab Spring* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 276. Makdisi goes so far as describing Israel as a regional hegemon (presumably in terms of its power position, rather than leadership position), but otherwise refers to it mostly in passive terms: as threatened by the Arabs, protected by the Americans, partnered with by the Saudis. In the final analysis, Israel is not mentioned among the local powers that scrambled to shape the post-2011 regional order. Karim Makdisi, 'Intervention and the Arab Uprisings: From Transformation to Maintenance of Regional Order', in Rasmus Boserup et al., eds, *New Conflict Dynamics. Between Regional Autonomy and Intervention in the Middle East and North Africa* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017), 102–5.

45 Benedetta Berti, 'Israel and the Arab Spring: Understanding Attitudes and Responses to the "New Middle East"', in Lorenzo Vidino, ed., *The West and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring* (Al Mesbar Studies & Research Center in collaboration with The Foreign Policy Research Institute 2013), 130–47; Martin Beck, '"Watching and Waiting" and "Much Ado about Nothing"? Making Sense of the Israeli Response to the Arab Uprisings', *Palgrave Communications* 2, no. 1 (2016): 160–79; Dünya Başol, 'Arab Spring and Israeli Security: The New Threats', *Alternative Politics* 3, no. 3 (2011): 509–46; Efraim Inbar, 'The Strategic Implications for Israel', in Efraim Inbar, ed., *The Arab Spring, Democracy and Security: Domestic and International Ramifications*

(London: Routledge, 2013), 145–65; Tami Amanda Jacoby, 'The Season's Pendulum: Arab Spring Politics and Israeli Security', in Elizabeth Monier, ed., *Regional Insecurity after the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 168–86; Clive Jones and Beverley Milton-Edwards, 'Missing the "Devils" We Knew? Israel and Political Islam amid the Arab Awakening', *International Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2013): 399–415; Ilan Peleg, 'Israel and the Arab Spring: The Victory of Anxiety', in Mark Haas and David Lesch, eds, *The Arab Spring: Change and Resistance in the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013), 174–94; Shmuel Sandler, 'The Arab Spring, Democracy and Security', in Efraim Inbar, ed., *The Arab Spring, Democracy and Security: Domestic and International Ramifications* (London: Routledge, 2013), 128–44; Avi Shlaim, 'Israel, Palestine, and the Arab Uprisings', in Fawaz Gerges, ed., *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 380–401.

46 Amour, 'Israel, the Arab Spring'; Asher Susser, 'Israel's Place in a Changing Regional Order (1948–2013)', *Israel Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 218–38.

47 Amichai Magen, 'Comparative Assessment of Israel's Foreign Policy Response to the "Arab Spring"', *Journal of European Integration* 37, no. 1 (2015): 114–15. Magen explores Israel's reaction in unilateral terms, placing it in a comparative framework that assesses it against the reactions of 'other *external* actors, especially the US, EU and Turkey' (my emphasis).

48 Hedley Norman Bull and Adam Watson, eds, *The Expansion of International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 1.

49 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 13, 14; Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*, 1–2, 117, 120.

50 Coexistence encapsulates 'three basic values of all social life': the triumvirate of security against violation of body, promises and property. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 5, 7. Bull does not proceed to spell out how it is possible to discern this 'recognition' or 'consciousness' of common interests in coexistence among states. Nor does he indicate whether states' 'consciousness' is of subjective or intersubjective nature. Throughout the text Bull interchanges the term 'consciousness' with states' 'recognition', 'sense', 'conception' or 'acceptance' of, or consensus over common or shared interests in maintaining coexistence; Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 14, 15, 42–3, 70, 249–50.; Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*, 1.

51 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 15, 249, 315; Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*, 120.

52 In Bull's precise formulation, international order is 'a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international

society'. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 8; 'By international order is meant a pattern or disposition of international activity that sustains those goals of the society of states that are elementary, primary or universal.' Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 16.

53 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, xii, 60.

54 Ibid. 42–3.

55 Bull identifies coexistence as the elementary or primary shared goal of states, whose fulfilment perpetuates society itself while enabling the realisation of any further – advanced, secondary, special – goals held individually or commonly by society's members. Optimum order, he write, obtains when the pattern of social activity sustains secondary goals beyond coexistence, such as peace, cooperation, justice, human dignity or universal welfare. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 4–5, 86–7, 89, 96–7, 253, 302.

56 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 3, 249–50. In the Oxford English Dictionary, the word contrived is defined as 'deliberately created rather than arising naturally or spontaneously'. 'Definition of Contrived', Oxford University Press, Le xico.com. Available at <https://www.lexico.com/definition/contrived> (last accessed 19 October 2020).

57 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 249–50.

58 'Foreword to the Fourth Edition by Andrew Hurrell', in Hedley Bull et al., *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 4th edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012 (1977), xvi. See also Bull et al., *The Anarchical Society*, 15–16. For the alternative position within the English School that sees shared culture as prerequisite for international society, see Barry Buzan, 'Culture and International Society', *International Affairs* 86, no. 1 (2010): 1–25.

59 Like Bull, Hinnebusch sees order as potential and functional: a particular pattern of interstate activity whose emergence constitutes a system's interdependent units as a society of states. However, whereas Bull defines order as any pattern of interstate activity contrived to sustain coexistence, Hinnebusch sees order in activity patterns that work more specifically to restrain interstate violence. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 17–18, 72; Raymond Hinnebusch, 'War in the Middle East', in Raymond Hinnebusch and Jasmine Gani, eds, *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and States System* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019), 358, ft 4; Raymond Hinnebusch, 'Order and Change in the Middle East: A Neo-Gramscian Twist on the International Society Approach', in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, eds, *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 201. Other studies of MENA order that explicitly reference Bull, or

employ the English School concepts via Buzan, include Soler i Lecha et al., 'Re-conceptualizing Orders', 38; Louise Fawcett, 'Iran and the Regionalization of (In)security', *International Politics* 52, no. 5 (2015): 647; Raslan Ibrahim, 'Primary and Secondary Institutions in Regional International Society: Sovereignty and the League of Arab States', in Cornelia Navari and Tonny Bremms Knudsen, eds, *International Organization in the Anarchical Society* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Bassam Tibi, 'The Middle East Torn Between Rival Choices: Islamism, International Security and Democratic Peace', in Elizabeth Monier, ed., *Regional Insecurity after the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 207; Amour, 'Israel, the Arab Spring', 296.

60 Hinnebusch, 'Order and Change', 201–3.

61 Ibid. 224.

62 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 110–11; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 5–6; Hinnebusch, 'Order and Change', 222.

63 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 111; Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, 6.

64 Ibid. 111.

65 Ibid. 111. Alternatively referred to as 'cold wars' or 'discourse wars' by Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 110–14.

66 Malmvig, 'Power, Identity and Securitization', 145.

67 Rózsa, 'Geo-Strategic Consequences', 7.

68 Whereas Hinnebusch asserts that in the MENA, 'The most typical balancing dynamic has been "soft balancing"', Beck argues that the region is characterised by 'hard-power rather than soft-power use', Martin Beck, 'The Concept of Regional Power as Applied to the Middle East', in Henner Fürtig, ed., *Regional Powers in the Middle East: New Constellations after the Arab Revolts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5; Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 111.

69 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 111.

70 Aaron Klieman, 'The Israel–Jordan Tacit Security Regime', in Efraim Inbar, ed., *Regional Security Regimes: Israel and its Neighbors* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 130.

71 Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky, 'Israel's Relations with the Gulf States: Toward the Emergence of a Tacit Security Regime?' *Contemporary Security Policy* 38, no. 3 (2017): 398–419; Efraim Inbar and Shmuel Sandler, 'The Changing Israeli Strategic Equation: Toward a Security Regime', *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995): 41–59; Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, 'Security Regimes: Mediating Between War and Peace in the Arab–Israeli Conflict', in Efraim Inbar, ed.,

Regional Security Regimes: Israel and its Neighbors (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 33–55; Efraim Inbar, ed., *Regional Security Regimes: Israel and its Neighbors* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

72 Noa Schonmann, 'Fortitude at Stake: The Accidental Crisis in American–Israeli Relations, August 1958', *Israel Affairs* 23, no. 4 (2017): 626–49.

73 Louise Fawcett, ed., *International Relations of the Middle East*, third edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 187; Louise Fawcett, 'States and Sovereignty in the Middle East: Myths and Realities', *International Affairs* 93, no. 4 (2017): 793.

74 Fawcett does not use the term 'secondary' institutions, but all her examples (League of Arab States, Organization of Islamic Conference, Baghdad Pact, Gulf Cooperation Council, and so on) comfortably fall under this category. Buzan introduced the distinction between primary institutions, which are constitutive of international society and 'evolved rather than designed, constitutive rather than instrumental' (for example, sovereignty, power-balancing) and secondary institutions that are instrumentally designed and take organisational form (for example, the WTO, Amnesty). He added that 'secondary institutions do not define international societies, but they do matter, not least as expressions of, and possibly benchmarks for, primary institutions.' Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, eds, *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 27, 44.

75 Louise Fawcett, 'Regional Leadership? Understanding Power and Transformation in the Middle East', in Nadine Godehardt and Dirk Nabers, eds, *Regional Powers and Regional Orders* (London: Routledge, 2011), 161; Fawcett, 'States and Sovereignty', 792–3.

76 Heller echoes Fawcett's point when he argues that Israel does not have the power to shape the regional order, and at best can block undesirable developments and avoid being overrun. Like Fawcett, Heller bases his conclusion on Israel's exclusion from secondary institutions, but his examples are primarily from non-security fields: 'In none of the arrangements or institutions normally associated with global or even regional order does Israel's voice carry much weight . . . And it does not even belong to the plethora of Middle East governmental or private associations that address – even if they do not effectively regulate – cultural, educational, public security, and scientific affairs.' Mark Heller, 'Israel: Extra-regional Foundations of a Regional Power Manqué', in Nadine Godehardt and Dirk Nabers, eds, *Regional Powers and Regional Orders* (London: Routledge, 2011), 237–8.

77 Simon W. Murden, 'The Secondary Institutions of the Middle Eastern Regional Interstate Society', in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, eds,

International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 117; Fawcett, 'Regionalizing Security', 40. A more recent strand of literature that reasserts this point in the post-2011 context includes: Sally Khalifa Isaac, 'A Resurgence in Arab Regional Institutions? The Cases of the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council Post-2011', in Elizabeth Monier, ed., *Regional Insecurity after the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 158; Mervat Rishmawi, 'The League of Arab States in the Wake of the "Arab Spring"' Delivering Democracy (5th CIHRS' Annual Report on the Human Rights Situation in the Arab World), Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (2013); Ibrahim, 'Primary and Secondary', 311; Avraham Sela, 'The Vicissitudes of the Arab States System: From Its Emergence to the Arab Spring', *India Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (2017): 165; Martin Beck, 'The End of Regional Middle Eastern Exceptionalism? The Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council after the Arab Uprisings', *Democracy and Security* 11, no. 2 (2015): 200.

78 Heller proffers only one, historically rather minor example to substantiate this claim: extension of Israeli military support to minorities in conflict with states hostile to Israel (for example, Iraq's Kurds, Lebanon's Maronites, even South Sudanese factions during the civil war). Mark Heller, 'Israel as a Regional Power: Prospects and Problems', in Henner Fürtig, ed., *Regional Powers in the Middle East: New Constellations after the Arab Revolts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 170.

79 Heller, 'Israel as a Regional Power'; Robert Kappel, 'Israel: The Partial Regional Power in the Middle East', in Henner Fürtig, ed., *Regional Powers in the Middle East: New Constellations after the Arab Revolts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 145–61; Fawcett, 'States and Sovereignty', 792–3; Beck, 'The Concept of Regional Power', 18.

80 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 114. Beck defines 'regional powers' as '(state) actors whose power is, to a high degree, based on leadership in their world area'. See Martin Beck, 'Israel: Regional Politics in a Highly Fragmented Region', in Daniel Flemes, ed., *Regional Leadership in the Global System: Ideas, Interests and Strategies of Regional Powers* (London: Routledge, 2010), 127–48; Beck, 'The Concept of Regional Power'. While Beck combines the two terms into one, Heller distinguishes 'regional power' ('an actor – state or even non-state actor – that is able to advance regional or at least sub regional order to suit its own purposes') from 'regional leadership' ('the ability to shape the perceptions and influence the positions of others in order to promote a regional order or regime'). Heller, 'Israel: Extra-regional', 237.

81 Heller, 'Israel as a Regional Power', 171; Heller, 'Israel: Extra-regional', 237.
82 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 123; Heller, 'Israel: Extra-regional', 237.
83 Fawcett, 'Regional Leadership', 164, 162.
84 Heller, 'Israel as a Regional Power', 170; Shlaim, 'Israel, Palestine', 400; Magen, 'Comparative Assessment', 117–18. The former was articulated by Israel former prime minister Ehud Barak (Aluf Benn, 'Israel is Blind to the Arab Revolutions', *The Guardian*, 23 March 2011); the latter by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Gilad Morag, '4th of July: Israel celebrate US Independence Day', [Hebrew] *Ynet*, 4 July 2013. Available at <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4401030,00.htm> (last accessed 2 November 2020).
85 Avi Shlaim, 'Israeli Interference in Internal Arab Politics: The Case of Lebanon', in Giacomo Luciani and Ghassan Salame, eds, *The Politics of Arab Integration* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 232–3.
86 Inbar, 'The Strategic Implications', 149–50; Heller, 'Israel as a Regional Power', 170.
87 Howard Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 2018); Robert K. Merton, 'Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge', *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 1 (1972): 21–2. The term 'outsider' has been applied to Israel by scholars who used it in this non-member, external actor, sense. See Heller, 'Israel as a Regional Power', 169; Rózsa, 'Geo-Strategic Consequences', 19; Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *The Crystallization of the Arab State System, 1945–1954* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 176.
88 Heller, 'Israel: Extra-regional', 238; Kappel, 'Israel', 145; Inbar, 'The Strategic Implications', 149–50.
89 Ian Black, 'Just Below the Surface: Israel, the Arab Gulf States and the Limits of Cooperation', LSE Middle East Report, The London School of Economics and Political Science (2019), 5.
90 Jones and Guzansky, 'Israel's Relations', 403; Uzi Rabi and Chelsi Mueller, 'The Gulf Arab States and Israel since 1967: From 'No Negotiation' to Tacit Cooperation', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 4 (October 2017): 576. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2017.1360013> (last accessed 16 October 2022).
91 Asher Orkaby, 'The 1964 Israeli Airlift to Yemen and the Expansion of Weapons Diplomacy', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 26, no. 4 (October 2015): 659–77. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2015.1096691> (last accessed 16 October 2022). For debate over the extent of Saudi knowledge of the Israeli use of their airspace, and mention of other possible episodes of tacit coordination, see Elie Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel: From Secret to

Public Engagement, 1948–2018', *The Middle East Journal* 72, no. 4 (2018): 567–8.

92 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 572–3.

93 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 573; Jones and Guzansky, 'Israel's Relations', 404; Rabi and Mueller, 'The Gulf Arab States and Israel', 583.

94 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 573.

95 Ultimately the process culminated in the signing of a peace treaty with Jordan in 1994, and the Interim Accords with the PLO in 1993 and 1995. Elie Podeh, *Chances for Peace: Missed Opportunities in the Arab–Israeli Conflict* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 263, 290; Elie Podeh, 'Israel and the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002–2014: A Plausible Missed Opportunity', *Middle East Journal* 68, no. 4 (2014): 586.

96 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 6; Rabi and Mueller, 'The Gulf Arab States and Israel', 577–85; Jones and Guzansky, 'Israel's Relations', 404–5.

97 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 576.

98 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 6–7; Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 576; Barak Ravid, 'WikiLeaks Blows Cover Off Israel's Covert Gulf States Ties', *Haaretz*, 29 November 2010.

99 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 17.

100 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 12. For list of news reports see Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 577. In an interview to Podeh, Olmert added that 'there were [even] more extraordinary things' going on than Dagan's 2010 visit to Saudi Arabia.

101 Ravid, 'WikiLeaks Blows Cover Off Israel's Covert Gulf States Ties'.

102 Sigurd Neubauer, 'Israel: A Strategic Partner for the UAE?' *Gulf State Analytics*, 9 November 2017; Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 12–14.

103 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 577.

104 Jones and Guzansky, 'Israel's Relations', 398–9.

105 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 10–20; Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 563.

106 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 13–22.

107 Ibid. 22.

108 Amos Harel, 'Israeli Military Chief Gives Unprecedented Interview to Saudi Media: "Ready to Share Intel on Iran"', *Haaretz*, 17 November 2017; Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 563.

109 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 24; Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 579.

110 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 563.

111 Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 8, 12.

112 Patrick Wintour, 'US Backtracks on Iran-focused Conference in Poland after Objections', *The Guardian*, 23 January 2019.

113 Podeh, 'Saudi Arabia and Israel', 584. I use Podeh's words here, but while he traces this shift back to the 1990 Gulf War, I see it emerging only in 2006.

114 Inbar, 'The Strategic Implications', 154; Malmvig, 'Power, Identity and Securitization', 146; Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 115; Del Sarto et al., *Interregnum*, 4, 43–5; Andrea Dessì and Lorenzo Kamel, 'The Gaza Equation: The Regional Dimension of a Local Conflict', MENARA Working Papers (September 2018), 10; Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 14–15. Few scholars see merit in the argument that the question remained as salient after 2011, among them Karim Makdisi et al., 'Regional Order from the Outside in: External Intervention, Regional Actors, Conflicts and Agenda in the MENA Region', MENARA Concept Papers 5 (November 2017), 10; Shlaim, 'Israel, Palestine'.

115 Rabi and Mueller, 'The Gulf Arab states and Israel', 583.

116 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011), 550; Black, 'Just Below the Surface', 16.

117 Hinnebusch, 'The Arab Uprising', 114–15, 122.