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INTRODUCTION

Signs of global warming have for some time been in evidence in the political and economic climate of the world. The protracted financial crises and their political implications have called into question the relevance of the liberal order as have the Arab uprisings. The summer of 2013 witnessed yet more upheavals from Brazil to Turkey, Egypt to Syria. In Brazil, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets and protested government's transportation fare hikes. These demonstrations rapidly became a venue that reflected a range of disappointments with Brazilian government's policies. Similarly, in Turkey, what began as a peaceful environmental activism to protect downtown Istanbul's sole green area, the Gezi Park, ignited countrywide demonstrations when the police set fire to the tents of protestors standing vigil at the park. For over a month, hundreds of thousands of concerned Turkish citizens marched on the main arteries of major cities and occupied downtown areas to express their discontent with the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) arbitrary and unilateral decision-making. Masses rose up to government's meddling with individual rights and choices. Overlapping with the events in Turkey and Brazil, in Egypt, the critical center of the Arab uprisings in 2011, public's longtime frustration with the eroding constitutional rights and targeting of irrevocable freedoms under the Morsi government led to an unexpected coup d'état.

At first glance, the three events appear to have little in common. Different geographic, political and cultural attributes suggest unique trigger points behind each case. In the words of a Turkish environmental expert who followed the Gezi events closely, "Those who are tempted to dub the Gezi protests 'Turkish Spring' are gravely mistaken. In Tunisia, and later in Egypt, revolutions erupted because of poor living conditions and a lack of economic development. In addition to democratic rights, people in those countries have overwhelmingly demanded prosperity and a fair distribution of wealth. In Turkey, on the other hand, people have protested government's overzealous development policies. The shopping mall that was planned to replace Gezi has symbolized for many state's ambitious urbanization and conspicuous growth strategy at the cost of environment. Among other things, Turkish demonstrations rang a loud and clear 'no' to government's arbitrary overdevelopment ambitions."

A deeper look past individual sociopolitical and macroeconomic realities, however, reveals a number of recurring frustrations shared by the raging crowds in all three countries. First, the authoritarian inclinations of governments exacerbate the conviction that the recent freedom movements have achieved very little in terms of democratic participation in these places. Second, the rift between citizens and the ruling elite is getting deeper and wider; citizens of both Western and emerging nations face new and more formidable challenges in holding their governments accountable. In North America and Europe, this problem manifests itself as a democratic disconnect. In both regions, government policies benefit a select few while they largely neglect the representation of a larger civil society, women, ethnic and religious minorities. In emerging countries and the so-called post-Arab Spring nations, democratic disconnect occurs very much in the same way. Parties that seize power through electoral victories block citizens' further participation in decision-making. Constitutional amendments are used as preferred tools to help governing authorities to consolidate their powers by enacting new laws that criminalize dissent. Third, more and more people feel that governments—either openly or clandestinely—interfere with personal choices, intrude into private lives, and force individuals to align their lifestyles with the ideology and norms of the ruling elite. Fourth, this new trend of recentralization of power and emerging "sovereigntyism" curtail means and space for freedom of expression. The illegal and disproportionate crackdown on demonstrators by the riot police, or armed forces, in three cases illustrates how little tolerance governments have for freedom of peaceful assembly and opinions that contrast their policies.

The majority of these regimes, in addition, feel threatened by new communication technologies that enhance people's means to practice their basic democratic rights and directly stake their claims on government. A few states have already declared social media as the new enemy of the state and taken steps to curb cyber freedoms by either completely banning these platforms or monitoring, and then criminalizing, opinions expressed on them. Finally, people on the street are increasingly disappointed in traditionally liberal and democratic nations that have committed very little tangible support for their cause. Most Western countries that fit this description are rattled by deep financial and political tremors. On one hand, their ability to offer an outlet is questioned on the premise of their own economic hardships and democratic deficits.

On the other hand, West's failure to live up to its own democratization rhetoric shakes revolutionaries' as well as true liberals' trust in them and resolution for a more liberal society.

These civilian outbursts of resistance to authoritarian regimes have revealed critical governance deficits, to which no nation is immune in the long run. The liberal order and its uncertain future are most susceptible to such regime failures. Against the backdrop of people's inalienable right to live and conduct their affairs in free and progressive societies, liberal order emerges as both a critical and highly contested notion. The complexity of this term has many facets. One of the intricacies has to do with its definition. Visibly the ephemeral characteristic of its conceptual definition construes a comprehensive academic discourse on its own. What orders, regimes, and governance models constitute "liberal orders"? What characteristics do we take into account when we classify a system as a liberal order? What are the key institutions of such an order? For instance, one may discover attributes of the liberal order even in transition countries such as Tunisia and Egypt. Proponents of this view consider the conduciveness of political and legal climate for mass demonstrations as important tenets of the liberal order. The same argument is also extended to access to latest information technologies, although such access could be restricted. In addition, the perceptions over economic liberalism add to the complexity of the debate on liberalism. Last, the liberal order by definition cannot be restricted to national governments; it is essentially connected with the way in which international system functions.

In the days leading up to the Gezi Park demonstrations, Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) in cooperation with the Transatlantic Academy, and Columbia Global Centers-Turkey organized a timely event on "The Future of the Liberal Order." The two-day conference on May 22-23, 2013 was organized into a half-day workshop and a day of panel discussions that addressed the preceding questions. First day's roundtable brought together a diverse mix of local and international experts from academia, diplomacy, public and private sectors, the media, and civil society. This off-the-record session took up urgent issues raised in the Transatlantic Academy's 2013 report *The Democratic Disconnect: Citizenship and Accountability in the Transatlantic Community*. Focusing on the shortcomings of Western democracy highlighted in the report, the experts shared their views on strengths and weaknesses of the liberal order. They further noted that the causes and results of democratic disconnect discussed in the report also exist in emerging powers. Such factors have been present especially in the countries that have just embarked on the thorny path to democracy and liberalization beginning with revolutions. This linkage suggests that the widening rift between citizens and governments is likely to have greater ramifications on the future of the liberal order—one that transpires beyond Western boundaries.

The problems clouding the future of the liberal order fall within five categories: 1) Lack of a clear, institutionalized conceptual definition of the "liberal order"; 2) an urgent, yet ignored, plea from citizens worldwide to participate in government decisions; 3) steady erosion of government accountability and power-sharing; 4) a global increase in arbitrary, opaque, and unsustainable government practices; 5) the endogenous challenges that have entrapped the traditional patrons of liberal order in a lethargic state; 6) a global shift of power from industrialized to emerging economies.

"LIBERAL" INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LIBERAL ORDER

The discussion on the future of the liberal order started with the definition of the term itself. Participants' responses converged with the contradictions emphasized in *The Democratic Disconnect*. Transatlantic Academy's report underscores that even though liberal democracies stand out with their peaceful transfer of power, the concepts liberalism and democracy have rarely coexisted in harmony. In fact, the common belief had it that "the two were incompatible."[1] The report discloses that historically governments often regarded the notion "liberty" as a value that "had to be protected from the people, not exercised by the people."[2] Furthermore, "the unregulated passions of the demos could trample the rights of minorities and undermine the rule of law. Many democracies are markedly illiberal in that they do not uphold civic liberties and political rights."[3]

This conundrum precipitated further relevant questions from the experts around the table: What then is liberalism? Is liberalism inherently "Western-centric"? What is the potential of liberal or democratic values embodied in other countries to contribute to conceptions of a liberal order? What constitutes the "West"? Participants noted that these questions often pointed to a common misperception in the discourse. That is, liberalism emanates from the West, and the West is the sole actor to perpetuate and disseminate liberal values. This misconception, however, overlooks that many non-Western nations enjoy democratic values, embedded in their own governance traditions. India today, for one, reigns in as the largest democracy in the world. Moreover, democracy in this nation was built upon the endogenous and time-tested understanding of democracy.

Even the meaning of liberalism in the West is unclear. In the United States, as one participant asserted, a valid definition of liberalism might easily suggest a value set that consists of a liberal economic approach, paired with social conservatism in a democratic context. In fact, religiously conservative governments brought to power democratically yet pursing a socially conservative agenda are likely to be perceived to be meeting the American liberal criteria. The same speaker suggested that the Tea Party movement is an embodiment of such definition.

Nonetheless, the application of this particular meaning outside the United States and the European Union is likely to result in unintended consequences. Take, for instance, the ascension of the Muslim Brotherhood to power in 2012 in the wake of Tahrir demonstrations. A workshop participant who closely followed the developments in Egypt unfold vouched for the liberal nature of the revolution that ousted the authoritarian Mubarak regime and later brought in Mohamed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood followers. Although Morsi and his supporters rode on the coattails of a fundamentally liberal revolution, they wasted no time in resorting to authoritarian practices once in power. Morsi's consolidation of power and curbing judicial and participatory rights of citizens was a testament to a liberal revolution gone wrong. Millions of frustrated Egyptians still had their agency under government bondage, and they continued to be stripped off means to hold their government accountable. This report will further elaborate on the systemic violations of democratic and citizenship rights committed by the Morsi administration in following sections. However, for the purpose of this section, the Egyptian case is a good illustration of problems associated with a fallacious contextualization of liberalism.

A similar example can be drawn from current developments in Turkey. The recent protests that were organized to stop the destruction of a downtown park to make space for a shopping mall quickly turned into a vote of no confidence for an authoritarian agenda of a democratically elected government. In the words of an eminent political scientist, Seyla Benhabib, "The real problem...is Mr. Erdogan's 'culture war' against the country's secular classes and the illiberal form of democracy that he is advancing."[4] Another important point Benhabib raises in her analysis is the governing elite's imitation of the juxtaposition of religion and politics in Western liberal societies to claim its own political mandate in Turkey. Benhabib bridges the recent abortion law passed by the AKP administration with familiar successful efforts to advance ideological

1 *The Democratic Disconnect: Citizenship and Accountability in the Transatlantic Community* (Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2013), 11.

2 Ibid., 11.

3 Ibid.

4 Seyla Benhabib, "Turkey's Authoritarian Turn," *The New York Times*, June 3, 2013, accessed July 19, 2013,

agendas by governments in Judeo-Christian societies that are guided by conservative priorities. She calls similar attempts to legislate abortion on religious and ideological grounds "borrowing a page from America's Christian right." In fact, since the early days in the office, the AKP leadership has made no secret of its intentions; more often than not it has publicly drawn comparisons between AKP's Islamist political model and that of Christian Democrats in Europe. An important contrast between the two models is that while the latter operates in a predominantly liberal order, where the ballot box is only one of the many agents of democratic process, the former associates democracy purely with elections and majoritarian rule. This stark contrast itself sufficiently illustrates how various interpretations and practices of liberalism can lead to different outcomes in different sociopolitical settings.

COMMON GRIEVANCES OF THE CITIZEN: ACCOUNTABILITY PARTICIPATION, STAKEHOLDERSHIP

Can we, then, conclude that liberalism, and its derivatives such as the liberal order, is a normative term and that the efforts to identify universal traits are futile exercises? Neither the authors of *The Democratic Disconnect* nor the participants of the Istanbul workshop would rush to affirm this. On the contrary, the liberal order does have a number of ubiquitous characteristics. Both the Transatlantic Academy's report and the experts at the roundtable session recognize that government accountability, transparency, greater citizen participation and stakeholdership are the indispensable elements of a liberal order across the board.

Both the workshop participants and the authors of the Transatlantic Academy report single out government accountability as the sole most important contributor to the increasing democratic disconnect in the world. The majority of governments in the world today still retain the old practice of approaching fundamental rights as values that need to be protected from people. Furthermore, little has changed in their attitude over the distribution of these fundamental rights. Outside Western democracies, a large number of states grant or deny the most basic rights to their publics at their discretion. Transparency is a rare virtue often neglected by these governments. They seldom inform the public about the processes leading up to government decisions, and nor do they seek civil society's participation in legislative processes.

Government accountability, or lack thereof, was the leading driver behind the Arab uprisings in 2011, according to an expert at the workshop. Although recent developments in information technology have made it significantly difficult and costly for governments to sweep their corrupt and arbitrary practices under the carpet, numerous states still engage in such actions and use their resources to keep their publics at dark. Contrary to common belief, accountability everywhere, whether in the West or East, has become more ambiguous in the past few years. In the West, the problem appears to be tied to multilevel governance and its increasing layers. The European Union, for instance, is frequently criticized for exacerbating the democratic deficit in Europe by allowing bureaucratic institutions to implement binding decisions over sovereign jurisdictions of member-states, while giving too little tooth to democratic establishments such as the European Parliament. The same frustration is also present in the United States, where in the eyes of many, government is getting excessively big and adding on new layers. In fact, some defend that the Tea Party movement is targeting specifically the increasing layers of the U.S. government. They rather want the government smaller and more accountable to the people on the street.

While it is slightly comforting to observe that accountability problems are not unique to hybrid nonwestern regimes, the types of shortcomings in these societies occur on higher scales. Prior to the great wave of uprisings in the MENA region in 2011, government malpractices such as arbitrary arrests of dissidents, the constant violations of the rule of law, mistreatment of women, gays, ethnic, religious and other minorities had been the common practice. Furthermore, most of these governments were heavily dependent on Western aid to sustain their societies. These funds poured into the totalitarian regimes and only infrequently made it to the public or used for supporting development projects that would benefit all.

Citizens of these countries, on the other hand, had little incentive and few instruments until recently to hold their governments accountable for their actions. They had no access to information about corrupt government practices. Even if they had some clues about corruption, they did not have access to evidence or adequate judicial means to prosecute usurpers and corrupt government officials. Nor did they have financial war chests and political savvy to run effective campaigns with a view to replacing corrupt officials with capable leaders. The advent of the internet and the web-based social networking platforms has changed this situation in favor of the unarmed, under-resourced citizenry living in hybrid democracies and authoritarian regimes. With the help of social media and other internet-powered platforms, citizens have begun to keep their governments in close scrutiny. In addition, as the Arab Spring and Occupy movements have demonstrated, the social media have proved quite efficient not only in disseminating information vis-à-vis government practices but also in enabling an organized dissent against fraudulent and undemo-

cratic policies of arbitrary regimes. In other words, these technologies "have empowered a generation who had become accustomed early in their lives to be more technology savvy and hence, in modes but significant ways, more knowledgeable and authoritative."[5]

In light of these developments, authoritarian governments find themselves facing a formidable challenge to maintain their monopoly over the decisions that concern the common fate of an entire country. Yet, however difficult and costly sustaining this bondage may be, they are not yet ready to entirely give up this privilege and grant more stakes or responsibilities to ordinary citizens in decision making. This impasse eventually leads to the type of revolutions that have been occurring since the beginning of this decade. Hybrid regimes and unaccountable governments find themselves facing a severe confrontation with the individuals who no longer want to be sidelined, but to weigh in on the policies that concern their shared destiny.

This fact leads to another common characteristic of the liberal order: participation and stakeholdership. A unique characteristic of the uprisings that set apart the movements in Tunisia and Egypt from the rest can be seen through the prism of public's desire for greater participation. Furthermore, citizens in these countries in fact demand more than participation. The revolting populations are no longer satisfied with their governments' empty promises of basic rights, argue eminent political scientists and Middle East specialists such as Olivier Roy and Lisa Anderson. Rather, they are after responsibilities and want to claim a stake over the welfare of these societies. Anderson, moreover, stated in her speech during the Asan Institute's Distinguished Speaker Series that people on the streets of Tunis and Cairo strove to demonstrate that they were as capable as the regime, and even more apt, in delivering basic public goods and services. Cairo's residents, said Anderson, lived up to their vows by setting up neighborhood watches to ensure their fellow citizens' safety during the most heated moments of the Tahrir protests. These "networks of trust," she argued, laid out the capacity and willingness of citizens to share responsibilities. In fact, neighborhood watches showed a "tactical error" of the Egyptian government; that is, instructions to withdraw the police so as to diminish security and to hinder public order. The replacement of police duties by neighborhood watches demonstrated to the public "that Egypt was not on the brink of chaos as the government tried to argue."[6]

Olivier Roy also draws attention to citizens' yearning to take more responsibility as stakeholders. He identifies this common will as a central tenet of the success of liberal revolutions. In an article he penned for the *New Statesman* in the days leading up to Egyptian elections, Roy forecasted Egypt's political future warning that the Arab Spring could quickly become an Arab Winter without a proper care for and catering to the demands of the young, savvy, educated and connected group of people that ousted Mubarak.[7] Reiterating that the Arab Spring is no Iranian revolution of 1979, Roy made it clear that the ideological elements that were predominant in the latter did not exist in the former. He predicted correctly that any government that ignored the revolutionaries' fundamental needs and succumbed to Islamist ideology would share the fate of its predecessor.[8]

The developments that followed last year's elections in Egypt verifies Roy's projections on the fate of successive autocratic formations in the respective Maghreb governments. Ruth Hanau Santini, a contributor to *The Democratic Disconnect*, notes that the constitutional reform processes in Tunisia and Egypt have been significantly different. "The Tunisian one was more consensual and representative of the society as whole since its inception, whereas the Egyptian experience has been characterized by a messier approach and only a marginal concern to include all sectors of society."[9] Furthermore, under the Morsi administration the Egyptian constitution reaffirmed "its 1980 amended constitution identifying *shari'a* as the principal source of legislation."[10] Moreover, the new government at the time removed the constitutional law that decreed the state "to guarantee equality between men and women, a basic tenet of all Egyptian constitutions since 1923."[11] In addition, even though Articles 45 and 46 in the new text of the Egyptian constitution guarantee the protection of freedom of expression and press, "the state control of the media landscape, both direct (political appointments of directors of the main newspaper) and economic (most media outlets are completely or partially state-owned), empties the constitutional

5 Lisa Anderson, "The Egyptian Uprising: Opportunities and Challenges," *The Asan Distinguished Speaker Series 5* (Seul: The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, November 2011), 6-7.

6 Ibid., 18.

7 Olivier Roy, "The cold choice-jobs or jihad," *New Statesman*, January 25, 2012, accessed August 12, 2013 http://www.newstatesman.com/middle-east/2012/01/arab-egypt-iran-muslim.

8 Ibid.

9 Ruth Hanau Santini, "Civil and Human Rights in North Africa after the Arab Spring." In *The Democratic Disconnect: Citizenship and Accountability in the Transatlantic Community* (Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2013), 96.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

rhetoric of actual meaning."[12] When challenged by public protests and upheavals on the restriction of fundamental freedoms, the recently defunct Muslim Brotherhood government had justified its policies as the will of the majority. Santini, on the other hand, disagrees: "These new constitutional texts were shaped by new élites' preferences within a social context characterized by little knowledge and support for the concept of minority rights."[13]

In sum, accountability on the part of the government, greater participation on the part of the people, and their desire to claim a stake in the way they are governed comprise indispensable tenets of a liberal democratic order. However, outside a handful of societies, these principals are under attack from unrelenting authoritarian regimes. In an environment where the future of the liberal order is becoming increasingly nebulous, societies must act quickly to equip their citizenry with political rights and duties; elect representative and accountable governments; strengthen the rule of law and independent judiciary; empower civil society; ensure popular participation; and protect economic freedoms.

The Arab nations in North Africa have struggled in the last two years to take steps on this path. During the course of the events that toppled *anciennes* regimes in the Arab world, noted one expert, individuals began to perceive themselves as individuals, as liberal citizens insisted on being attributed agency and capacity. An inherent component of their call for greater liberalism was a refusal to be infantilized by governments that had consistently told them that they were not mature or educated enough to be responsible citizens. The long-enduring chain of protests in Egypt that resulted in the fall of the authoritarian Mubarak regime was the best answer the people had given the government. The Egyptians simply proved that they could be self-sufficient in an environment where neither central nor local government was functioning. One participant suggested that this indicated a fundamental change in the way the revolutionaries perceive their governments as well as their relationship with their government. In other words, those in the Arab world motivated by liberal ideals would be deeply disappointed to think that liberalism had become passé.

Against the backdrop of the recent military coup in Egypt that ousted former President Morsi, and which took place more than a month after the Istanbul conference, the notion that Egyptians have developed a new perception of their relationship with the government may be questionable. The familiar quality of the military's intervention and the eagerness by which it was welcomed by those dissatisfied with the government suggest a reenactment of old patterns rather than political action guided by a new conception of liberalism. While it was the increasingly illiberal rule of the Morsi government that brought the protesters back to the streets, Morsi's removal was ironically carried out by an entirely illiberal apparatus.

In fact, the greater challenge against the liberal order's taking root in the most contested corners of the world has little to do with the psyche of the local cultures, but is much dependent on the support from the quintessential liberal nations—especially those in the West. While standing up to their own aggressors, the non-Western actors who fight for the liberal order often feel deserted by the real bastions of liberalism.

12 Ibid., 97.

13 Ibid.

SILENCE OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

The European Union and the United States drew much criticism from the experts at the Istanbul gathering due primarily to their lack of support for local organizations or individuals who go to great pains to establish liberal order in their respective regions. The Arab uprisings were a test for the European Union's commitment to liberalism. A considerable number of participants argued that the EU failed that test miserably. The West's active engagement with authoritarian governments in the Arab world has been an indicator of its willingness to be content with the window-dressing of democracy. Prior to the uprisings, the EU had a rhetorical commitment to democracy, but in fact was engaged with authoritarian leaders. In the aftermath of the uprisings, the rhetorical commitment to democracy remained, but the willingness to be satisfied with democratic window-dressing also remained to a certain extent. Furthermore, it was argued that the EU's engagement was primarily at the government level, and that its ability to engage civil society was limited. Moreover, the West's willingness to equate elections with democracy suggested an imperfect understanding of democracy among Western policy makers. That lack of understanding is reflected in the attitudes of governments and citizens of countries in which democracy promotion is undertaken. In collectivist cultures this attitude shapes the form and nature of representative institutions, often leading to a majoritarian understanding of democracy, which leaves little room for opposition and legitimate political dissent.

A greater cause of frustration for reformers is the unfulfilled promises of support. The United States has the worst reputation among its peers for empty rhetoric without standing behind its commitment. Obama's Cairo trip and speech provide a good illustration of this. In 2009, during his visit to the Egyptian capital, President Obama delivered an eloquent address on human rights, open government, rights to participate in the political process. The speech and his emphasis on participatory democracy raised the expectations in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt. However, the United States' hesitation to support the protestors in the first place, and later its recognition of the interim military regime, cast serious suspicion among reformers of Washington's intentions. Lisa Anderson sheds light on Egyptian public's frustration over unfulfilled pledges of democracy support:

> *It is not that surprising to Egyptians that the United States would start the beginning of the uprisings supporting Mubarak. We always had. But miscues along the way, just looked incompetent and it ended up looking as if the United States was very reluctant to support the protests. And even if that were true, that particularly rankled because if you remember Obama's speech in Cairo in June 2009, where he came out talking about human rights, open government, rights to participate, very strongly. Huge expectations had been raised in the Arab world as a whole, and Egypt particularly.*[14]

Anderson confesses "the United States is so unpopular in Egypt because of that speech."[15] By making these pledges, the U.S. President nurtured the hopes and expectations of millions of people who had already suffered so much under the oppressive regimes. Anderson continues:

> *There is such profound disappointment with the United States as a result of the promises now unfulfilled. The role of the United States, the role of the Obama administration, particularly Secretary Clinton, is very fraught. It has nothing to do with NATO, nothing to do with American policies in the region as a whole; it has to do with "Obama promised us some things and not only has he not delivered them, he has delivered nothing. So, the in that is, "If you are the president of a country, do not go somewhere else and promise all sorts of thing that you are not going to deliver." It makes your country less popular than it was before.*[16]

The other scholars who contributed to the deliberations in Istanbul were not as eager to condemn the West's commitment to promulgating the liberal order. Another line of thought contended that over the last three or four years while the EU had been experiencing an internal crisis, its commitment to human rights issues abroad needed to be strengthened in some modest ways. Before the Arab Spring, a foremost EU expert asserted, some EU member states had almost given up on the idea of democracy promotion. The indigenous push in the Arab World for greater liber-

14 Anderson, 53.

15 Ibid., 54.

16 Ibid.

alism encouraged EU members who had stepped back from democracy promotion back into re-engaging and providing at least modest support to political reform in the Middle East.

This attitude, however, comes with its attendant challenges. First among them is the difficulty of promoting values elsewhere in the world that may not be fully enshrined in the EU itself. Democracy, freedom, an end to corruption, and promotion of the rule of law were all motivating factors in the Arab uprisings. However, it is questionable whether these values are fully established in all EU member states. The democratic backsliding taking place in Hungary is one example highlighted at length in *The Democratic Disconnect*.

In the chapter entitled "The Rise and Fall of Hungarian Constitutionalism," Gabor Halmai offers a candid, and yet morbid, outlook of Hungary's ballooning democratic deficit. Halmai's analysis places the violations of the Hungarian constitution at the center of the decaying democratic and liberal practices in this country. The Hungarian scholar discloses that country's new constitution neither complies with the standards of democratic constitutionalism, and nor does it abide by the classic principles set forth in Article 2 of the Treaty on the EU.[17] Furthermore, "Appointments to key offices such as Constitutional Court Judgeship ombudsmen, the State Audit Office, and the public prosecutor no longer require minority party input. Independent boards regulating crucial institutions necessary for democracy, like the election commission and the media board, no longer ensure multiparty representation."[18]

The fundamental citizenship rights in Hungary are also violated on constitutional level, and the principles of living together have taken serious flak with the "National Avowal" amendment. The amendment describes and endorses an ethnic Hungarian nation while rejecting other ethnic sub-cultures and identities: "We, the members of the Hungarian Nation... hereby proclaim the following; there is no place in this community for the other nationalities living within the territory of the Hungarian state."[19] Moreover, the revised text goes to great lengths to regulate private life in the image of a Christian-conservative ideology. "With this," says Halmai, "it prescribes for the members of the community a life model based on the normative preferences that fit in with this ideology in the form of their obligations toward the community."[20] In many other hybrid democracies, this particular amendment provide the state with "legal" means to interfere with the institutions of marriage, family, same-sex matrimony, and the protection of embryonic and fetal life—all based on dominant ideological and normative stance of the government on the given issues.[21]

Other democratic deficit questions pertaining to the EU are becoming more robust as the ripples from the protracted financial meltdown wash up on Union's shores. *The Democratic Disconnect* authors Daniela Schwarzer and Richard Youngs point to a critical predicament between the decision-making bodies of the EU and sovereignty of member states. The essence of the conflicting views between Brussels and national capitals is the economic governance setup. The opponents of the financial policies and regulations suggested by EU's central decision making units (such as the Commission) find such practices illegitimate and consider them an obvious penetration of the sovereign rights of the state.[22] On the other hand, some governments simply choose to use the democratic legitimacy rationale as an excuse to steer away from Brussels's austerity measures. "This then poses another threat to the EU's legitimacy," warn Schwarzer and Youngs. "The member states that actually abide by the rules and take financial risks in the European rescue mechanisms are likely to judge the economic governance setup illegitimate if not all parties play by the rules (as flawed as they may be)."[23]

These are hardly the only challenges facing the West when it contemplates democracy promotion. A further challenge emerges from a deeper look at barriers to providing aid. In the past, it has been assumed that democracy-minded reformers would want as much support as the West would be willing and able to provide. However, recent cases in the Middle East have demonstrated that reformers are more selective about the type of support that they want and are willing to accept from international actors. Though there is still a desire for support, there is an equally strong desire for support to be tailored to specific domestic agenda, not for aid to follow an externally designed template.

17 *The Democratic Disconnect,* 72.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 73.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Daniela Schwarzer and Richard Youngs, "Crises in the Euro Area and Challenges for the European Union's Democratic Legitimacy." In *The Democratic Disconnect: Citizenship and Accountability in the Transatlantic Community* (Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2013), 33-43.

23 Ibid., 36.

The European Union's capacity and desirability to further West's democracy promotion was debated specifically from Turkey's vantage point. Participants agreed unilaterally that the impressive momentum of economic liberalism is hardly paralleled by political liberalization. The experts concurred this was the reason why Europe is so important to Turkey. The most important aspect of EU accession talks for Turkey is that it keeps the liberal goal visible. A significant number of participants claimed that Europe, not the United States, was the role model for Turkey's evolving political order.

On the other hand, the opponents of this view contended that the EU is increasingly losing relevance for Turkey, a trend that has only been exasperated by the weeks of protest in June of 2013. Nevertheless, in spite of the nebulous state of Turkish-EU affairs, the relevance of the EU for other countries has not diminished in the slightest. Croatia's recent accession into the Union, as well as Macedonia's and Serbia's desire to join illustrate the attraction of the EU project in the Balkans, despite Europe's current crisis. However, the idealism of EU membership being desirable on liberal ideological grounds should not be overstated. Many of the participants contended that the EU had always been magnetic not because its norms were necessarily better, but because being a member had material benefits. This particular concentration on the material benefits of the EU membership also explains the diminishing enthusiasm on the Turkish citizen's part to join the Union. Membership at the moment does not have the same potential to provide material benefits as it might have had previously. Since the EU can hardly extend the old lucrative membership benefits, countries are looking elsewhere for such structural perks. China, for example, rises as a viable alternative, albeit not as a viable model.

EMERGING POWERS TO THE RESCUE?

A global shift is imminent in world politics. As power balances shift from the Global North to the South, from the West to the East, so do the principles underlying the global order. One eminent scholar of globalization at the workshop emphasized that this global shift had taken two forms. The first was that of multiple modernities. That is, a monolithic understanding of modernity bundled with Westernization was no longer valid. Instead, there appeared an increasing disjuncture between modernization and westernization, with the current debate centering on varying modes of cultural modernization such as discussions concerning secularization, individualism and liberalization. The impetus for economic modernization was present in emerging powers, whereas the debate around political modernization retained its ambiguity. The second form of global shift was that of multipolarity. Emerging powers were trying to put their stamp on the direction that globalization was moving. The divide here was not between Western and non-Western states, but between those who wanted to renew multilateral governance structures in a way relatively similar to their current mode, and those who wanted increased spheres of influence in the multilateral institutions that reflected more accurately the weight of developing global powers.

A looming question at this juncture is whether emerging powers have the vision and capacity to match their desire to be at the helm and steer the trajectory of the world order. In other words, if emerging countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Turkey want to contest for a seat at the table of major players, what kind of an international order would they help create? With respect to sustainable human development, for example, the Western social models were doing better than the rest in terms of social and gender equality. The West moreover had the capacity to act as a conflict mediator that emerging countries lacked the capacity or desire to undertake. On addressing environmental issues, emerging powers have yet to show any substantive leadership. Some of them are rising to power simply by merging liberal market economy with autocratic or semi-autocratic systems, which is a threat to the norms and values of the liberal order. For advocates of liberalism, there is scant evidence to suggest that the values of liberalism would be incorporated into an international order shaped by emerging powers.

Although at times the "decline of the West, rise of the rest" perspective is taken for granted, participants pondered whether emerging powers were actually gaining the degree of influence that is popularly attributed to them. There is ample evidence to support this claim; however, an equally abundant number of cases demonstrate that the "rise of the rest" is not as substantial, or far along, as is sometimes presumed. The United States and Europe have experience in terms of having responsibility beyond their own state borders. Liberalism itself emerged after World War II out of a sense of global responsibility. It is not yet certain whether rising powers have a similar sense of responsibility, or the capacity to act on such impulses if the do come into existence. The shift of power that is colloquially perceived is not reflected in a shift in the legal and institutional order. To apply Joseph Nye's definition of Power—the conversion of resources into soft power—emerging powers are not operating at a level to challenge the current international order.

In brief, as underscored by a participant, the perception of decline is not that liberalism is decreasing, but rather that the weight and prominence of those that cannot be considered liberal is on the rise. So long as merging powers are benefiting from the international economic system, the desire to take on additional global influence might be considered distraction from economic growth and a responsibility for international governance—a burden more than a mark of power. Take China and Brazil, for example. Neither is inclined to question the values of liberal internationalism too much because each is benefiting from that system. In fact, at the moment, there is not an alternative on par with liberal internationalism—a system which consists of an open world economy reconciled with social welfare and employment. Neo-liberalism and market fundamentalism may be on the decline, but nothing has sprung to take the place of liberal internationalism.

CONCLUSION

The opposing arguments offered in two recent books reflect the dilemma one faces in contemplating the future of the liberal order. The rule-based liberal order, claims John Ikenberry in his *Liberal Leviathan*, can accommodate the rising powers with different political traditions from that of the West.[24] Moreover, the liberal order was likely to be adopted, or adapted, by the rising powers as the only system that would ensure their orderly participation in global markets. It is highly doubtful that the rising powers, for example China, are likely to fully embrace the liberal order as we have known it since World War II—a point made earlier in this report. Yet, the liberal order as the basis of a coherent international system is destined to "evolve" and continue to provide a framework for international exchange and security relationships.[25]

Contrary to Ikenberry, in *No One's World,* Charles Kupchan sees a multipolar world in the making with the rest having a different values and outlook than the West.[26] The liberal order or its adaptations are not likely to be shared globally in what is predicted to emerge as a "multipolar world"—a world in which competing ideologies, cultures, and political systems would coexist. The transition to this next world will admittedly be difficult, as will be the maintenance of the global order in such circumstances. An orderly state of coexistence, history teaches us, is achieved either by means of balance of power (amongst states) or through effective imperial rule (over nations or communities). In future, Kupchan sees a more modest role for the United States commensurate with its resources, but strongly believes in the centrality of the West's experience for an orderly transition of power to the next world.

> *If the West can help deliver to the rest of the world what it brought to itself centuries ago—political and ideological tolerance coupled with economic dynamism—then the global turn will mark not a dark era of ideological contention and geopolitical rivalry, but one in which diversity and pluralism lay the foundation for an era of global comity.*[27]

Even if the anticipated global power transition might mark the demise of the global order such as we know it, Kupchan appears to be arguing, a peaceful next world will be one informed and shaped by the same conditions that gave rise in the first place to the liberal order in the West.

Whether adapted or reinvented, the heritage of the liberal order is not likely to be forgotten; its reinterpretation, however, will carry the danger of misrepresentation, particularly that of attributing Western particularism to what has been a historical search for universal pluralist accommodation regardless of the degree to which it has succeeded. And, pluralist accommodation, it can be inferred, in a global as well as regional and local contexts is what is needed most now and in the forese eable future.

24 John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis and the Transformation of the American World Order*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

25 Ibid., 331.

26 Charles A. Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest and the Coming Global Turn*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

27 Kupchan, 205.

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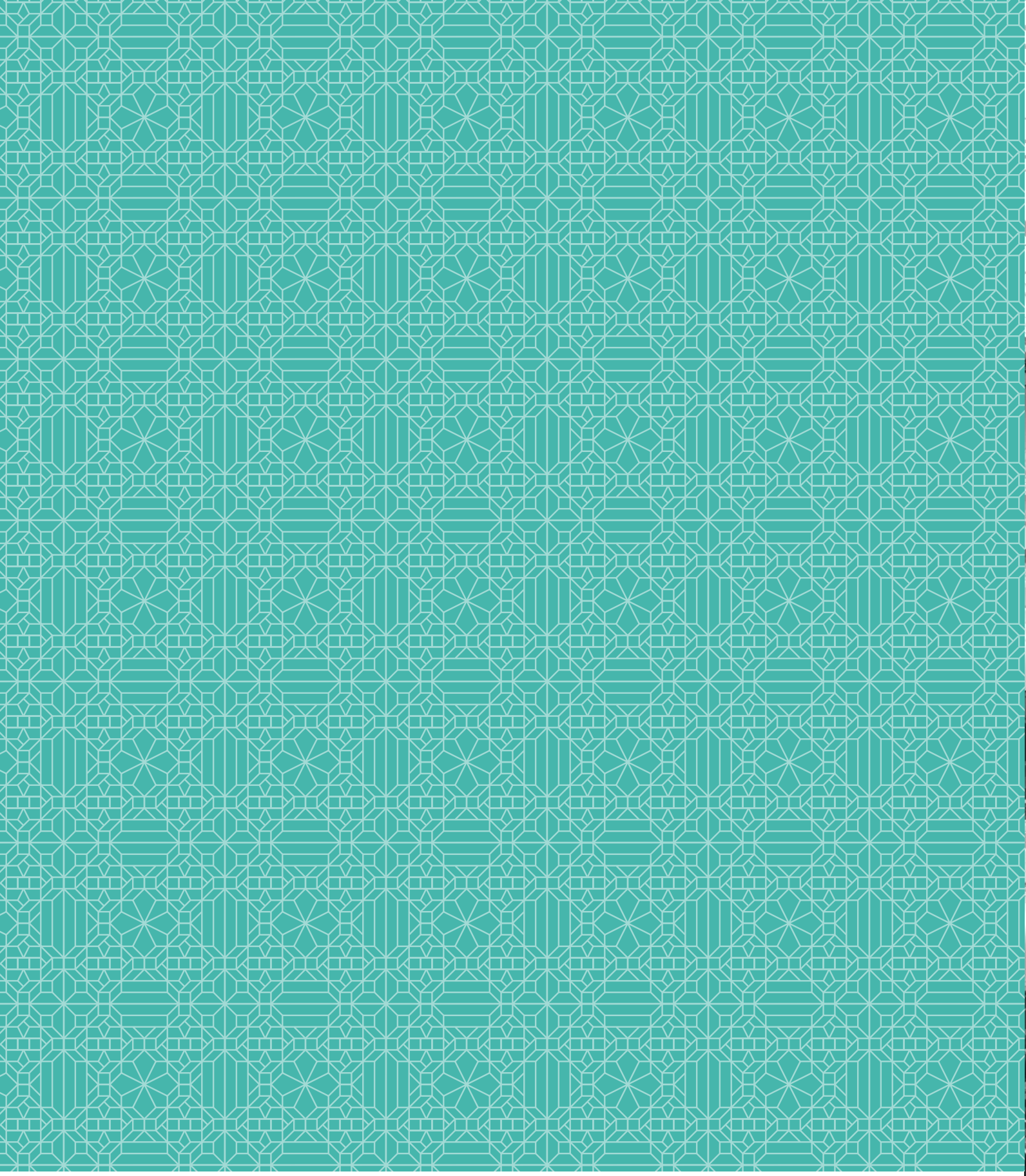
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