

Maliki, further strengthening the Iraq-Iran alliance.

During the period starting after 2015, under King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, efforts were made to re-establish relations with Iraq. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir's visit to Baghdad in 2017 was a significant turning point. As a critique, this chapter could have provided a more detailed examination of the impact of Riyadh's policies towards Maliki on its relations with other Arab countries and the U.S.

The book highlights how Saudi Arabia's biases and erroneous decisions resulted in unfavorable outcomes in regional politics. Harvey argues that Saudi Arabia's policies effectively drove Iraq into Iran's sphere, actualizing the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Katherine Harvey's *A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy* offers a comprehensive examination of Saudi Arabia's policies towards Iraq, filling an important gap in Middle Eastern studies and international relations. The book provides an in-depth analysis of Saudi foreign policy dynamics and their regional consequences. Additionally, the relationship trajectory between these two key Middle Eastern powers serves as a valuable resource for understanding state behaviors.

Harvey's work is crucial for understanding the impact of perceptual errors and the human factor on foreign policy. Due to its detailed and comprehensive nature, the book is likely to appeal more to academics and those closely following the Middle East. It holds significant value for both academic circles and policymakers, offering insights that resonate across these communities.

## The Age of Counter-Revolution: States and Revolutions in the Middle East

By Jamie Allinson

Cambridge University Press, 2022, 302 pages, \$29.99, ISBN: 9781108735520

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The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across much of the Arab world. It began in response to oppressive regimes and a low standard of living, starting with protests in Tunisia following Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in protest of police corruption. With the success of the protests in Tunisia leading to a revolution and the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, similar movements sprouted across other



countries like Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Bahrain.

The book *The Age of the Counter-Revolution* by Jamie Allinson, a Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Edinburgh, is based on his expertise in Middle Eastern politics

to provide a nuanced examination of these complex events. The book extends beyond the regional focus to engage with broader discussions about the nature of revolution

and counter-revolution in the contemporary world, making a significant contribution to the field of political science and international relations.

The book explores the aftermath of the Arab Spring, framing it as a period dominated by successful counter-revolutions rather than failed revolutions. Counter-revolution is conceptualized as efforts, collective and reactive, to defend the status quo against significant threats from revolutionary movements aiming to overturn it. The discussion broadens to include the term that counter revolution is not merely a restoration of the old order but often leads to the establishment of a new order that, while quashing the revolutionary situation, still incorporates changes influenced by the revolution it opposed.

The book consists of 8 chapters. The first chapter introduces the concept that the Arab Spring symbolizes the defeated hopes for democracy and social justice in the Middle East. By examining the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen, Allinson demonstrates how revolutionary situations were overturned by counter-revolutions. His analysis connects the Arab Uprising to a decade of global protests, highlighting how new forms of counter-revolution have made it nearly impossible to enact political change without first achieving fundamental social transformation.

Chapter 2, titled “What Is Counter-Revolution?” delves into the complex nature of counter-revolution, framing it within the broader context of the struggles following the Arab Spring. The nuances of counter-revolution are further dissected by examining its reliance on both “from above” (elite-driven) and “from below” (mass support) (p. 31) strategies to reconstruct a semblance of the old

order, albeit often in a new form. This reconstruction involves a blend of policy, repression, and popular mobilization against the fundamental structural changes proposed or initiated by revolutions. The author emphasizes the importance of narratives, identity, and social expectations in the formation and success of counter-revolutionary movements, suggesting that counter-revolution, like revolution, is deeply embedded in the social fabric and political context in which it arises. Chapter 3, “The Revolutionary Situations,” focuses on establishing the presence of revolutionary situations in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, and Libya during the 2011 uprisings. These revolutionary situations represented moments where the previously stable political and social structures were challenged, making alternative futures seem possible and comprehensible.

Chapter 4, “Political Revolutions and Counter-Revolution: Tunisia and Egypt,” contrasts the outcomes of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, highlighting how each country experienced significant political upheaval but with differing results. In Tunisia, the revolution led to a somewhat stable constitutional democracy, albeit under continuous threats and challenges. The Tunisian case is presented as a success story of the Arab Spring, where the transition to democracy was managed without descending into civil war or succumbing to foreign intervention. This transition, however, was carefully orchestrated to preserve the social dominance of the old elite under a new democratic guise. In contrast, Egypt’s revolutionary period resulted in a stark counter-revolution, with the military’s return to power under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. This transition not only reversed the democratic gains made post-revolution but also attacked the very principle of popular control of the state. The Egyptian case is marked by

the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood and the broader civil society that had hoped for democratic governance.

Chapter 5, “Militarising Counter-Revolution: Syria and Bahrain,” examines the militarized responses to the Arab Spring in Syria and Bahrain, emphasizing the role of external intervention, sectarianism, and the distinct outcomes in both countries despite their initial similarities in managing to retain power through the upheavals. Chapter 6, “From Revolution to State Collapse: Libya and Yemen,” delves into the aftermath of the revolutions in Libya and Yemen, highlighting the complexities and the chaotic outcomes that followed the initial uprisings. Both countries transitioned from revolutionary fervour to a state of fragmentation and civil war, with multiple factions vying for control and influence. Chapter 7, “Revolutionary States? ISIS and Rojava,” explores the radically different paths taken by ISIS and the Kurdish-led project in Rojava, Northern Syria, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. This analysis contrasts the attempts by these entities to establish new social orders amidst the regional turmoil. The last chapter, “Conclusion: Where Is Counter-Revolution Going?” synthesizes the insights gained from the analysis of the Arab Spring and its aftermath, framing the broader implications of counter-revolutionary movements in the region and globally. Jamie Allinson draws three main lessons from the book’s examination of the Arab Uprisings and their counter-revolutions: the significance of counter-revolutions, the popularity of counter-revolutions, and the international dimension of counter-revolutions.

The book reflects on the trajectories of counter-revolutionary movements beyond the

Arab world, noting their implications for global politics and the prospects for future revolutionary change. Allinson suggests that the era of revolutionary upheavals leading to significant social transformations may be giving way to a new phase of political contention, marked by the resurgence of counter-revolutionary forces. This analysis points to the enduring relevance of counter-revolution as a lens through which to view the struggles for political and social change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

His work emphasizes the role of popular support in enabling counter-revolutions and points to the significance of international alliances in shaping the outcomes. One might critique whether this framework sufficiently accounts for the internal dynamics and heterogeneity within the revolutionary movements themselves. The book’s methodology, which involves comparing upheavals across different countries, is a strength as it allows for a comprehensive analysis of the counter-revolution phenomenon.

The study undoubtedly contributes to the field by suggesting a fresh perspective on the Arab Spring and its aftermath. His study undoubtedly improves the ongoing debates and actions of those still engaged in the struggle for democracy and social justice in the Middle East. While Allinson’s *The Age of Counter-Revolution* provides a valuable re-examination of the Arab Spring and its aftermath, a crucial review might examine its theoretical assumptions, methodological choices, depth of historical contextualization, and implications of its arguments for both academia and real-world activism. This book would particularly appeal to students and scholars of Middle Eastern studies and international relations.