

RECONCILIATION, HERITAGE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND NORTH AFRICA, EDITED BY IYAD MUHSEN ALDAJANI, AND MARTIN  
LEINER. SPRINGER, CHAM. 2022. XXV, 481 pp.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4>.

REVIEW BY: VAHRAM PETROSYAN \*

**Abstract**

The idea of reconciliation, heritage and social inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa has been in the spotlight for many decades, as both regions constantly present such dramatic changes that reverberate around the world. In both regions, the geopolitical interests of world and regional powers are closely intertwined, and energy reserves allow you to influence the level of prices for them. In fact, all this becomes the reason for the acute manifestation of religious conflicts, the politicization of religion and tradition, thereby creating a turbulent environment for many actors. It is also worth mentioning the unresolved issues of nation-building and nation-states, the diversity of the ethnic and religious composition of the population in many places, the uneven distribution of income in societies, the level of militarization, and much more, to present the complexity and anxiety of the overall picture.

The results of the chain of revolutions that took place in these regions did not solve almost any of the urgent problems in any of the countries and at the same time caused a systemic earthquake, a series of coups, civil wars, interventions, as well as unrelenting confrontation in society, leading to rampant terror and repression. Based on a comprehensive theoretical study of the phenomenon of reconciliation, heritage and social integration, this collection of articles presents a deep analysis of events in the Middle East and North Africa, summarizes the results of the previous development of this region, and reveals the causes of social and political failures. The main conclusions of the articles lead the reader to the conclusion that turbulence in both regions is the beginning of a new process that has embraced the reconfiguration of the modern world-system.

This book contains many interesting facts, generalizations and points of view. Therefore, it will be interesting and useful not only for social scientists, but also for everyone interested in the problems of systemic transformations in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Keywords:** Middle East, North Africa, statehood, sovereignty, conflict, dialogue, peacebuilding, transition, security sector, cybersecurity, social justice, social harmonization, humanitarian aid, local heroes, ethnic diversity.

---

\* Vahram Petrosyan is a PhD in History, Associate Professor of the Chair of International Relations and Diplomacy at Yerevan State University. He is a Director of the Institute for Armenian Studies at Yerevan State University.

Email: [vahram.petrosyan@ysu.am](mailto:vahram.petrosyan@ysu.am).

*Journal of Political Science: Bulletin of Yerevan University*, Vol. 1 (3), December 2022, Pp. 100-107

Received: 20.11.2022

Revised: 01.12.2022

Accepted: 15.12.2022



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

© The Author(s) 2022

The idea of an inclusive process of reconciliation in the midst of a conflict (AlDajani 2022), international economic integration, as the most pronounced trend in the world economy, embraced the modern world-system and, having spread first in Western Europe, continued to expand in developing countries. They also include the Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa, which have become a testing ground for regional and subregional organizations, various integration blocs. The trend towards the emergence of a new prospect for resolving the conflict situation in the Middle East and North Africa has been outlined (AlDajani 2022; Dietrich 2022; Leiner 2022), in many respects, due to the effectiveness of multilateral trade negotiations. With the increase in the number of regional agreements, a new approach has emerged in integration theory, according to which a number of bilateral regional agreements are more effective than global regulatory mechanisms (Dietrich 2022; Leiner 2022).

The integration of the Arab countries into the international trading system is a difficult process, the study of which plays an important role in understanding the current situation and the subsequent development of the customs and tariff policy, as well as the foreign trade policy strategies of the countries participating in world trade. With an increase in population in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, problems associated with labor migration have become acute. Firstly, there is an outflow of the working-age population to the more developed countries of the South and the countries of the North, in particular to the EU Member States. Secondly, illegal migration is becoming a serious problem. In response, a number of measures are being taken to help overcome the difficulties associated with labor migration. Understanding the current situation is also an important task for the world community, since its significance in the world economy is very high in the context of ongoing globalization processes and in the formation of transnational economic relations.

Modern North Africa plays an important role in political, economic and cultural relations between states. The voice of the North African countries is sounding more and more firmly and confidently from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly, influencing the adoption of resolutions on a number of international problems, especially those relating to the hot spots of the planet. The countries of the African continent differ in civilizational characteristics, level and pace of development. However, when it comes to armed conflicts, they have a lot in common: the mass death of innocent people, the suffering of women and children, the problems in refugee camps, hunger and death from the lack of food, medicine and proper social security. Often, mass displacement of people provokes local conflicts of a religious and ethnic nature. The emerging contradictions, piling up on each other, carry a threat to security and the danger of escalation of conflicts.

The consequences of armed conflicts are catastrophic. Irreparable damage is being done to the economy, culture, education, political and humanitarian spheres, the ecological system is degrading, homelessness and crime are growing, and the sanitary situation in cities is deteriorating. Even more tragic are the human losses and the growing number of refugees (Tacchini 2022; Elayah and Ahmed 2022; Dama 2022). There are even more displaced persons who have not left their countries. They have lost their homes, jobs, sources of income, and are forced to leave unharvested crops in the fields. Refugees are also a problem for host states, as recipients are forced to take funds from their own meager budget to keep refugees from starving to death. Their camps become

not only hotbeds of disease, crime, illegal trade in weapons and drugs, but also often a field of armed clashes with the population living there. That is why the tasks of maintaining peace and security do not leave the agenda of the African Union, the EU, the UN, and regional summits. Despite the efforts of the world community, it has not yet been possible to prevent conflicts. It will probably take a long time to resolve this problem, since wars are usually fought over strategic raw materials that bring high profits to international consortiums. In this regard, the likelihood of recurrences of overt or latent confrontation remains high.

Modern geopolitical processes are characterized by a high degree of complexity and unpredictability for Yemen (Elayah and Ahmed 2022). This state of international relations speaks of a serious crisis in the entire existing system of world regulation. This is evidenced, among other things, by the tendency associated with the rooting in international relations of unilateral, bypassing the UN Charter, military responses to reports of atrocities and gross violations of human rights. Unilateral military measures are increasingly being taken even before all the facts have been established by the international community, in accordance with agreed and approved procedures. Such practices only exacerbate the emergency conditions and the crisis of sovereignty in Yemen (Elayah and Ahmed 2022), in which elements of chaos and violence in the global community are born and spread. In their extreme expression, they can threaten global security, world peace and such achievements as humanity, sociality and international legal mechanisms for the protection of human rights. Against this background, multilateral efforts and steps by individual states to strengthen the systemic foundations of international relations, primarily to uphold the observance of the UN Charter and the principles of the work of the UN approved in it, are of particular relevance. The urgency of the threats affecting humanity as a whole increases the importance of humanitarian diplomacy, humanitarian assistance and cooperation in modern international relations.

The actual context in which human security challenges come to the fore on the international agenda is far more complex than in previous decades. This is the reason for the significant interest in humanitarian issues in the political science of international relations and the variety of approaches to its definition and study (Peña 2022; Aldajani 2022; Alnwairan, Aldajani and Alshraideh 2022; Abu-Zayed, Alzaghoul, Aldajani and Alshraideh 2022). Meanwhile, international humanitarian cooperation has firmly established itself in political science, which traditionally includes relations in the media, science, education, tourism, culture, sports, youth exchanges, etc.

At the same time, it is obvious that the humanitarian component of modern international relations is a much larger and more complex phenomenon. If international humanitarian cooperation, by definition, cannot lead to an aggravation of interstate contradictions, then the politicization of humanitarian issues that is observed today, on the contrary, often leads to an aggravation of relations between two or more actors in international relations and destabilizes the world system. Such an effect is produced by humanitarian interventions and military interventions with an appeal to the responsibility to protect, which have become a prominent phenomenon in today's international relations. Humanitarian diplomacy is based on the principles of independence, neutrality, non-partisanship and includes actors of various nature in the negotiation process: countries, intergovernmental organizations, CSOs, business and other actors.

In 2011, events took place in the Middle East, which later received the generally accepted name of the Arab Spring. These events had a great impact on almost all Arab states and their further political development, and in some cases completely changed the existing political regimes. Protest movements and actions for the states of the Middle East throughout their history cannot be called an exceptional phenomenon, and after a series of mass demonstrations leading to a change in the ruling regime, they look like a relatively familiar phenomenon. However, in terms of the intensity of events, specific forms of political action and the consequences for the entire region of the Middle East and North Africa, the Arab Spring has become an outstanding phenomenon. In particular, all this manifests itself in the legacy of Christian public figures and social justice in the Middle East (Sensenig 2022). Which of the characteristic features of the development of the region can be considered the main reasons for the presence of a crisis potential in it?

First, geopolitically, it is located at the intersection of Europe, Asia and Africa, that is, the three largest world regions. This position of his for a long time provoked powerful world powers to try to establish control over him. With some regularity, such attempts occurred with the use of military force. The number of armed conflicts in the Middle East over the past half century has significantly exceeded their number in other regions of the world.

Second, noteworthy is the fact that, throughout human history, the Middle East has been the origin of both Christianity and Islam. Both in the past and in recent history, this has become a breeding ground for religious conflicts and clashes.

Thirdly, there are countries in the region with differences in economic development, social and cultural aspects. In addition, each of them has specific features of the structure of political regimes and nuances of the social organization of society.

Fourth, the discovery of large oil reserves in individual countries of the region has further increased the role of the Middle East in the global economy. However, the focus on the export of hydrocarbon resources makes such countries dependent on the situation on world markets and creates conditions for strategic economic instability. The development of social and political crisis phenomena in the region at the present stage can be due, along with internal and external geopolitical factors, to this instability.

In addition, the internal processes taking place in the states of this region have regularly influenced and continue to influence the geopolitical situation in the world. In this regard, events in the region often have an impact on the situation in countries beyond its borders.

This situation calls for close attention and scrupulous analysis of the above transformational processes in the Middle East and North Africa and their consequences in order to determine their impact both in the near and in the longer term on a regional and global scale. First of all, this concerns the Arab Spring, which is understood as a wave of demonstrations and coups that took place in the Arab world, due to many interconnected global, regional and national factors, both social, demographic, economic, political, technological, cultural, and the level of claims, the realization of the need in political freedom, dissatisfaction with the authoritarian political regime, readiness for mass protests, delegitimization of power (Meyers 2022; Diab 2022; Sarrouj 2022; Merza and Muneam 2022). In some cases, the reaction of traditionalism to

liberalization acquired the features of radicalization, which the Arab regimes were not ready to confront under the new conditions. Citizens perceived some political leaders as unattainable and corrupt, while against their background, others who looked deeply committed to religion enjoyed greater preference (Abu-Nimer 2022; Hassan 2022; Lahmamed 2022; Pena 2022; Salahat 2022; Mulugeta Woldegiorgis 2022). Against the background of regional instability, the struggle for leadership between such important states as Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia has intensified, which see in the current situation a chance to strengthen their influence and provide themselves with greater opportunities to control resources and ensure their own national security (Alashqar 2022; Rullansky 2022).

The instability and anarchy established in some countries of the studied region served as fertile ground for the growth of organized crime, drug trafficking, human and arms trafficking. The widespread Islamization and general radicalization of the region deserve special attention, which eventually turned into a significant threat to international security, requiring decisive measures. At the domestic political level, social and political crises led to the fall or significant transformation of a number of ruling regimes in the region under study, but at the same time did not lead to significant democratization, or even to the solution of the problems that caused them. In some countries, armed conflicts have become a reality, which have led to the formation of gray areas beyond the control of legitimate authorities, or have caused the actual collapse of statehood.

## References

- Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. 2022. "Interfaith Dialogue: A Path to Reconciliation." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 463-481. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_28](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_28).
- Abu-Zayed, Abeer Abdel-Jabbar, Alshraideh, Mohammad, Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Saleh Al-Sharaeh. 2022. "Netnography Internet Research Methodology into the Internet of Toys." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 87-98. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_6).
- Abu-Zayed, Abeer Abdel-Jabbar, Esra Alzaghoul, Iyad Aldajani, and Mohammad Alshraideh. 2022. "Netnography Internet Research Methodology Applications: A Survey." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 99-107. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_7).
- Alashqar, Yaser. 2022. "Heritage in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Sociopolitical Perspective." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 315-328. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_20).
- al-Dajani, Amjad M., and Muhsen A. al-Dajani. 2022. "The Muslim Custodian of King David's Tomb Since 1529 al-Sayyid Sheikh Ahmad Dijani, the Jerusalemite (1459-1561)." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and*

- North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 219-230. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_15).
- Aldajani, Iyad Muhsen. 2022. "Exploring the Strengthening of National Research Capacity on Reconciliation Studies." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 147-154. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_10).
- AlDajani, Iyad Muhsen. 2022. "Inclusive Reconciliation Process in the Middle of Conflict: A New Perspective Towards Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 3-14. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_1).
- Alnwairan, Sajeda, Iyad Aldajani, and Mohammad Alshraideh. 2022. "Measuring the Academic Students' Performance at the University of Jordan Using Netnography Methodology." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 129-143. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_9).
- Dama, Nergis. 2022. "Do the Institutional Welfare Services Provide Social Harmonization? The Case of Syrians in Turkey." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 193-208. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_13).
- Diab, Issa. 2022. "Religion, National Culture, and Peacebuilding in the Middle East." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 329-344. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_21).
- Dietrich, Wolfgang. 2022. "Peace and Reconciliation Studies." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 15-30. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_2).
- Elayah, Moosa, and Noman Ahmed. 2022. "Humanitarian Aid in Yemen: A Crisis of Sovereignty and Inevitable Harm." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 173-191. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_12).
- Ferrari, Francesco. 2022. "Autobiography as a Hermeneutic Practice of Reconciliation with Oneself." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 47-64. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_4).
- Hakkou, Yamina, and Mahmoud Seddik. 2022. "Indigenous Language Preservation for a Socio-political Reconciliation: Morocco as a Case Study." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 211-217. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_14).
- Hassan, Zinat. 2022. "Regional Geopolitical Conflict and the Fragile State: Foreign Influence and Lebanon's Sovereignty." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social*

- Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 443-462. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_27](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_27).
- Lahmamed, Elmehdi. 2022. "Bargaining Over What We Were All in Together: Citizenship and Belongingness in the 2017 Qatar-Gulf Crisis." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 419-442. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_26](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_26).
- Leiner, Martin. 2022. "In Response to Wolfgang Dietrich's Article About "Peace and Reconciliation Studies" or How to Catch a Unicorn?." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 31-45. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_3).
- Merza, Hadeer, and Zeinab Ayad Muneam. 2022. "The Iraqi Marshland and the Quest of Tourism and Development." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 273-295. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_18).
- Meyers, Justin. 2022. "The Heritage of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in America, the Omani Context, and the Work of Al Amana Centre." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 345-360. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_22](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_22).
- Mulugeta Woldegiorgis, Mesfin. 2022. "Social Structure, Economic Exclusion, and Fragility? Pertinent Theories and Empirics from Africa." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 361-381. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_23](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_23).
- Omar, Omar Mahmoud, Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, Ma'en Juwaihian, and Martin Leiner. 2022. "Cybersecurity in Sovereignty Reform." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 109-128. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_8).
- Pena, Luis. 2022. "The Spatiality of the Peace." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 401-417. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_25](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_25).
- Peña, Luis. 2022. "Theories of Reconciliation-Basic Coordinates for Navigating Debates on Building Better Relationships in Societies in Transition." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 65-83. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_5).
- Rullansky, Ignacio. 2022. "Discourses on Statehood and Ethnic Diversity in Jerusalem: The Notion of Apparatus of Israelization." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and

- Martin Leiner, 251-271. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_17).
- Salahat, Nizam F. 2022. "Security Sector Reform as a Process of Reconciliation, What Went Wrong in Palestine?." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 383-399. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_24](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_24).
- Sarrouj, Hiba. 2022. "Creative Interventions as an Act of Reconciliation." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 297-311. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_19).
- Sensenig, Eugene Richard. 2022. "Local Heroes: The Legacy of Christian Social Activists and Social Justice in the Middle East." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 231-250. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_16](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_16).
- Tacchini, Davide. 2022. "Heritage, Social Inclusion, Refugees, and Reconciliation with Your Past: A Multidisciplinary Approach." In: *Reconciliation, Heritage and Social Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, and Martin Leiner, 155-171. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08713-4_11).