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Revolutionary diplomats? Introduction to the study of North African foreign policies within the context of the Arab Spring

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ABSTRACT
This article explores the concept of ‘revolutionary diplomats’ that is central to this guest-edited issue of The Journal of North African Studies. Specifically, we explore whether the political openings associated with the Arab Spring beginning in January 2011 have permitted the emergence and/or re-emergence of state and non-state actors that are capable of challenging the foreign policy supremacy of authoritarian presidents, and therefore playing more important roles in the formulation and implementation of their countries’ foreign policies. We do so by focusing on the North African countries of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The first part of this article explores North Africa’s status within the Arab Spring and broader Foreign Policy Analysis literatures, most notably the foreign policy shortcomings associated with an inherently case study approach that dominates these literatures. A second section examines three theoretical approaches (‘big man’, great power, and dependency theories) that typically have been adopted to explain North African foreign policies. The primary dilemma with these theories is that they limit our understanding of North African foreign policies to either North African rulers or external powers. A third section sets out a domestic actor approach to North African foreign policy, which underscores that a host of state actors (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and non-state actors (such as civil society groups) play varied foreign policy roles. The foreign policy influence of these actors has ebbed and flowed during democratic and authoritarian periods alike, including during the Arab Spring.

KEYWORDS Revolutionary diplomats; Arab Spring; foreign policy; North Africa

Introduction
The primary purpose of this guest-edited issue of The Journal of North African Studies, entitled ‘Revolutionary Diplomats?’, is to explore the impacts of the
Arab Spring on the formulation and implementation of North African foreign policies, inclusive of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. Our collective research endeavour, which grew out of a 22 March 2017 symposium by the same name at Loyola University Chicago, approaches the study of North Africa as a region at the intersection of African Studies and Middle Eastern Studies. Both of these regionally-based academic enterprises historically have treated North Africa as less important off-shoots of their ‘core’ intellectual pursuits, whether Sub-Saharan Africa (inclusive of Central, East, Southern, and West Africa) in the case of African Studies, or the Levant (inclusive of the Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia) in the case of Middle Eastern Studies. We instead treat North Africa as the centerpiece of analysis, which can benefit from research conducted in both African and Middle Eastern Studies.

The cornerstone of our research agenda is the adoption of a domestic actor approach to understanding North African foreign policy, with a specific focus on the evolving foreign policy impacts of both state and non-state actors during the Arab Spring and its aftermath. The expectation is that the political openings associated with the Arab Spring should permit the emergence and/or re-emergence of a variety of state and non-state actors – what one Tunisian colleague referred to as ‘revolutionary diplomats’ – that are capable of challenging the foreign policy supremacy of North African presidents, and therefore playing more important roles in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. It is important to note that the contributions to this special guest-edited issue adopt the following terminology and inclusive dates: ‘Arab Uprisings’ or ‘Arab Revolts’ (2010–11), to refer to the initial protests that challenged authoritarian rule in North Africa and the wider Middle East; ‘Arab Spring’ (2011–12), which captured the early optimistic vision that these uprisings and revolts would lead to more inclusive, ideally democratic, forms of governance; and ‘post-Arab Spring’ (2013–present), a period marked by authoritarian resilience and reaction to popular pressures for change. The adoption of this common vernacular, however, should not be interpreted as suggesting that non-Arab North African populations, such as the Amazigh, have played inconsequential roles from 2011 to the present. The exact opposite is the case, as witnessed by the 20 February (2011) movement and the 2016–17 Al Hoceima demonstrations in Morocco.

The remainder of this introductory article is divided into four sections. Section 1 explores North Africa’s status within the Arab Spring and broader foreign policy analysis literatures. We especially focus on the foreign policy shortcomings associated with the largely case study-oriented nature of these literatures. A second section examines three classical theoretical approaches – ‘big man’, great power, and dependency theories – that typically have been adopted to explain North African foreign policies. The primary dilemma with these existing theories is that they limit our understanding of
the formulation and implementation of North African foreign policies to either authoritarian rulers (big man theory) or external powers (dependency and great power theories). Section 3 sets out a domestic actor approach to understanding North African foreign policy, with a special focus on the impacts of the Arab Spring on the formulation and implementation of those policies from 2011 to 2018. A final section offers concluding remarks.

**Shortcomings of existing case study-oriented literatures**

On 17 December 2010, a 26-year old Tunisian fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire in the town of Sidi Bouzid to protest the harassment he was suffering at the hands of local officials. Bouazizi’s actions, which led to his death on 4 January 2011, set in motion a national protest movement variously referred to as Tunisia’s ‘Dignity’ or ‘Jasmine’ Revolution that led to the overthrow of the Ben Ali dictatorship on 14 January 2011 (Schraeder and Redissi 2011). Ben Ali’s overthrow initiated a domino effect in North Africa and neighbouring regions, as prodemocracy demonstrators confronted dictatorships as part of broader desires for socio-economic and political-military reforms that are now commonly referred to as the Arab Spring. In North Africa, protests toppled the 30-year dictatorship of Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak on 11 February 2011, and the 42-year dictatorship of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi on 21 October 2011. In the wider Middle East, Arab Spring protests toppled the 17-year dictatorship of Yemeni leader Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was forced to resign on 27 February 2012, while at the same time contributing to the intensification of political protests and civil conflicts throughout the region, most notably the Syrian civil war amid the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Even in Sub-Saharan Africa, often assumed to be immune to events in North Africa, the Arab Spring continues to exert an influence, especially in the predominantly Muslim countries of West, Central, and East Africa. In Mali, hundreds of Tuareg soldiers who fled Libya’s civil war returned in 2011 to the northern provinces of Mali with their years of fighting experience. They served as the military bulwark of the northern region’s secession in 2012 as the independent country of Azawad, an event referred to as a ‘perfect storm of events unleashed by the Arab Spring’ that was only ended by French military intervention in support of the Malian central government (Schraeder 2011, 177–8).

The Arab Spring has resulted in a growing, largely case study-oriented comparative politics literature that aims to understand the origins of socio-economic and political-military pressures for change in each North African country. Tunisia as the ‘birthplace’ of the Arab Spring has been the subject of an especially large number of publications written by both Tunisian and international observers (e.g. Schraeder and Redissi 2011; Stepan 2012; Redissi, Nouira, and Zghal 2012), followed by Egypt (e.g. Korany and El-
Mahdi 2012; Ghonim 2012; Tabaar 2013) and Libya (e.g. Hilsum 2012; Prashad 2012; McQuinn 2013), where political transitions also occurred. A more theoretically-informed comparative literature has sought explanations for the differences in political outcomes among the Arab Spring countries as a whole (Brynen et al. 2012; Stepan and Linz 2013; Kamrava 2014; Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds 2015; Ganen 2016a, 2016b; Haas and Lesch 2017). In North Africa, for example, this literature has sought to explain the range of Arab Spring outcomes, from authoritarian durability in Algeria and Morocco, to Tunisia’s successful transition to democracy, Egypt’s military coup d’etat which reversed a transition to democracy, and Libya’s descent into civil war in the aftermath of state collapse. The common shortcoming of all of these works is an almost exclusive focus on the domestic as opposed to the foreign policy outcomes associated with the Arab Spring, including a neglect of the impacts of a wide array of state and non-state actors on the foreign policymaking process. When such works do focus on the ‘international’ dimension, they typically do so in terms of how foreign influences facilitated or hindered transitions to democracy, as opposed to the evolution of foreign policymaking structures within each of these countries, and how such internal changes have affected North African foreign policy behaviours (e.g. Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds 2015; see also Brownlee 2012; Schraeder 2012a, 2012b). One exception, which nonetheless ignores the role of foreign policy, is a recent collection of articles of how the Arab Spring has affected our understanding of international relations theory (Lynch and Ryan 2017).

A turn to the Foreign Policy Analysis literature for answers provides equally unsatisfactory results. This literature historically has neglected the study of the Global South, including Africa and the Middle East, relative to the overwhelming amount of scholarly attention focused on North America and Europe (Brummer and Hudson 2015). Although this academic state of affairs has improved somewhat in recent years (Adar 2015; Hinnebusch 2015), it is striking that a leading volume edited by Foreign Policy Analysis specialists, which brings together a total of fifteen case studies in a second edition, includes the two classic cases from Sub-Saharan Africa (the regional giants of Nigeria and South Africa) and the two classic cases from the Middle East (the regional giants of Iran and Turkey), but none from North Africa (Beasley et al. 2013; see also Beasley et al. 2002; Hook 2002).

Coverage of North Africa somewhat improves when one delves into the Foreign Policy Analysis contributions of the African Studies and Middle Eastern Studies literatures. The primary challenge at this level, however, is the tendency of area studies specialists to put together loosely-edited volumes of case studies that emphasise the substance of foreign policy as opposed to more theoretically-informed analyses that explain the formulation of foreign policy and that are rigorously applied across the cases in question.
This is true of both the edited volumes devoted to African foreign policy (McKay 1966; Ingham 1974; Aluko 1977; Shaw and Aluko 1984; Wright 1999; Khadiagala and Lyons 2001; Adar and Ajulu 2002; Adar and Schraeder 2007) and the edited volumes devoted to Middle Eastern foreign policy (Korany and Dessouki 1984; Korany 1991, 2008; Korany, Noble, and Brynen 1993; Brown 2001; Hinnebusch and Ehteshami 2002, 2014). In both cases, North African countries are neglected in favour of ‘more prominent cases’ that constitute the core agendas of these regional studies literatures. In the two most noteworthy and now somewhat dated edited volumes (Wright 1999; Khadiagala and Lyons 2001) devoted to African foreign policy, North Africa is completely ignored. In the two most prominent edited volumes devoted to Middle Eastern foreign policy, only three North African countries are represented: Egypt and Morocco in Korany and Dessouki (2008) and Egypt and Tunisia in Hinnebusch and Ehteshami (2014). Algeria and Libya are ignored.

The net result is that anyone interested in understanding North African foreign policy must turn to country specialists who individually focus on the foreign policy of either Algeria (Bousselham 2005), Egypt (Brownlee 2012), Libya (Sicker 1987; Lemarchand 1988; Deeb 1991), Morocco (El Houdaígui 2003; Sambe 2010; Regragui 2013; Zouitni 2013; Mohamed 2014; Fernandez-Molina 2016), or Tunisia (Deeb and Laipson 1991; El Machat 1996, 2005; Grimaud 1996; Mbougueng 2002; Chneguir 2004). Toward this end, there exists a rich number of doctoral dissertations written by international or North African Ph.D. students who typically have conducted research in either Algeria (Mortimer 1968; Byrne 2003), Egypt (Mughisuddin 1975; Ibrahim 1978; Ayubi 1982; Fallatah 1986; VanDenBerg 2000; Makar 2007), Libya (Shembesh 1975; El-Ghariani 1979; Arab 1988), Morocco (Lewis 1960), or Tunisia (Barker 1971; Hung 1971; Castor 1975; Rezgui 1988). The dilemma with this case study literature, however, is that it is difficult to draw conclusions that are generalisable to the entire North African region, let alone to the broader African and Middle Eastern environments or to other regions of the world (Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America).

Classical approaches to understanding North African foreign policies

A review of the case study literature demonstrates that when scholars undertake research on North African foreign policy, one of three sets of theories tends to dominate.² The first body of theory, known as ‘big man’ theory, argues that foreign policy begins and ends with the desires of authoritarian leaders. This theme formed the basis of an entire generation of scholarship and was popular among journalists, policymakers, and academics, due to the tendency of the first generation of North African leaders, such as Libya’s Muammar Qaddafi, to create highly centralised regimes during the initial
decades of the contemporary independence era (see Sicker 1987; Lemarchand 1988; Deeb 1991). These regimes suppressed and in some cases dismantled other centres of power potentially capable of challenging the foreign policy supremacy of the presidential mansion, including other state actors (such as parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and non-state actors (such as Islamist parties and civil society groups). The logical outgrowth of these centralising tendencies, argue proponents of big man theory, is the overriding importance of the personal whims of authoritarian North African leaders in any examination of the formulation and implementation of North African foreign policies.

A second body of theory stresses the theoretical importance of great power influence on the formulation and implementation of North African foreign policies. Several historical turning points serve as the intellectual basis of this literature, ranging from the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) that defined the spheres of influence that the Triple Entente of the United Kingdom, France, and Russia would have on the former Ottoman Territories following their defeat in World War I, to the outbreak and intensification of the cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and the more recent U.S.-led ‘global war on terrorism’ begun in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Especially during the cold war, regional conflicts often having little if anything to do with the ideological concerns of communism or capitalism were exacerbated by great power intervention with little regard to local interests and desires (Gavshon 1981; Marantz and Steinberg 1985; Laïdi 1990; Lefebvre 1991). The hallmark of this body of theory is the differential levels of power between the great powers and North African countries, with the latter being referred to as ‘small states’ in international affairs; an assessment typically referring to the limited foreign policy capability of North African states as opposed to actual size (East 1973a, 1973b). In the extreme, North African countries are portrayed as great power ‘pawns’ with limited control over their foreign policy environments (e.g. see Le Vine 2004, 337–57).

A final body of theory highlights the exploitative nature of foreign economic ties between North African countries and the northern industrialised democracies, especially the former colonial powers. This school of thought, referred to as dependency theory, traces its origins to scholarship that sought to explain Latin America’s economic stagnation and underdevelopment in a U.S.-dominated Western Hemisphere (Frank 1967), and was initially popularised in North African circles by the publication of Rodney’s (1972) influential and much-debated work on Europe’s ‘development of underdevelopment’ on the African continent. The foreign policy implication is that economic dependency generates distortions in the socio-economic and political-military systems of weaker states, which in turn fosters the emergence of
elites whose interests, values, and perceptions have more in common with those of elites from the northern industrialised democracies than with the masses of their own countries. The net result is a ‘shared consensus’ between northern elites and their North African counterparts in favour of the foreign policy interests and wishes of the northern industrialised democracies (Moon 1985). This approach is especially prominent in analyses of what are referred to as French ‘neo-colonial’ relationships with its former North African colonies (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia). Drawing on the scholarship of Egyptian scholar Amin (1973) and French scholar Suret-Canale (1975), this largely francophone literature examines the array of ties that form a special foreign policy bond between francophone North African elites and their counterparts in the French foreign policymaking establishment.

The primary dilemma with big man, great power, and dependency theories is their combined tendency to reduce our understanding of the formulation and implementation of North African foreign policy to one of two sets of factors: North African leaders or foreign powers (e.g. see Korany 1986; see also Korany 1974). Specifically, these scholarly literatures together argue that one can explain North African foreign policies by focusing either on North African leaders, whether Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi of Egypt, Fayez al-Saaraj of Libya, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, or Beji Caid Essebsi of Tunisia, or their counterparts in the capitals of the most involved powers in North Africa, most notably Beijing, Berlin, London, Madrid, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, and Washington. Other, potentially influential state actors, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or non-state actors, such as Islamist parties, are largely ignored in the foreign policy analysis literatures devoted to North Africa.

**Domestic actor approach to understanding North African foreign policy**

The overarching theme of our domestic actor approach to understanding North African foreign policy is that big man, great power, and dependency explanations constitute at best exaggerations of more dynamic North African foreign policy processes. Even during the initial decades of the contemporary independence era, when North Africa emerged as a cold war battleground between the U.S. and the former Soviet Union, the formulation and conduct of foreign policies could not be completely explained by mere reference to the idiosyncrasies of the regions’ leaders (big man theory) or the foreign policy interests of either the superpowers (great power theory) or the former colonial powers (dependency theory). ‘It is our belief that the governments of the Middle East, like the democracies of the West, cannot be analysed, nor their actions understood, without reference to the publics they speak for and answer to’, explained a group of scholars who conducted a
comparative study of the role of domestic influences on foreign policymaking in Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and Syria (McLaurin, Mughisuddin, and Wagner 1977, 4). In the case of Egypt, for example, they underscored the important roles played by the party leadership of the Arab Socialist Union (the sole political party allowed at the time under the Egyptian constitution), the Egyptian military, and the ulama (Muslim religious leaders). The other case studies underscored the importance of additional domestic actors outside of the presidential mansion. Thus according to these scholars, ‘Today’s Middle East is, then, a vast complex of publics or constituencies; and national leaders’ decisions must be placed in the context of their need to maintain their domestic power positions by influencing constituent alignments, as well as in that of their intentions to realise Egyptian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Syrian, or some other “national interest”’ (McLaurin, Mughisuddin, and Wagner 1977, 5). In this regard, it is not surprising that one of the three co-authors (Mughisuddin) had written a dissertation on the evolving impact of domestic actors on the formulation of foreign policy in Egypt and Iraq, having conducted field research in both countries (Mughisuddin 1975).

The essence of the study by McLaurin, Mughisuddin, and Wagner (1977), which we adopt in our project, is that a host of state and non-state actors play varied foreign policy roles in both democracies and dictatorships alike. It is not a question of ‘either-or’, as is typically portrayed in most foreign policy studies of the region, but rather a question of degree, with individual state or non-state actors rising and or declining in foreign policy influence, during both democratic and authoritarian periods alike. To be sure, there is no question that authoritarian leaders suppressed and in some cases completely dismantled other centres of power potentially capable of challenging the foreign policy supremacy of the presidential mansion, including other state actors (such as parliaments) and non-state actors (such as Islamist parties). This suppression was never complete, however, with individual state and non-state actors playing different roles at different points in time, even under dictatorships.

The evolving role of two foreign policy actors in Egypt – the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – provides an excellent example. The country has been ruled by a succession of authoritarian military leaders since the military coup d’état of 1952 which removed King Farouk from power. The sole exception was the short-lived, democratically-elected government of President Mohamed Morsi (2012–13), who was also overthrown in a military coup d’état. Throughout this period, Egyptian military leaders have given priority to the role of the Ministry of Defence in the policymaking process, including within the realm of foreign policy, and have prioritised the pursuit of foreign security assistance, most notably from the United States, which is targeted toward enhancing the capabilities of the Egyptian military. It is important to note, however, that the institutionalisation of
authoritarian military leadership did not automatically mean that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which historically has played a more central role in foreign policy, would be completely sidelined in the foreign policymaking process. There exists significant variation in how Egyptian military regimes have interacted with the foreign affairs bureaucracies, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs enjoying a more influential role under the military rule of Hosni Mubarak (1981–2011), as opposed to under the previous military regimes of Gamal Abdul Nasser (1954–70) and Anwar Sadat (1970–81). As explained by Korany, ‘Though its [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] real influence is variable, it has stayed – especially during the Mubarak regime – an important source of information and implementation of foreign policy’ (Korany 2005, 172).

Adopting a domestic actor approach requires an in-depth analysis of the state and non-state actors that theoretically can play a role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. For the purposes of our project, we begin by exploring the foreign policy content of national constitutions, which provide the constitutional framework for understanding the foreign policy roles of state actors. We subsequently analyse the foreign policy roles played by two North African state actors outside of the presidential mansion: militaries and ministries of foreign affairs. Other state actors could also be explored, including, legislatures and the various economic affairs bureaucracies (e.g. ministries that deal with trade, finance, and tourism) and even the judiciary, which is sometimes called on to make decisions with foreign policy content. Our analysis of non-state actors begins with an exploration of the foreign policy concerns of North African public opinion, which provides the backdrop for understanding the foreign policy roles of non-state actors. We subsequently analyse the foreign policymaking roles of Islamist parties, civil society actors (youth, women’s, labour, and human rights organisations), and violent non-state actors (insurgent groups, terrorists, and foreign fighters). Other non-state actors could also be explored, including political parties more generally speaking (we cover only their Islamist variants), the media, private companies, think tanks, ethnic organisations, and traditional authorities.

An important starting point for exploring the dynamics between the presidential mansion and other state and non-state actors is understanding what happens when there is a presidential transition. At least four major types exist: A transition from a democratically elected leader to an authoritarian leader, which often happens in the aftermath of a military coup d’état (such as the 2013 military coup d’état against the democratically elected regime of Mohamed Morsi, and his ultimate replacement by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi); a transition from one authoritarian leader to another due to authoritarian resilience, typically due to the incapacitation or death of the leader (such as Morocco’s transfer of power in 1999 to King Mohammed VI, after the death of his father, King Hassan II); a democratic transition from an authoritarian leader
to a democratically elected leader (such as the transfer of power in 2012 from the Egyptian military dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak to democratically elected President Morsi); and a transition from one democratically elected leader to another, as a result of elections in a democracy (such as the 2014 transfer of power in Tunisia from President Moncef Marzouki to President Caid Beji Essebsi). In each of these cases, political transition potentially heralds the emergence of leaders with very different ideas about their country’s foreign policy, as well as the roles of various state and non-state actors within the foreign policymaking process.

The essence of our foreign policy actor approach, however, is to determine the degree to which the Arab Spring has contributed since 2011 to the further ‘opening up’ of the authoritarian political systems of North Africa, thereby providing greater possibilities for state and non-state actors to play more influential roles in the formulation and implementation of their countries’ foreign policies. The Arab Spring in this regard is not an isolated event, but rather constitutes part of what Huntington (1991) characterised as the ‘third wave’ of democratisation in world history. This wave of democratisation began in southern Europe in 1974, in turn significantly affecting Latin America, and spreading to Sub-Saharan Africa beginning in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of single-party communist regimes in Eastern Europe. As of 2011, the third wave has spread to North Africa and the wider Middle East as a result of the Arab Spring.

One means of systematically exploring the opening up of North Africa’s political systems is to assess changes in the level of democratisation within each North African country. The assumption, of course, would be that more democratic countries provide greater possibilities for input by other state and non-state actors, whereas such input will be more constrained but still exist in authoritarian countries. A widely used source for assessing a country’s degree of democracy is Freedom House, which uses a 14-point Freedom Index score to annually assess all countries of the world. This index ranges from the highest positive rating of 2 to the highest negative rating of 14. Countries are then grouped into three categories: (1) free (democratic, with a score of 2–5 points); (2) partly free (partly democratic and partly authoritarian, with a score of 6–10 points); and (3) not free (authoritarian, with a score of 11–14 points).

The Freedom House scores demonstrate that the 1989-onward portion of the third wave of democratisation has had a positive impact on Sub-Saharan Africa (see Table 1). Democracy scores steadily improved by more than 2 points, from an average score of 10.9 in 1980 to 8.6 in 2010, only to witness a slight deterioration to 8.9 in 2017. In the Middle East (not including North Africa), the 2011-onward Arab Spring portion of the third wave of democratisation witnessed a greater deterioration in democratisation scores, from an average score of 10.2 in 2010 to 11.3 in 2017. This was partially due to
Middle Eastern leaders ‘learning the lesson’ of what the Arab Spring had wrought in North Africa, subsequently undertaking a host of repressive policies to prevent the further spread of this wave (Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds 2013). North Africa’s experience with the Arab Spring places the region in between the experiences of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The region’s overall democratisation score improved from an average score of 11.4 in 2010 to a 10.2 in 2017. As clarified by the country-specific data, this average improvement was principally due to changes in Tunisia, which made a dramatic jump from a score of 12 in 2010 to a 5 in 2017. Morocco exhibited a slightly deteriorating score from a 9 in 2000 to a 10 in 2017, which represented a further deterioration from a score of 8 in 1980 and 1990. Authoritarian durability in Algeria and Egypt is demonstrated by a score of 11 and 12, respectively, in 2017. Finally, Libya exhibits the worst score of 13 in 2017, principally due to the Libyan civil war and the lack of effective central authority. The countries of North Africa nonetheless demonstrate a range of scores from 5 to 13, which suggest varying levels of the opening up of their political systems, and therefore varying possibilities for input by other state and non-state actors in the foreign policymaking process.

A second means for understanding North African foreign policy involves exploring the degree to which the Arab Spring and the third wave of democratisation more generally have strengthened institutional constraints on the foreign policy maneuverability of North African presidents. This logically should contribute to a decline in the personalised nature of foreign policy that proponents of big man theory assume to be characteristic of North African foreign policy in general. An important aspect of this process is what can be referred to as the ‘democratisation of foreign policy establishments’, or the emergence, and in some cases reemergence, of state and non-state actors outside of presidential mansions that are capable of challenging the foreign policy supremacy of North African presidents. Indeed,

### Table 1. Levels of democracy in North Africa (Freedom House data).

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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Africa Average</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
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<td>Middle East Average</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa Average</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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**Scale = 2–14.**

Free = 2–5.

Partly Free = 6–10.

Not Free = 11–14.
democracies, including those newly established and in the process of consolidation, embody increasingly open political systems that, by their nature, should permit wider involvement in the foreign policymaking process.

The degree to which the Arab Spring and the third wave of democratisation have contributed to growing constraints on North African leaders can be measured by using the executive constraint score from the Polity IV Project (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2017), which is also conceptualised in terms of its relationship to an executive’s degree of personal rule. A country’s executive constraint score from Polity IV can range from 1 to 7, with the score of 1 indicating a low degree of executive constraints, and therefore a high degree of personal rule exerted by the leader. The impact of other state and non-state actors on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy presumably would be low. In contrast, a score of 7 indicates a high degree of executive constraints, and therefore a low degree of personal rule exerted by the leader. The impact of other state and non-state actors on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy presumably would be high.

The Polity IV executive constraint scores demonstrate that the 1989-onward portion of the third wave of democratisation had a positive impact on Sub-Saharan Africa (see Table 2). Executive constraints gradually improved from an average score of 2.58 in 1980 to 4.61 in 2016. In the Middle East, the 2011-onward Arab Spring portion of the third wave of democratisation witnessed a slight deterioration in executive constraints, from an average score of 3.29 in 2010 to 3.15 in 2016. In this regard, North Africa’s experience with the Arab Spring once again places the region in between the experiences of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The region’s overall average score improved from a 2.8 in 2010 to a 4.5 in 2016. Regional variations include a score of 6 for Tunisia, 5 for Algeria, 4 for Morocco, and 3 for Egypt. Libya did not receive a score due to ongoing civil conflict. A fascinating aspect of these scores is that they paint a slightly different picture than that offered by the Freedom House democratisation scores. Specifically, they indicate

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<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Africa Average</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East Average</td>
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<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa Average</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.61</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Scale = 1–7.
1 = low degree of executive constraints (high degree of personal rule).
7 = high degree of executive constraints (low degree of personal rule).
higher levels of executive constraints (and hence lower levels of personal rule) than one would expect if one focused solely on the Freedom House democratisation scores. This would suggest that North African leaders are increasingly being challenged by state and non-state actors intent on making their voices heard in the policymaking process, including within the realm of foreign policy.

**Revolutionary diplomats?**

It is striking that the discipline has yet to explore the foreign policy impacts of the Arab Spring. Our project seeks to fill this scholarly gap. What are the state and non-state actors that have emerged or re-emerged as a result of the Arab Spring, and what are their impacts on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in North Africa during the post-Arab Spring era? Does it matter whether a country such as Tunisia has made a transition to democracy, or have pressures for change affected foreign policymaking even in countries such as Algeria that have remained authoritarian in the post-Arab Spring? What is the impact on foreign policy when a democratic transition has been reversed, as occurred in Egypt in 2013, when the military overthrew the democratically-elected government of Mohamed Morsi? What about the case of the Moroccan monarchy, which is labelled by Freedom House as semi-free (i.e. partially authoritarian and partially democratic), but nonetheless continues to be ruled by a hereditary monarchy? Finally, what has been the impact of state collapse and civil conflict on foreign policymaking in Libya? Our project seeks to provide preliminary answers to these questions.

The seven contributions that follow focus on the foreign policy impacts of state and non-state actors. An analysis of state actors begins with Tofigh Maboudi’s exploration of the foreign policy content of North African national constitutions, all of which have been either replaced or revised during the Arab Spring. We subsequently explore the evolving roles of two North African state actors: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Peter J. Schraeder) and the military (Zoltan Barany). Our analysis of domestic non-state actors begins with an exploration by Lindsay Benstead of the foreign policy concerns exhibited by North African public opinion. We subsequently explore the evolving foreign policy making roles of three North African non-state actors: Islamist parties (Quinn Mecham), civil society actors, inclusive of youth, women’s, labour, and human rights organisations (Kirstie Lynn Dobbs and Peter J. Schraeder), and violent non-state actors, inclusive of insurgent groups, terrorists, and foreign fighters (Michael J. Schumacher and Peter J. Schraeder).

**Notes**

1. We thank Hamadi Redissi, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tunis, El Manar, for providing the inspiration for this term.
2. These theories also generally apply to the broader African and Middle Eastern studies literatures, they are presented here solely in their North African application.

3. Some have questioned whether the Arab Spring constitutes a unique and/or separate wave. See Abushouk 2016.

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Disclosure statement

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