

CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROCESSES
IN MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES UNDER GLOBALIZATION AND THEIR
IMPACT ON YOUTH CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract: This article explores the nature and theoretical dimensions of political and social processes in the Middle East, focusing particularly on the influence of the socio-spiritual environment on youth consciousness in the context of globalization. It analyzes the consequences of recent political events in the region, the dominant geopolitical trends, and post-"Arab Spring" transformations.

Keywords: Middle East, Arab Spring, Syria, Tunisia, geopolitics, authority, spiritual decline, political processes.

In today's rapidly transforming world, where new threats and dangers undermine stability and sustainable development of nations, special attention to spirituality, enlightenment, moral education, and the acquisition of modern knowledge and skills by youth has become more crucial than ever.

In recent years, the world has witnessed sharp geopolitical shifts and the destabilization of global security and stability systems. The intensification of globalization is expanding human potential while simultaneously exacerbating global conflicts and increasing the gap between developed and underdeveloped nations. As a result, a range of transnational phenomena threatening peace and stability have emerged.

The Middle East, one of the global hotspots, remains a region of critical geostrategic importance in the modern globalized era. The balance of power and mechanisms of influence in the region are acquiring new characteristics. Geographical, energetic, ideological, and religious factors are driving growing geopolitical interest in the region, pulling it into a vortex of "great games." The Middle East encapsulates virtually all global challenges: ethnic and religious tensions, borders and refugees, socio-economic crises, terrorism, extremism, separatism, organized crime, and the geopolitical rivalry of external forces.

Many researchers continue to debate the political developments that unfolded consecutively in Middle Eastern countries. It is evident that the strategy of "controlled instability" was actively used. While Western media labeled these events as the "Arab Spring," others referred to them as the "Arab Awakening," "Arab Winter," or even "Pan-Arab Revolutions."

The term "Arab Spring" itself is surrounded by controversy. Scholars argue that to properly understand this phenomenon, one must consider the unique historical and socio-political dynamics of Arab societies. Researchers generally distinguish three major waves of Arab unrest. The first wave, called the "Great Arab Revolt," occurred in 1914 under the leadership of Sharif Hussein, aiming to dismantle the Ottoman Empire in the Arab world.

This wave coincided with two major events: globally, World War I; and regionally, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The uprising, backed by the British Empire, was primarily driven by efforts to eliminate Ottoman dominance in the region.

The second wave, in the 1950s–60s, saw the emergence of the term "Arab Spring" by French writer Jacques Benoist-Méchin in his 1959 article "Un Printemps Arabe." He drew parallels between Arab events and the 1848 "Springtime of Nations" revolutions in Europe. This wave was also shaped by global and regional events: World War II, and the creation of the state of

Israel in the heart of the Arab world. In response, Arabism emerged as a counter-ideology to Zionism.

The third wave began on December 17, 2010, in Tunisia, when young street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolated in protest in Sidi Bouzid, exposing the deep spiritual crisis among the region's youth. This act sparked mass protests across Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Mauritania, and other Arab nations, which became collectively known as the "Arab Spring."

Social and economic indicators from these countries prior to the Arab Spring reveal:

- Over 50% of the population in Arab countries was under 25 years old.
- Youth and female unemployment reached global highs (37%).
- In Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan, 30% of university graduates were unemployed.
- One in five young people had not completed primary school.
- Around 50 million adults (1/8 of the population), two-thirds of them women, were illiterate.

Despite this, the Arab Spring drastically transformed the region's landscape. It affected the dynamics of socio-political processes and even redrew the geopolitical map.

In academic discourse, internal societal unrest and conflicts are often labeled as "chaos." Recently, the concept of "controlled chaos," or "managed instability," has gained popularity. It refers to the deliberate creation or manipulation of disorder to align with specific interests.

The consequences of modern conflicts in the Middle East are multifaceted, spanning humanitarian, economic, political, geostrategic, and socio-spiritual aspects. As V.S. Yagya notes, Syria vividly illustrates both the positive and negative outcomes of the Arab Spring: ethnic fragmentation, sectarian divisions, foreign interference, the UN's impotence, inter-Arab rivalries, weak democratic institutions, Israeli aggression, regional power struggles (e.g., Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Turkey), rising terrorism, and the geopolitical reshaping of the Greater Middle East.

Many analysts argue that the Arab Spring did not arise spontaneously but was influenced by globalization, and that it failed to deliver its promised outcomes:

1. It did not fundamentally change the ruling elites.
2. It failed to eliminate corruption.
3. It did not improve socio-economic conditions.
4. It did not enhance political freedoms.

Except for Tunisia, most countries saw no democratic reforms post-regime collapse; instead, violence escalated.

As a conclusion, first, as political processes globalize and ideological threats to our nation intensify, youth education becomes increasingly vital.

Second, spiritual values are emerging as a universal issue, not only in Uzbekistan but globally, underscoring the importance of analyzing youth's moral development in a socio-political context. Third, in an era threatened by global problems—such as ecological disasters, terrorism, extremism, human trafficking, and drug abuse—political and socio-spiritual research plays a vital role.

Fourth, globalization is reshaping the lives and cultural foundations of all nations. Preserving national identity and values while building a democratic society is a critical and urgent task.

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