Memories of Economic Justice: Distributive Politics and the Arab Uprisings
Broad Patterns in Arab State Formation, 1940s-1960s

- The rise of dominant single-party, ruling party governments and their monarchical equivalents;
- New, post-independence constitutions that enshrined interventionist and redistributive principles in the basic laws;
- A wave of agrarian reform programs to redress inequalities in the rural economy (esp. in Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Iraq);
- Sweeping nationalizations of industry, banking, insurance, and trade in the late 1950s and early 1960s, producing a dramatic expansion in the scale of public sectors;
- The introduction of state-corporatist models of associational and trade union governance (see slide 3);
- The consolidation of import-substitution industrialization as a strategy for establishing domestic industrial sectors;
- Programs for state provision of social services, including education, housing, health care, food subsidies, and other benefits.
FIGURE 2.4

Average Annual Change in Real Gross Domestic Product Per Capita, by Region

Percent

-0.5

0

0.5

1.0

1.5

2.0

2.5

3.0

3.5

4.0

4.5

5.0

1965–85
1986–2001

Sub-Saharan Africa
Latin America and the Caribbean
East Asia and the Pacific
MENA
MENA (non-oil producers)
MENA (oil producers)

Note: Non-oil producers are Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia; oil producers are Algeria, Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia.
Percentage of the Population Living Above $1/Day versus Per Capita GDP
(Source: WDI, Penn World Tables)
Figure 4.5

Size of Government around the World in the 1990s

Percent

Government employment as a percentage of total employment

Government wages as a percentage of GDP

Asia
Eastern Europe and former Soviet states
Latin America
MENA
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Sub-Saharan Africa

Number of Privatized Firms by Region, 2000-2005


- East Asia & Pacific: 83
- Latin America & Caribbean: 80
- South Asia: 89
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 102
- Arab World (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia): 44
GDP Growth and Income Inequality in the Arab World
(Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen)

Source: World Development Indicators;
University of Texas Inequality Project, http://utip.gov.utexas.edu/data.html
Government Spending as percentage of GDP

Percentage of GDP

Years

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007

East Asia/ Pacific
South Asia
Latin America and Caribbean
Sub-Saharan Africa
Arab
MENA
Egyptian Protests, 1998-2008

Protests

Year


Joel Benin, *Justice for All: The Struggle for Workers Rights in Egypt* (Solidarity Center, 2010), pp.17-18
Redistributive Legacies: Egypt Social Protection Spending 2005
(IMF Country Report No. 07/381; 2007)

Figure III.4. Social Protection Spending, 2005
(In percent of GDP)
Decline of Redistribution in Egypt
2003-2007
(IMF Country Report No. 07/381; 2007)

Figure III.5. Egypt: Composition of the Expenditure Adjustment,
FY2003–07
(In percent of GDP)

Sources: Egyptian authorities; and Fund staff estimates. Data refer to the central government.