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The recruitment of youth political elites during transformations in Central and Eastern Europe and Arab Mediterranean Countries:
A comparative approach

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe and compare the mechanisms for the recruitment of youth political elites in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Arab Mediterranean countries (AMC) during and after the periods of social and political transformation that were the breakdown of the communist bloc in 1989 and the uprisings in the southern and eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in 2011. While the early expectations were for a similar course of events in the two regions, at present it is the differences in the factors and consequences of the mass mobilisations that capture most scholarly attention.

The analysis in this paper is based on desk research and rich quantitative and qualitative datasets from five AMCs carried out in the framework of the SAHWA Project funded by the 7th FP of the EC. Young people's active engagement in institutional politics is the major channel for political recruitment into the politically relevant elite both in post-1989 CEE and in the AMCs after 2011. The official channels for youth elite recruitment, such as working in support of political parties, in election campaigns and specialised leadership training are often underpinned by young people's families' economic, social and cultural capital (in a more direct form in the AMCs and a more covert form in CEE). In CEE in 1989 and in the AMCs in 2011 mass mobilisations opened a window of opportunities for the replacement of the old elite and transformation of the political system. However, in the post-communist countries elite circulation reinforced by a stronger middle class and greater societal aspirations for accession to the EU went much further than in the AMCs after 2011. In the latter region the rejuvenation of the politically relevant elite was undermined by the crucial role of military and religious elites, weaker middle classes, insurmountable divisions among protesting groups and not least by society's distrust of the youth. Politically active young people aspiring to elite positions are most often found among those with higher education, in stable employment, living in urban areas and in families which discuss political issues. Civic engagement in NGOs and the creative arts are desired channels for self-expression but cannot compensate for the blocked channels to elite circulation and social transformation more generally.

Introduction

In 1989 the rising wave of democratisation in central and Eastern Europe (CEE) prompted the American scholar Francis Fukuyama (1991) to predict "the end of history". The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact followed by that of the Soviet bloc opened up the road toward freedom, democracy and a market economy to the countries east of the Berlin Wall. The enthusiastic crowds filling the main squares of eastern European cities rejoiced in optimistic expectation. However, the positive predictions overlooked the economic difficulties, political crises and demographic decline in the first decades of the transition. And yet with varying degrees of depth and speed, the CEE countries succeeded in breaking with the communist regimes relatively peacefully, established more or less stable democracies and functioning market economies and joined the European Union.

The 2011 uprisings in the Arab Mediterranean countries (AMCs) twelve years later was met with similarly bright hopes. It seemed that "the third wave of democratization" (Huntington, 1991) had finally reached North Africa and would put an end to the authoritarian regimes in the region, oust the dictators from their golden palaces and bring long-due prosperity to the people living in the AMCs. Seen from Eastern Europe, the task in the AMC region seemed to be even easier as market economies were already in place and the economic transformations needed were less radical than they were in the countries with centrally planned economies. Nonetheless, such expectations soon faded and by mid-2016, with the uncertain exception of Tunisia, the AMCs have returned to just as – or even more – undemocratic political realities as before 2011.

When the protests were spreading in the AMC region and the ostensibly stable regimes proved vulnerable to mass discontent, many scholars pointed out the resemblance between the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 and those in the AMCs in 2011 (Voeten, 2011; Way, 2011). A few years later, however, even more analysts (Goldstone, 2012; Maogoto and Coleman, 2014; Durac, 2015) have engaged in explaining why the results of similar awakening movements were so different. The explanations for the diverging paths in the two regions most often start with the different cultural contexts preceding the mass mobilisations, and the dissimilar processes of modernisation underway. Other arguments arise from the political opportunities and constraints both inside and outside the revolting countries, including the role of international powers such as the USA, the EU and the rich Arab states in the Middle East. Some explanations take social forces into account along with their strategies and actions in challenging power-holders. What we try to do in this paper is not to provide an all-encompassing explanation of the character of the social changes in the two regions but to scrutinise one single aspect – the process of elite recruitment, reproduction and replacement before and after the two great mobilisations – focusing on the elite in formation, that is, the young people actively engaged in the pursuit of power.

Our analysis is based on a literature review, as well as on analysis of empirical data. We build upon studies of young people in Eastern Europe, such as one on the student movement in Bulgaria in the early 1990s (Kovacheva, 1995a). The major source of data on the role and experiences of the youth living in the AMCs is the SAHWA Project (2014-2016) funded by the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission. We use the rich qualitative dataset from the ethnographic work conducted by our local partners in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon and quantitative data from representative surveys of 2000 young people in each of those countries carried out in 2015-16. The main research questions

in this paper are: How can we explain change, as well as continuity, in the recruitment of the youth political elite during social transformations? What roles did youth political elites play in democratic transitions and mass mobilisations as experienced in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the AMCs in 2011?

Given the diversities not only between the two regions but also between the constituting countries within them, it is impossible to create a universal model of youth elite recruitment without taking into consideration the specific social situation at specific historical times. Thus, our conclusions are inevitably non-exhaustive and should be viewed as a step towards the understanding of the role of young people in social change in different socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts around the world.

1. The youth political elite in the making: theoretical framework

The process of elite formation is strongly influenced by the existing state and economic structures and the dominant culture in the societies under study. In academic literature elite recruitment has been studied from different theoretical perspectives, each focusing on different processes: Weberian (authority types), modernisation (institution building) and Marxist (political economy). Major questions whose answers have been sought since the classic theories of Mosca, Paretto and Michels concern the configuration and reproduction or replacement (circulation) of different elite types and how these are enacted in different societies and historical circumstances. There is a broad consensus that the elite's role in strengthening or changing the dominant structures is not only a manifestation of the will of political actors but is constrained by "path dependency" (Stark and Bruszt, 1998; Mahoney, 2000). The forms of recruitment and subsequent role of the political elite are shaped by the burden of the past, that is, the historical legacies and durable inheritances from the old regime which serve as building blocks of the new regime. Another strong impact factor, without which the process of elite recruitment in both CEE and AMCs today cannot be understood, is the process of globalisation – the role played by international institutions and foreign political and economic networks.

The political developments in both regions in the past decades represent highly complex processes of interplay between agency and structure and the study of the formation and role of the political elites should address both sides of the dichotomy. While state institutions are the primary channels for political actions, groups and individuals play a significant role in the political process with the decisions they take and the resources they mobilise for their implementation. Political elites in a given country are heterogeneous not only in their social background and ideological orientation but also in their access to power. Perthes introduced the term "politically relevant elite" to denote the "stratum … who wield political influence and power in that they make strategic decisions or participate in decision-making on a national level, contribute to defining political norms and values (including the definition of "national interests") and directly influence political discourse on strategic issues" (2004:5).

Youth political elites are part of the politically relevant elites in their quality as elites in the making that are supposed to inherit the positions of the old ruling class and counter-elites. The emerging elites act as guarantees of the reproduction of the political system and its stability. At the same time, due to their specific social status straddling the main life domains of education, labour and housing markets, politics and culture, young people have

the potential for political innovation and the rejuvenation of society (Mitev, 1988). They acquire political relevance not only through their recruitment into the ruling political elite but also as a result of their own political agency and public actions in search of identity. Experiences of major historical events during the period of youth might lead to the formation of specific political generations with their own worldviews and preferred forms of political behaviour (Mannheim, 1952).

From an analytical perspective two questions in the study of youth elites seem to need pertinent answers. The first concerns the channels for the recruitment of youth political elites, which vary in different social contexts. Elections and appointments in the state administration are the two obvious entry points which do not, however, explain the selection mechanisms hidden behind. Family background either in the more direct form of openly declared inheritance or the more subdued influence of the family's economic, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) is one of the main recruitment mechanisms. Gaining political skills through participation in different state institutions such as the legislative bodies is another significant channel (Perthes, 2004). Hooghe and Stolle (2005) indicate that the youth wings of political parties play an important role as socialising vehicles and means of recruitment for the political parties. They are social agents for partisanship, ideological orientation and organisational learning processes for the new upcoming political generations. A contrasting channel is the experience of mass mobilisations, which may also bring about the formation of individuals and groups that can challenge and replace the incumbent elite or be co-opted by it.

A second question is about the conditions for replacing the old elite and its willingness to prevent or allow the entry of new elites into power. One argument focuses on the ability of the regime to keep its capacity of patronage and to provide the political and other institutional elites with access to wealth and power. Way (2011) points to the strong partisan ties among the ruling elite in the face of a revolutionary threat and in particular the ties between the political rulers and the security forces. In countries with "sultanistic" regimes (Chenabi and Linz, 1998) the strength of the elite comes from the family ties and the expectations and training of the next family generation to keep hold of power. Under the conditions of established democracies, the changing of the ruling elite might be seen as the best way to preserve the regime during crisis while at the same time providing the old elite with new opportunities outside the domain of politics. Participation in successful social movements often capitalises by gaining access to elite positions in the subsequent social transformation. In the next paragraph we look for answers to these questions first in the developments in CEE around 1989 and then in the AMCs from 2011 on.

2. Change and continuity in the formation of youth political elites

In this section we present an overview of the channels for recruiting young people into the politically relevant elites in the two regions and the role that mass mobilisation plays in the process of elite circulation.

3.1 The case of CEE

Over the past century the CEE countries experienced at least two turning points in the formation of the political elite: the so-called "socialist" revolutions in the 1940s and the "gentle" revolutions in 1989. The communist context of elite recruitment varied in the countries in the region according to their political traditions and economic and cultural developments before the establishment of the one-party regime. Still, some common features could be discerned due to the forced unification within the Soviet bloc. Thus, in the initial period after World War Two, there was a radical replacement of the old national elites by new political leaders for whom the commitment to the communist ideology and the fight against fascism and imperialism acted as significant sources of political capital. However, since the 1970s there has been a gradual replacement of the old political cadres by a more competent and professional generation with technocratic skills (Staniszkis, 1991; Bundzulov, 2008). An accompanying process was the ageing of the political elite following the model of the elderly Soviet leaders.

The totalitarian character of the communist political system gave a subordinate role to the youth elite – that of a "transmission belt" of the will of the ruling party to the young (Mitev, 1985). The main – and in many countries the only – youth organisation, the Communist Youth League (Komsomol), was built on the model of the Communist Party and acted as a school for its leaders on the road to a political career. Instead of presenting and defending the interests of young people as a social group, the Komsomol often had to fight against spreading youth fashions and subcultural activities which were defined as "alien" to the communist ideology and conducive to "imperialistic" influence. This important role of youth leaders determined their careful selection by the party cadres based on full loyalty to the party. In practice, the leading positions in the youth organisation were acquired mainly through family connections – the networks of patron-client relationships (Mozhny, 2003). A notorious example was the appointment of Lyudmila Zhivkova – the daughter of the first secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party as Head of the Committee of Culture (equal to ministerial rank) at the age of 33 in the otherwise gerontocratic elite in Bulgaria.

Membership of the Komsomol was considered a precondition for political reliability and its absence closed the door not only to the political elite but also to studies at university, to jobs in administrative positions in the state-owned economy and even to leisure facilities or travel abroad, which was anyway limited to countries that were in the Soviet camp. While proclaiming gender equality in ideology and law, the youth organisation mostly promoted men to its higher ranks (Kitanov, 1981). Young women had to take the responsibility of the triple role assigned to them by the party: productive workers, mothers and lower-rank political activists (see: Kjuranov, 1978). The formation of a counter-elite in the face of the dissident movements in countries such as Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia was well developed, while in others such as Bulgaria and Romania it was harshly repressed by the state control apparatus and young people were discouraged from joining by adult dissidents in order not to ruin their chances of education and work (Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998).

The Gentle Revolutions (including the "Velvet" and "Singing") in CEE in 1989 were largely peaceful citizens' mobilisations resulting in the change of the political regime and the economic system. These were not truly youth revolts (Roberts, 2015) as they were composed of members of different social strata and diverse age groups and the leading role was allocated to established (and older) dissidents. Nevertheless, young people were highly

visible in the street protest scenes which were transmitted by the electronic media all over the region and beyond and acted as a spillover of discontent and hope for change. High school and university students were the leading social group among the youth. In countries such as Bulgaria where the political change was made "from above" and proceeded more slowly, young people organised strike committees and independent student unions, insisting upon the radicalisation of the change (Kovacheva, 1995a).

The regime change did not result in a revolutionary break in the political elite. The new elite was composed of four main groups: former communist "nomenclature", dissidents, representatives from the pre-communist elites and people from the "street protests" (Bundzulov et al., 2008). Research into composition and mobility among the elites in CEE (Szelenyi and Szelenyi, 1995) found empirical evidence for both reproduction and circulation processes. Thus, while the old political elites in Hungary and Poland shrunk somewhat with some individuals experiencing downward mobility and many more joined the ranks of the new technocracy, in both countries a quarter to a third of the new political elite had held elite jobs prior to the transition. About a fifth of the new power-holders had been non-elites before 1989 and they were mostly recruited from the middle strata and not from the bottom of the communist social stratification. A significant group among the new political elite were humanist intellectuals.

The rejuvenation of democratic politics in CEE was strongly felt in the first years after the regime change. In Hungary a youth party was formed and many young people entered the new democratic parliament as MPs. The communist youth organisations in most countries were quickly abolished or dissolved themselves and their cadres sought political engagement in the reconstituted communist parties or left politics altogether to pursue careers in business and other sectors of the economy (Kovacheva, 1995b). The new youth leaders came from outside the official youth organisations and acquired experience in the course of the mass spontaneous actions. Some of them joined the ranks of the newly formed or restored parties and their involvement in the mass demonstrations acted as a significant political resource. A key role for the recruitment of young people into the political elite after 1989 was played by considerations of personal or political loyalty rather than meritocratic criteria – what Szelenyi and Szelenyi called "administered circulation" (1995: 632).

Interviews with young people who joined the parties that were reconstituted from the pre-WWII politics in Bulgaria argued that they were led by the desire to restore "traditions" and claim their political "inheritance" from the past (Krasteva, 2010). Those who entered the ranks of the reformed communist party insisted upon continuity and stability. On the contrary, participants in the student chains around the parliament in Bulgaria in 1990 and the two subsequent nation-wide occupations of university buildings framed their protest in the desire for a total replacement of the ruling elite and proclaimed that true democracy could be born only when the generations "who had lived in slavery were gone" (Kovacheva, 1995a: 39). Beside their concern with a new morality in politics, the protestors viewed their collective actions as a search for self-expression and individualisation. As one of the interviewed leaders explained:

> "We were tired of being equal with faces as grey as the concrete roads
> and buildings around us. We wanted to be recognized as still alive, with
> various faces and thoughts behind them". 24 year-old male member of
> the student strike committee in Plovdiv, 1994 (ibid: 42).

Cultural contestations were consistent with political and economic confrontations and gave birth to strong age and gender stereotyping in the representation of the protests (Kovacheva, 2000). The competing sides used negative images of the opponents – "the old red woman" for the supporters of the transformed communist party and "the young blue hooligan" for the newly formed parties. Not only in Bulgaria but also in Hungary, Slovakia and elsewhere in CEE the promotion of democratic politics mingled with conservative gender ideologies (Corrin, 1992; Einhorn, 1993).

After the democratic consolidation of the multi-party political system in CEE countries and their accession to the European Union, the reproduction of the political elite became the dominant trend, often at the expense of a lack of sufficient openness to prevent counter-selection. Today, young people in the region are less visible in politics, less interested and less active on the political scene and more heterogeneous in their political beliefs (Roberts, 2009; Amna and Ekman, 2013; Hurrelmann and Weichert, 2015). The channels for recruitment into the political elite are mainly the youth sections of the established political parties as well as the numerous youth associations that became a target group for training and recruitment by various, mostly Western, political foundations. While the symbolic capital of the young being "non-routine" and "non-corruption" is still often mobilised by recruiters, educational credentials, technocratic and organisational skills have grown in importance. A prominent example of the new wave was the entry into politics of the so-called Yuppies in Bulgaria – young people with diplomas from prestigious Western universities and experience from jobs in large international companies who were invited to become ministers in the former king's government in Bulgaria in 2001-2005. Since the beginning of the new century most youth leaders have started presenting themselves as professionals rather than as following a "calling", in Weberian terminology. Another "shortcut" into the political elite is the formation of populist parties with "cash and carry" (pragmatic) young politicians (Krasteva, 2010).

The youth political elite in CEE has been attributed with an important role in the official public discourse both before and after 1989. The citizens' mobilisation, including that of young people, during the 1989 revolutions in the region induced the regime change and allowed a wider elite circulation and some rejuvenation of the politically relevant elite. For the majority of young people twenty-five years on the main concerns are focused on their own life path transitions and they are looking for other forms of self-expression and public engagement. The aspiration to get into the political elite is of interest to just a few of them.

2.2 The case of the AMCs

The social context of youth elite recruitment in the AMCs in the period before and after the revolutionary wave in 2011 is very different in terms of demography, politics, culture and economy from that of CEE countries. In addition, the five southern and eastern Mediterranean countries in the SAHWA Project are a diverse group in their colonial past, post-colonial development and present day situation. In this section we focus more on the processes in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco – the countries which experienced protest mobilisations in 2011.

The wave of social change that followed the end of WWII and swept through CEE establishing communist regimes washed over the region of the AMCs as well, but with contrasting consequences: creating conditions for gaining independence from the colonial powers, building autonomous states and managing wider social modernisation. A common trend in both regions, however, was the rejuvenation of the political elite. The nationalist movements dominated by the burgeoning middle class in Tunisia and the army in Egypt became the new political actors in the process of state formation. The first generation of the political elite was largely recruited on the basis of its political capital for having participated in the movements for independence, was of a younger age and of a more modest social origin, being largely party politicians and military officers. However, the traditional elite – the landed upper class – continued to be part of the politically relevant elite resisting the reforms (Allison, 2015). With the development of the market economy and mass education in the 1970s and 1980s, new social strata started to enter the political elite – the higher status layers of the bourgeoisie with technocratic and administrative skills (Sumpf, 2014; Hinnebusch, 2015). In Egypt and Tunisia the elite became more urban and better educated. Morocco, however, persisted in keeping the highest political positions for the traditional elite coming from the rural notability with clientele connections to the royal family. The absence of significant development programmes devalued technocratic skills and the rise of a young educated generation was feared for its potential radicalism and eventual mobilisation against the regime. Protests were prevented not only by repression but also by patronage (Storm, 2014). It was only after the two attempted military coups in the 1970s that the Moroccan political system started to liberalise and allow some activities of opposition parties.

The two decades before the 2011 uprising in the AMCs were a period of significant ageing of the politically relevant elite and stagnation of the process of elite replacement in the region. The neoliberal trend in the development of the economy was matched by rising foreign debt and creditor pressures for austerity. The privatisation largely took a crony form allowing the ruling families and other members of the political elite to take unsecured loans from the banks and buy state property, often not paying back the loans. Analysts have paid attention to the role of the middle class in the region as a social stratum not only with some political influence but also "with an incentive to translate political participation into political influence" (Sumpf, 2014). This is not a homogeneous group and its members vary along numerous dimensions, for example, the urban-rural divide, modern or traditional profession, gender, national or immigrant origin. Two specific groups in the composition of politically relevant elites in the AMCs were the Islamists and the army leadership. While Catholicism also played a role in the accumulation of discontent against the communist regime in CEE, mainly Poland, the role of Islam in the AMCs was much stronger and had greater political consequences. Islam gained importance through the development of national identity in opposition to Western powers and in the last decades of the 20th century it acted as an expression of the discontent of the poorest social strata marginalised from the economy and politics (Sika, 2012). The army is another specific social group with a significant place

among the political elite in the AMCs. The army and the security forces provided strong support for communist rule in Eastern Europe and their new stance of non-interference in the events of 1989 was a precondition for the spread and success of the anti-communist movements. In the AMCs the role of the military elite is more complex and diverse. Thus the Egyptian army is strong and politically active, while the Tunisian army is smaller in size and largely apolitical. The politically relevant elite among the army is also diverse – in Tunisia the army elite is more technocratic than the one in Egypt, which tends to rely on its political capital and anti-Islamist stance. In most countries there were attempts to co-opt trade union and opposition party leaderships in order to endorse privatisation laws which increased their numbers among the aspiring elite groups – a process named by Hinnebusch (2015) as "elite overproduction". The limited opportunities for new elite recruitment were among the significant factors for the discontent resulting in the 2011 uprisings, together with mass impoverishment and unemployment, particularly among the young population.

Considering the role of young people in politics in the period before 2011, we can say that, apart from the national liberation struggles and the first post-colonial generation of politicians and state builders, the youth was largely excluded from power and invisible on the political scene. Elite recruitment among the young was based on family economic, social and cultural capital. The young were not seen as possessing the necessary administrative skills for the institution building during the state formation and the educated youth were considered suspicious and possibly rebellious or at least not obedient enough of authority and tradition. The main (and largely accepted as legitimate) mechanism of recruitment into the countries' top positions was the preparation of the ageing leaders' offspring. The notorious examples of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, Gamal Mubarak, Bashar al-Assad, Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh demonstrate that this was true both for the monarchies and the republics in the region.

Elite circulation was induced once again with the mass mobilisation wave rising in the AMCs in 2010-11 against the irresponsible authoritarian political regimes. The opening up of political opportunity structures made the youth visible on the political scene and young people in the AMCs filled the squares in Tunisian, Egyptian and Moroccan cities, which was reminiscent of the events in CEE in 1989. The 20 February Movement in Morocco empowered thousands of youth activists to take to the streets. In Egypt the protests gathered both marginalised and well-educated middle-class "Facebook" young people, unorganised and organised groups such as the Youth of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Youth of Kefaya, the Front of Coptic youth and young people from the Tomorrow Party, the Democratic Party, the Labor Party, and the Wafd Party (Durac, 2015; Korany, 2015).

Along with the physical spaces in Arab cities, the virtual spaces of the new social media became "discursive territories" for youth self-expression, identity formation and political communication (Christensen and Christensen, 2015). Young people's posts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs influenced political debates in the region, communicated political messages and were used as tools for organising gatherings and other protest actions

(Khalil, 2012; AlSayyad and Guvenc, 2013; Markham, 2014). As in CEE in 1989, the international media magnified the power of the mass mobilisation in the Arab cities, spreading protest well beyond its initial locations. However, while the interplay between traditional and new media fostered the creation of the agreed symbolic meaning of the events, it did not reach all young people in the AMCs, nor all public spaces and geographical territories in the countries starting the protests.

And again similar to the Gentle Revolutions in CEE, many other groups besides the youth took part in the uprisings: the workers' movement, which was particularly strong in Tunisia, the urban middle classes such as the Kefaya movement in Egypt, liberals and leftists (Beinin, 2014; Sumpf, 2014; Boubekeur, 2016). These movements remained separate, often acting in competition with one another, prone to internal fracturing and not able to create "collective identities" and coherent "action frames" which classical social movement theorists consider a precondition for the rise and success of a social movement (MacAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1998). The movements did not have clear ideological inclinations and their slogans contained general references to human rights, democracy and justice (Sika, 2012). These features of the Arab uprisings of 2011 prompted scholars to question the utility of using the social movement theory (Durac, 2015) or of naming them "nonmovements" (Bayat, 2010).

What is important for our analysis in this paper is that despite the mass mobilisation, a notable change in political leadership could to a certain extent be observed only in Tunisia and Egypt, while in Morocco the king responded with a power-sharing initiative and the political elite continued to hold on to power. In the course of a few years after the uprisings deep divisions opened up between the power holders in the state, the secular oppositions and the Islamic forces, which gradually reversed the processes of democratisation. In Tunisia democratisation went further because of the historic traditions of trade union power. Less were the democratic changes in Egypt due to the obstruction of the military-dominated state and least of all in Morocco, where the monarch's rule offered only semi-pluralistic practices. In Egypt after the overthrow of Morsi in 2013 the political elite was challenged again and some of the leaders of the 2011 uprising, such as Ahmed Maher and Alaa Abd El-Fattah, were arrested and the Muslim Brotherhood's Supreme Guide faces numerous accusations in court (Gonzales, 2016). In addition, some well-known members of the political elite from the Mubarak era have been reinstated, as Asseburg and Wimmen (2016) point out.

At present another group is highly visible among the youth elite – what Sukarieh (2012) name "Young Global Arabs". Similar to the Yuppies in CEE, they have been educated in the West or in the few prestigious universities in the AMCs region, they own local businesses and/or work as heads of NGOs. The channel for elite recruitment seems to have moved back towards family capital, however, with an increasing role for cultural capital. Antonakis-Nasrif (2016) also highlights the role of the highly educated professionals with experience from working abroad and contacts with international organisations in political life in post-revolutionary Tunisia.

Egypt's military and Tunisia's trade union federation started to act in the name of the "restoration of peace and order", a role similar to that of the Moroccan king (Kerrow, 2014). The growing terrorist threats in the region further strengthen the positions of the traditional autocracies among the political elite, insisting upon preserving the "prestige of the state" (Mousa, 2014) and bringing the promise of peace, stability and prosperity. Corruption is another challenge to democracy in the region and its scope has been widened in Tunisia with the formation of the new coalition which Ghilès (2016) describes as a deal between the old and the new elite aiming to avoid a more radical break with the inheritance from the Ben Ali family.

4. Political engagement and youth elite recruitment: new evidence

The SAHWA survey did not aim to measure the degree of reproduction or circulation among the politically relevant elites in the AMCs: the object of research was the general youth population (15-29 year old). The design included a structured questionnaire delivered to young people from a representative sample of the households in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon. Around 2000 filled in questionnaires in each of the five countries that were collected and analysed using SPSS. The questions covered various topics relevant to young people's lives. In this section we discuss the data on young people's forms of political behaviour and their aspirations and expectations about politics. We then compare these results with the qualitative data collected via focus groups, narrative interviews, life stories and ethnographic observations conducted by the local teams in three sites in each country.

Even in Tunisia – the country that sparked the fire of discontent that spread over the region in 2011 – only a tiny minority in the survey sample declared having taken part in political activities at the time and the survey team in Egypt – the other country which experienced mass political mobilisation – indicated a widespread reluctance among respondents to speak about their own participation in the uprising and seemed to "fear to announce that they are affiliated to a certain political or social group" (National Case Study, Egypt 2016: 16).

The survey datasets reveal that involvement in political activities, which provides young people with necessary experience and skills for the entry into the politically relevant elite in their countries, is not widespread. Avoiding the term "membership", the questionnaire used a wide indicator of engagement – "belonging to a political party and a political movement as a participant, donor, volunteer or sympathizer". Between 3% and 16% of the surveyed youth declare such forms of involvement in the activities of a political party and similar but the proportion of active supporters of political movements is lower. Figure 1 demonstrates significant country differences in the level of political engagement, with the youth in Morocco and Lebanon being the most active.

Figure 1. Forms of active involvement in institutional politics among the youth in the AMCs (%)
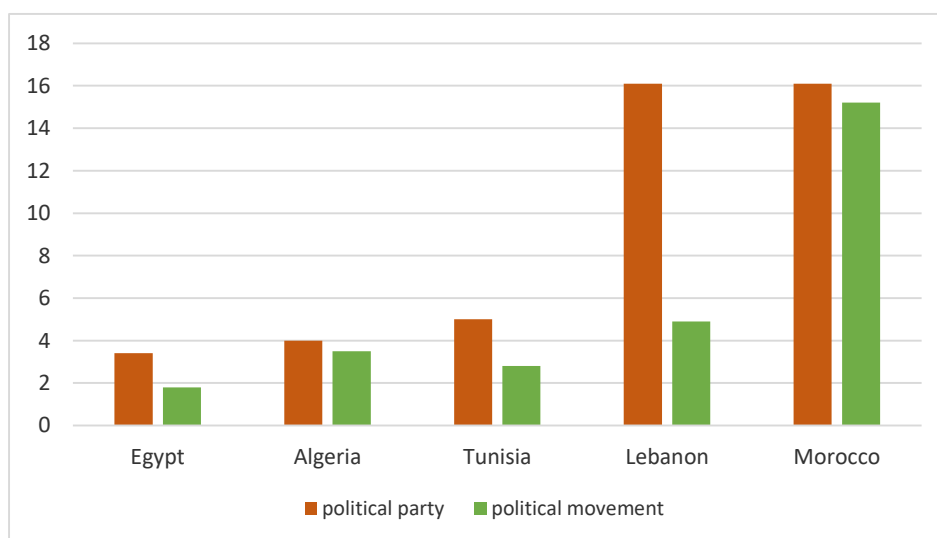
SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

Participation in unconventional or protest politics can also serve as a route for youth entry into the politically relevant elite. Involvement in non-institutional politics is somewhat more common among young people than involvement in institutional politics. Figure 2 compares the rate of participation in various forms outside political parties among the youth in the five countries. The young respondents in Algeria report the highest participation in these non-institutional channels: in the past year 20% had joined strikes and 19% demonstrations. This was followed by the youth in Morocco with 17% for demonstrations and 16% for strikes. Those forms are very rare among young people in Egypt and Tunisia and the number of those actively involved did not reach 5% for the past twelve months. Lebanese youth take up a position in the middle. Violent actions are the least common form in all countries. The new social media is used for political information and mobilisation most often in Lebanon with 11% of young people having engaged in such activities via the internet over a one year period. We should note, however, that this form does not replace the other forms of active engagement in non-institutional politics and comes third overall.

**Figure 2. Forms of active involvement in non-institutional politics
among the youth in the AMCs (%)**
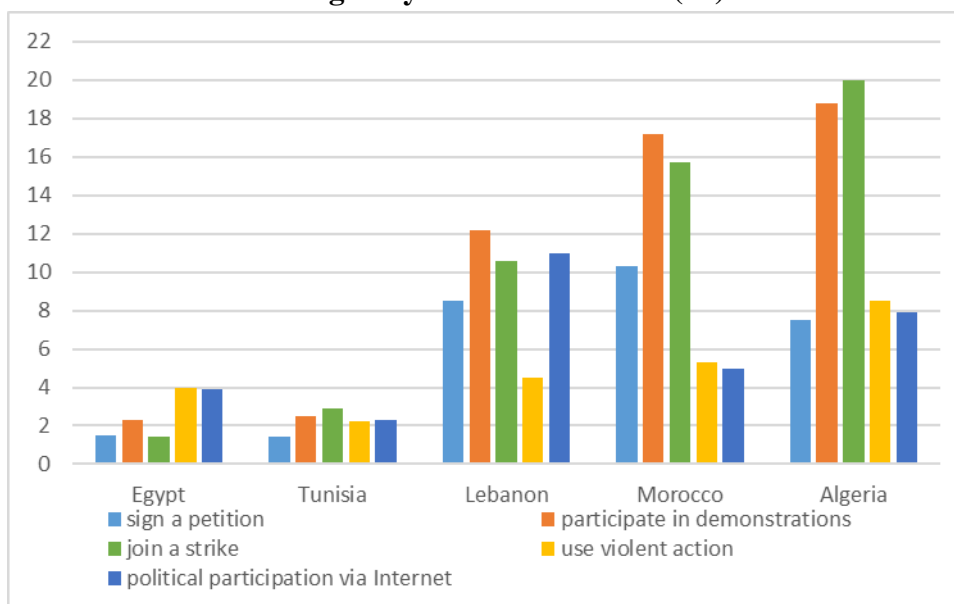
SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

The comparison between the forms of non-institutional participation in the five countries suggests a situation in which the countries with higher involvement in the 2011 events such as Egypt and Tunisia have much lower levels of this kind of participation than the countries which did not experience a revolutionary wave at this time – Algeria and Lebanon. Besides the fear of openly claiming political participation, a probable explanation is young people's disappointment with the low efficacy of such forms of political activities five years after the events.

Active participants in political life in the AMCs are mostly men living in urban areas independently from their parents. Among the older age group – over 20 years of age – those who participated in protest activities during the events of 2011 in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco and continue to be politically active at present form a distinctive group. They tend to be young people with higher levels of education working in stable employment in the official economy and not the unemployed and the informally employed. Those who have grown up in families where political issues are discussed "often" and "very often" tend to get involved in various forms of political activities, although the significance of this factor is not as strong as that of young people's own education. All in all, the life transitions of the activists in politics are more successful than those of the politically inactive youth (Roberts et al., 2016).

Civic organisations are more popular among young people in the AMCs. Up to 40% of the survey samples in the AMCs participate, sympathise, donate money and do voluntary work for non-governmental organisations. The proliferation of youth NGOs in the region was

confirmed by the fact that as many as 153 youth groups responded to the call of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces in Egypt to participate in the "national dialogue" (Korany, 2015).

The qualitative data sheds light on young people's understandings of politics five years after the wave of protest in the AMCs. In their own words, young interviewees explained their dislike of getting involved in politics. In a focus group discussion in Tunisia (TN_FG_4: 6), the general opinion was that after the ousting of Ben Ali politicians were not dealing with the pressing problems in the country and had neglected the issues about which people had revolted. They had not kept their promises. In his biographical interview, a young Tunisian man was highly vocal about his disaffection with politics as he was sure that no matter what his personal opinion was, the politicians in Tunisia "will do what they want!" (TN_LS_5e; male, 19 years old). The focus group members in Algeria stated that politics was still "a confiscated sphere" for the majority of young people and their personal involvement did not matter. Elections were only a pretence of democracy and a means for reproducing the elite: "We know the winning candidate and party in advance" (National Case Study, Algeria 2016). The Moroccan report (National Case Study, Morocco 2016) also notes young people's disinterest in politics and distrust in politicians and political institutions. Despite youth participation in the February 20 Movement, young people are still perceived by the ruling political elite (and the population at large, according to the report) as immature and irresponsible. The young participants in the ethnographic study commonly referred to those in power as "them" in opposition to "us" (ordinary people). Many interviewees spoke about their disappointment with the ruling parties compared to the high expectations they had before these parties came into power.

Governments in the region have introduced programmes for recruiting well-educated young people and training them for managerial positions in politics and economy, such as the Presidential Leadership Program in Egypt in 2015 (Korany et al., 2016). The young people, however, often assess the measures introducing quotas for youth participation in governance as mere "diplomatic schemes" used by the ageing political elite to allow only secondary roles to active youth (National Case Study, Algeria 2016). Young people believe that their representatives in the political institutions get their positions through clientelism and connections (*maarifa*) and care only about their own personal interests. There are also youth cooperation schemes funded by the Council of Europe, and other international or foreign country sources which have difficulties reaching young people with fewer opportunities (Göksel and Şenyuva, 2016). Foreign programmes for political training in particular, such as the Tunisian School of Politics, do play a role in developing skills and providing experience relevant for recruitment into the political elite, However, they do not enjoy great confidence among the Arab Mediterranean youth who widely believe that they benefit "the rich and the powerful" (Laine et al., 2016: 15).

So who are the young people who are interested in politics, get involved in some forms of political participation and aspire to become members of the politically relevant elite in their

countries? In the ethnographic dataset there is one focus group of politically active young people in Tunisia. Their views provide insights for understanding youth political elites and the ways young people get engaged in politics.

In this focus group only one out of seven activists claimed to have been influenced by his father's commitment to politics. For the rest, it was a particular type of family socialisation encouraging autonomy that played a role in their taking an active political stance. Another significant factor for many was education in general and more specifically the opinions of respected teachers and the knowledge of foreign languages which allowed access to Western music, culture and information more generally.

> I discovered American rap which expresses protest, then Rock, which is
> very rebellious to society, to the State, but also to religion and family, in
> a word, to anything that oppresses! (TN_FG_1: 3).

The SAHWA documentary film also shows that young people's creative involvement in arts (music and cinema) becomes a way of taking an independent perspective on political issues and criticising the government, be it in Tunisia, Egypt or Lebanon. The young man from Alexandria who was involved in filmmaking was very critical of the role of the army in public life in Egypt, which in his opinion tried to engulf all spheres of public life.

> The army has an economic monopoly … Army pumps are now
> extinguishing fire [because there is no civil service fire department in
> Egypt] … I am so worried that if the market doesn't produce movies, the
> army will start doing it instead … To protect the cinema, the army will
> start to produce movies. (SAHWA documentary film, 35:15 minute
> onwards).

Four of the young people in the focus group took part in the 2011 revolution by joining the demonstrations and strikes, posting or sharing photo and video material and expressing opinions online. Two of the active focus group participants who were too young to get involved personally in the events explained that it was the 2011 popular revolt which prompted their interest in politics and they became active after that. Another political event, the assassination of the prominent politician Chokri Belaid, was a turning point for a 16-year-old woman in her relation to politics. She accepted the values and ideology of the victim and could quote from memory parts of his media interviews and speeches.

The active young people were disappointed with the present day developments in Tunisia. One of them shared his frustration:

> Since 2011 nothing has changed, nothing took place actually. The senior
> responsible arrives in Gafsa, makes a tour of the city, and then says:

'everything is fine'. No! …the only new thing is the opening of the mall
Carrefour. (LS_TN_3e, 26-year-old male: p. 8).

He decided to withdraw from political activism altogether, but the others in the group
persisted in trying to influence politics from the outside – through their involvement in civil
society. We could define this group as a counter elite in the making on the basis of their
public engagement (in organisations or through the arts) which they perceive as a means for
criticism and pressure on the ruling political elite. In the words of the young rapper from the
Tunisian report: *"I address the power, I tell them that they should move on and change
things"* (National Case Study, Tunisia 2016: 13).

The ethnographic studies confirmed the role of youth centres in elite recruitment. The
Tunisian report underlines the significance of young people's engagement in the activities of
youth centres which provide information, raise awareness about various topical issues and
directly form groups of "youth leaders" who are then invited to take part in various national
and international meetings (National Case Study, Tunisia, 2016: 10).

Another significant finding from the qualitative study is that if it is difficult for young men
to influence politics in the AMCs it is twice as difficult for young women to do so. Even
though women were present in the protests in Egypt, El-Sharnouby's (2015) analysis of the
protest imagery made evident that the image of young protestors had masculine connotations
rendering centrality to the notions of manhood and responsibility. After the uprisings,
political power remains a sphere mostly for men, as the Tunisian National Case Study
(2016) demonstrates that women who have political opinions get involved at best in NGOs
and trade unions but not in political parties. Emblematic is the story of a young woman who
tried to voice support for the Palestinian cause while still at school. This was met by harsh
reprisal from the educational authorities and a slap in the face from her father. A similar
observation is reported in the Algerian National Case Study (2016) – the socially recognised
place for women is their home, where they are protected by their parents and husbands.

5. Conclusions

As of 2016 the "end of history" proclaimed by Fukuyama has not materialised either in
Eastern Europe or in North Africa. Comparing the elite formation in CEE over twenty-five
years and in the AMCs for five years after the mass mobilisations highlights more
differences than similarities. The changes in the functioning of the economy, the political
regime and elite replacement were more radical and substantial to the north than to the south
of the Mediterranean. Both internal and external factors prevented significant
democratisation in the AMCs and the reproduction of the political elite and of the
mechanisms for its recruitment were among them. While in both regions the protest
movements created a window of opportunity for elite replacement, it was largely averted by

means of repression and co-optation. The youth as a political elite in the making were not given real access to power. Stronger patriarchal traditions in the family and public life in the AMCs still produce distrust in society about the abilities of the young to take responsible decisions and participate in governance. While political leaders in the AMCs now pay greater attention to the younger generation and the problems with their social integration, offering quotas and training to get into state administration, the young people remain disillusioned about political participation and distrustful of politicians and political institutions. They turn to other forms and spaces of self-expression while being concerned with the barriers they face in the search for personal autonomy and social justice.

Describing the present day low interest of young people in the AMCs in politics and distrust of institutional forms of political participation, we should recognise that the picture of the mass attitudes towards state institutions among the eastern European youth is not that different. Since we do not have truly comparative results from empirical studies with the same methodology in both regions, we cannot measure the scope of the difference. What we can argue as a reliable result of the analysis in this paper, however, is that the openness of the political elite to young recruits is a measure of democracy itself. Skilful negotiations between incumbent and counter-elites, the forms and levels of international support are significant factors for social change but they cannot replace the rejuvenating role that that young people's entry into the politically relevant elites in their countries plays in the path to social transformation. Another conclusion from a research perspective is that there should be more attention to the processes of recruitment of youth political elites when studying the functioning of political systems and that greater sensitivity is needed towards all forms and spaces of youth participation in public life.

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