The Revolutions of 2011-2012 in the Arabic Countries and Ontological Security of Israel

Zeinab Zobeydi [*1], **Nabiollah Ebrahimi** [2], **Sayyed Masoud Shafaee** [3]

1. M.A. International Relations, Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, IRAN.
2. Assistant Professor of International Relations, Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, IRAN.
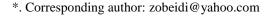3. Associate Professor of International Relations, Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, IRAN.

Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the effect of the revolutions of 2011-2012 in the Arabic countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) on Israeli regime's ontological security and its strategy of closure and deviation in the regional level. In other word, the paper tries to find the challenges the ontological security and identity of Israel is facing with after the occurrence of the awakening. This article argues that Israeli ontological security came across a kind of insecurity due to the appearance of democratic states in revolutionary countries, which resulted in forming a new identity against its identity. On this basis, review and analysis of the Israeli regime security is an important issue. Thus we are going to discuss security- identity challenges of Israel in the region. To do this, first the theory of ontological security will be explained as the theoretical framework; then the nature of the upheavals of the region will be expressed; and finally, Israeli ontological insecurity and its responses to it will be examined.

Keywords: Democracy, Identity, Regime of Israel, Revolutions of 2011- 2012, Security.

---

*. Corresponding author: zobeidi@yahoo.com

Introduction

Generally, Israel's security strategy in the Middle East has been based on the logic of closure and deviation in Islamic revolutionary movements. The main purpose of this study is to answer to how Israeli regime has used the strategy of closure in popular revolutions in the Arab countries. The main assumption of the paper returns to maintaining the ontological security of Israel against the religious- popular movements of Middle East. In other terms, one of the most important and effective factors in defining the security and security discourse of Israel is its elites' understanding of the process and evolution of revolutionary and religious movements of Middle East.

According to this, and to reach to the answer of main question, the following minor questions should be first discussed:

A) What is the nature of upheavals in the region?

B) How is ontological security of the Israeli regime defined?

C) What is Israeli elites' viewpoint on developments?

Since the beginning of 2011, the Middle East has faced fundamental uprisings and was subjected to serious changes and Arab states which were generally considered as traditional and almost stable governments, faced with massive protests. National, regional, and international actors affected in a way by these developments and tried to influence the process of changes by adopting some policies and actions, and to push them to the side with fewer damages and more gains (Yazdanfam, 2011: 48). One of these actors is the Israeli regime which was affected particularly in security terms by the revolutions in the Arab countries of MENA, and its relations with these states were changed.

The Israeli society has a special situation and cannot be regarded as a natural society due to its formation of an immigrant population. Indeed, a nation that is known as Israel is built on population from different regions and countries. Thus, foundation of Israel is not the result of a gradual and long-term process, but it is on the basis of the immigration of Jews from various regions due to the general plan of Zionism (Rajabi Gharegheshlaghi, 2009: 146).

On the other hand, participation and membership in a community requires individual (the person or the government) to declare itself as a member of that community and express and uphold the values and norms which constitute the community. To do so, state must have a stable identity that has capacity to maintain a particular narrative. Therefore, membership in a congenial society requires a dominant historical narrative, i.e. an identity that matches the identity of that community. As

Charles Taylor states: "In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going" (Barnett, 2011: 219).

Accordingly, Israel through various initiatives including the "New Middle East" plan presented by Shimon Peres in the early 1990s, tried to consolidate its status as a member of the Middle East by getting recognized by countries of the region through establishing peace between Arabs and Jews. But with the advent of revolutions in the region especially its neighboring countries, and the tendency of the new governments to establish democratic states with Islamic scent, it was challenged to achieve its goal of membership in the region. For example, the opening of Rafah Crossing on Gaza Strip by Egypt was a fact that would generate tremendous anxiety to Israel.

Regarding this issue, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the effect of the revolutions on the ontological and identity security of Israel. In other words, how these uprisings and emergence of Islamism and civilian- democratic governments in the revolutionary countries have impacted the alteration of Israel's understanding of its security and its perception of the threat. Due to the importance of identity, the evolution of the concept of security and the necessity of considering the mental factors of security along with its material ones, the theoretical framework of ontological security or existential security will be used as the most appropriate theory for this study.

This article consists of several sections. In the first section, the ontological security theory will be explained as a theoretical framework. In the second part, the nature of the changes and movements will be explained briefly. The sources of identity in the Israel foreign policy will come in the third section. In the fourth section, we will observe the feeling of ontological insecurity in the statements of the policy-makers and elites of Israel. And ultimately, the responses of Israeli politicians to this insecurity will be explored. In fact, this study will examine the insecurity of Israeli's identity in terms of their own discourse and literature. The research method is explanatory-analytical review of resources and documents through library research and other information centers.

1. The Theoretical Framework: Ontological Security

We are accustomed to thinking about security monolithically, as physical security of the body. But there is another fundamental form of security, namely ontological security or security of one's identity. A person needs

to define his identity and the one he is. Therefore, to form a community, individuals should at firs define their identity to earn ontological security (Mitzen, 2006: 272).

This theory, which has been shaped by constructivism and on the basis of social identity theory, argues that identification process -both for individuals and governments- is essentially done through their relationships with others. The importance of this identification process lies in the fact that in order to have a sense of being "agents" or "actors," individuals and governments need a stable cognitive environment to relate the tools to their needs in necessary times. This cognitive environment gives the individual or states a sense of identity (Vaezi, 2011: 325).

Indeed, the ontological security theory in the analysis of international relations and foreign policy has been inferred from Anthony Giddens' "human existence" theory at the individual level. Giddens explains that humans need a "sense of continuity and order in events, including those which are not directly within the individual's perceptual environment." In his opinion, individuals' perception of "self" should be produced and maintained through their everyday activities and reactions. Hence, to be ontological secure is to possess "answers" to fundamental existential questions about "self" (Dehghani Firoozabadi & Noori, 2013: 152).

On the other side, it should be noted that although identities are rather fluid and should be daily produced, they do not change easily. In reality, identity changes are difficult because identities are rooted and anchored in daily routines, and to maintain their identity, individuals are stuck to these identity controlling routines and hardly leave them (Mitzen, 2004: 1).

Brent J. Steele is another theorist that has discussed this subject in his work "Ontological Security in International Relations; Self Identity and the IR State." Steele's approach is drawing on the work of sociologist Anthony Giddens who defines ontological security as a sense of continuity and order in events. "According to Steele," feeling "insecure" does not necessarily mean having one's own survival at risk. Rather, insecurity refers to situations whereby "individuals are uncomfortable with who they are." Consequently, ontological security, unlike physical security (survival), is security of "being." To government agents as well as individuals, threat means missing of continuity and order in states' actions. In the foreign policy stage, state agents must create meanings for their actions to be logically consistent with their identities. Steele's main argument is that while physical security is evidently important to states,

ontological security is more important because its fulfillment affirms a state's identity (it shows primarily how a state sees itself and secondly how it wants to be seen by others) (Steele, 2008: 50- 51 and Herta, 2012: 74- 76).

A strategy which is generally adopted in confrontation with profound uncertainty is Routinization. Routines mean responses to events that are relatively automatic or habitual. Routines help individuals and agents to bring their environmental threats under control, to solve the problems, and allowing them to maintain their identity enable them to provide ontological security. Therefore, the first step to go back to normal state is re-establishing and re-defining routines (Mitzen, 2006: 273).

Based on this theory, it seems that the occurrence of Arab revolutions has created a sense of ontological insecurity among Israeli officials by breaking the actions of Israel -especially its actions over the past three decades- to normalize relations with its neighboring countries, and by formation of new identities against its identity. We will deal with the examples of this feeling of insecurity and the reactions of these authorities in the next sections.

2. The Nature of the Revolutions (2011 and 2012) in the Arab Countries

The revolutions in the Arabic Islamic countries of the region are in fact, a wave of transformations and revolutions that have taken place in MENA since late 2010 and early 2011. Various theories have been raised about the nature of these revolutions. From the point of view of this article, popular and democratic with Islamic scent is closer to reality.

Conforming to this view, in these countries, the protests sprung from economic desperation, demands across the region for long-standing leaders to relinquish power, and for more political freedoms. In Egypt for instance, the demonstrations were at first relatively free of violence. Millions of demonstrators demanded that Mubarak should step down. But the ousting of Egyptian leader after 30 years was not sufficient to meet the demands of the Egyptian protesters. Instead, they remained in Tahrir Square and demanded democracy, pressuring the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to implement full democratic reforms. On 19 March 2011, the Egyptians voted on the constitutional referendum, participating in what might turn out to be the first free and fair voting process of a new democratic era. In this line, the changes in the constitution as decided upon by the referendum represented a move towards a more democratic country. However, it was not without criticism.

Some young activists, Coptic leaders, political parties, ElBaradei and some other presidential candidates opposed the fundamental changes, arguing that some of the reforms were sufficient (Spierings, 2011: 3).

In other side, as Asef Bayat analyzes, revolutions and revolutionary uprisings are integral features of modernity, and the Middle Eastern experience is of no exception. Modern capitalism economy and science, urbanization, education, and the idea of citizenship are closely tied to the flourishing of new social groups such as the bourgeois, professional classes, youth and women who foster new social existence and habits and generate particular demands. At the same time, ways of life and modern institutions question a great deal of humanity services, in terms of life-chances, respect, equality, and real political participation. Therefore, revolutions are the outcome of the collective contention of such social beings whose often "partial interests" moral and material, converge and become the basis of collective identity and actions. Hence, revolutions are more intricate than mere structural contradictions and agency. The making of revolution involves a complex set of material, moral, and cognitive conditions as well as political (internal or international) opportunities (Bayat, 2010: 222).

The British historian E.P. Thompson in his work on bread riots in England in 18th century argues that revolutions usually happen not only because of an increase in prices, but due to the perception that social values are being severely breached. His analysis, actually, focused on the mentality, expectations and traditions of rioters and protestors as key variables of the occurrence of revolutions, something that was highly obvious in the uprisings of MENA specifically in Egypt. Egyptians protested at a time when unemployment and financial stresses were global phenomena. In fact, the groups that paved the ground for the protests of 25 January 2011 drew on both political and economic grievances. Cancelling the state of emergency, opposition to the presumed plan for the president's son, Jamal Mubarak, to succeed his father, and the political and economic corruptions were some of protesters' discontents (Kinninmont, 2012: 6).

On the other hand, with advent of democratic Islamist governments in developing countries and in assessing the role of the Islamists for participating in power and transforming the shape of state, we have seen their efforts for political participation and entering into the political arena with strategy of dialogue, and mediation. They gradually provided the circumstance for Islamic movements to be considered as a strong and active political stream to form a democratic system despite extensive

activities of secular forces in the political space of Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan and other countries, domestic media, and international circles (Javanpour & Bani-Hashemi, 2011: 94). Therefore, these upheavals have led to the formation of a new political identity in the countries of the region; a kind of democracy with Islamic scent, which due to the Islamic nature of the revolutionary countries, the demands of the people cannot be contrary to Islam, and challenged Israel which defined itself as the only model of democracy in the region.

3. The Ontological Security of the Israeli Regime

Since identity is in the center of ontological security theory, in this section, we are going to explore identity and identification resources of Israeli regime in its policy. Identity of Israeli regime is the consciousness and perception of this regime of itself based on the perception and understanding of other countries of it, which must be continuously reproduced in its daily political life and be acknowledged and supported by its efforts and behaviors.

By source of identification we mean a set of value and normative systems that make the Zionist regime's social, political and cultural characteristics more consolidated and distinguish it from other actors. These sources are the basis for policy-makers' understanding and interpreting of international relations arena and the events and motivations of other actors which in the next step define the appropriate response to the (Dehghani Firoozabadi & Noori, 2013: 154).

The Israelis have three common principles and commitments in their foreign policy decision-making:

A) Concerning for security and the existential threats that face Israel;

B) Consensus over the Zionist ideology;

C) The preservation of Israel as a democratic Jewish state (El-Gendy, 2010: 186).

Indeed, the identity and culture of Israeli regime have several components including: being as a preferred people, permanent insecurity, the inevitability of war, territorial expansionism, self-reliance, preemptive strike, etc. All of these components come from three main resources: Jewish religion, Zionist ideology and the idea of being democratic. We will explain these three resources briefly here.

3.1. Judaism

Religion as a semantic element is an identity factor for social solidarity. But this factor in modern societies becomes weak and is usually driven into the private life of individuals due to the formation of a sort of social

solidarity based on the necessity of work. Therefore, in Israeli society whose founders introduced as a modern society, Jewish religion does not play so many roles and rather than being a unifying factor has been degraded to the sphere of individual interests. In fact, the Jewish religion in this community has gained a dual and contradictory function which caused a social gap in it (Zeydabadi, 2002: 2- 3).

In other words, while the Jewish state is formed and attempts to normalize its situation on the basis of a national-state pattern, the issue of identity and the definition of the concept of "Jewishness" of the country based on the definitions of main owners of the Zionist project, became a challenge. In Israel unlike other nation-states, the phenomenon of the nation is not compatible with the phenomenon of citizenship, because every Israeli citizen is not necessarily part of the "nation of Israel." In fact, the majority of the inhabitants of Israel are Jews who belong to a world community called the Jewish Ummah (Shofani & Abo- Ramdan, 2004: 19).

The formation of a heterogeneous society composed of different social classes without a common language has made the structure of Israel more artificial. Thus, so far, physical security has prevented the disintegration of the texture of this regime, and indeed, the internal collective security issue has become one of the most important deterrents to the collapse of this heterogeneous texture (Dorakhshah & Sadeghizade, 2013: 111).

3.2. Zionism

Zionism is a reading of the Jewish religion that is supportive to the Jews not to Judaism, and is even in conflict with some of the most important teachings of Torah (Dorakhshah & Sadeghizade, 2013: 91). The statement by Ben Gurion, one of the World Zionism Organization activists and the first Israeli prime minister, on the nature of Zionism is expressive: "the Zionist organization is able to obtain something beyond the power and competence of Israel, and this is the advantage of Zionism in relation to this country."

The idea of political Zionism emerged in 1896 based on Theodor Herzl's thoughts, which practically shaped the religious idea and discourse of the formation of the Jewish state in his book. Actually, he believed that the future Jewish state, along with the significance of the Jewish religion should be the western liberal sample of state (Ebrahimi, 2013: 88).

The ideology of Zionism is based on several foundations, including:
- Israel's security needs necessitated maintaining strategic relationships with an outside military power: Israeli leaders since Ben Gurion have

been aware that Israel could never be completely self-sufficient. To them, Israel as a small state with limited resources, simply could not afford to allow itself to become isolated during wartime. Ben Gurion's principle that Israel should always have one great patron has remained a cardinal principle of Israel's national security doctrine. This alliance with a superpower took the form of an alliance with the Soviet Union during the late 1940s, with France in the 1950s, and with the United States since 1967 (El-Gendy, 2010: 139).

- Relationship with Jewish communities outside of Israel: the Jewish community's structure and the Israel lobby in the United States is by far the most influential Jewish community outside of Israel. The Israel lobby has been recently defined in a study by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt in their work "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" as "a loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively works to shape the United States' foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction" (El-Gendy, 2010: 150).

- Reliance on past experiences in times of crisis: Israeli decision-makers are psychologically prone to reliance on past experiences as a guide to cope with current threats to their basic values. And this reliance creates a great conceptual rigidity to understanding the threats (ibid: 186).

3.3. Being Democratic

To Israel, the ability to present itself as a patron of western modern values in the region against the Orientals -an amalgam of Islam, Arab identity and religious fundamentalism- seemed to provide ideal situation for the Zionist settler-state as prophesied by Herzl. This was not only done for external legitimacy, but Israel has depended on this identity and continued to conceive and present itself both as European and Western. This identity was carefully honed and developed, and depended on a continuous projection of Israel as a valuable and dependable ally for the west, and particularly for the United States (Bresheeth, 2012: 52).

In fact, the Israelis consider themselves the only democratic country in the region that has been able to present a model of democracy in Middle East. The Jews introduce Islam to the western public opinion as a source of bombing and suicidal operation, and promote a major gap between Islam and Jewish beliefs. By repeating the "ten commandments" of the Torah, the Israelis claim that their religion is non-violence (Ebrahimi, 2013: 90).

Accordingly Israel has always considered itself as a small democratic group seeking to determine its fate, the creation of a state. But there is a kind of dichotomy in its foreign policy which means on the one hand, it

is an expansionist and has always entered into regional wars and conflicts to expand its territorial borders, power and security, and on the other hand, it has the most vulnerable security environment. This dichotomy has led Israel to always consider security factors as the main axis of its foreign policy framework (Haji Yousefi & Eslami, 2009: 181).

Regarding contradiction between being Jewish and being democratic, some analysts like Israeli rabbi "Ariel Bar Tzadok," believe that Israel should consider itself as a part of the Middle East and not as the 51st state of the United States or a European nation. Thus, in order to survive Israel must live by its own standards and goals. Israel needs to cease its pursuit of pleasing western powers and imitating their ideas. Every nation on earth regards its own national ideals and needs before implementing its policy. Israel also must take into account what is firstly best for Israel and Jews. Israel must maintain its Jewish identity, even at the expense of the curtailment of democracy. Democracy is meant to strengthen the state, not to destroy it (Tzadok, 2005).

On the other side, some like Ruth Gavison, professor of law at Hebrew University of Jerusalem believe that Israel can be both Jewish and democratic, and it is reasonable that Israel can have a combination of Jewish and democratic nature. The Jewishness of Israel is, first and foremost, the recognition of the fact that Israel is a state in which the Jewish people exercise their right to national self-determination. Hence, there is not a contradiction between Jewishness and democracy (Gavison, 2000).

Nevertheless, Israel has not still been able to make its final decision on whether to be Jewish or democratic. Zionist statesmen seek to preserve these two fundamental pillars in society, and this has created a controversial situation in Israel. "Israel is democratic for its Jewish citizens, and is Jewish for its Arab citizens," Ahmed Tayybi, an Israeli Arab member of the Knesset said sarcastically (Dorakhshah & Sadeghizade, 2013: 100).

These sources of Israeli identity have always faced challenges. The challenge to Jewish identity, in the inside, appears as a split between religious and secular Jews, and in the region, as a confrontation with Islamic identity and Islamists. Zionism also confronted a challenge called post-Zionism, especially in the inside. The idea of being democratic, despite many questions and contradictions has been basically challenged since the beginning of 2011 with the rise of the revolutions in the neighbor Arab states, growth of democratic discourse and the emergence of democratic states. In fact, so far, Israel has been stuck and attached to

this source of identity because of the identity gaps it suffers from, and its lack of legitimacy and not being recognized by neighboring countries, as well as to offset its identity challenges. But by the outbreak of the revolutions this source of identity has also been challenged.

4. Ontological Insecurity in the Israel Foreign Policy after the Revolutions

In this section, we will observe the feeling of ontological insecurity in the statements of the policy-makers and the elites of Israeli regime. Indeed, one way to accurately understand the viewpoints of Israeli decision-makers about the revolutions and upheaval in the Arab Islamic countries is to analyze their statements.

Israel watches the upheavals in Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain differently from those in Egypt and Syria. In these states, upheavals and revolutions do not pose a direct threat to the interests of Israel, and the effect of these states will remain limited in drawing the future order of the Middle East. Most Israeli experts believe that the United States and the great European powers can handle the problems in these countries because any danger from these states is indirectly detrimental to western governments which have vital interests in them. Therefore, the upheavals in Egypt and Syria are more important to Israel and it has the most feeling of insecurity from these two states (Okashe, 2011).

Egypt on the era of Hosni Mubarak was the most important strategic alliance of Israel. Israeli analyst Aluf Benn points out that: "Israel has replaced eight prime ministers, participated in several wars, and engaged in peace talks with multiple partners, but Mubarak was always there" (Byman, 2011: 124). The support provided by Egypt was significant. First, the peace treaty signed in 1979 guaranteed security and to a certain extent, economic cooperation between the two countries. It provided intelligence sources for Israel as well, played a role of moderator in the Arab- Israel relations, helped Israel in fighting with radical Islamists in Gaza and imposed an embargo on it, and also struggled against Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Esisc Team, 2011: 1- 2)**.**

However, with the occurrence of the revolutions, even moderate Egyptian leaders who enjoy support of Washington, such as Ayman Nour and winner of Nobel Prize Mohamed El-Baradei, have called for revising the peace treaty with Israel or holding a referendum on it, and declared that the era of Camp David is over (Byman, 2011: 125). Hence, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu during the revolutions seriously warned that it was even possible that Egypt would go in the direction of Iran, and the

new Cairo government would change its attitude toward Israel. Also in the context of the relations between Egypt and Israel and during invasion of people of Cairo to the Israeli embassy, and the death of five police officers on the border, the Egyptian Prime Minister responded that the peace between Egypt and Israel is not a sacred matter and can change (Mousavi et al., 2012: 97).

Ehud Barak called these upheavals a diplomatic tsunami against Israel. When Netanyahu at first, described Israel as a quiet coast of a turbulent sea, Peres responded to him: "even if this (calm coast) is true, it's better to have the sea calm because it is the sea which affects the coast, not otherwise." "What happened in Egypt and Tunisia was a strategic warning to Israel," said Shaul Mofaz, chairman of the Knesset Foreign affairs Committee, senior member of the Kadima party who is a former defense minister. And Moshe Ya'alon, an Israeli senior military called the recent uprising as a historical earthquake (Razavi, 2011: 17).

The strongest condemnation of the United States for its silence against revolutions came from former head of Mossad and chairman of the ICT Board of Directors, Shabtai Shavit, in the World Summit on Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya in mid-September 2011; who said: "dictatorship is preferable to Islamic extremism and it is better to leave things as they are." He blamed President Obama for chaos in Egypt, saying he pushed Mubarak out to appeal to the masses but, the masses cannot lead and cannot govern. Shavit also accused President Obama of "political naiveté" in his "hesitant efforts" to support Saudi Arabia and quiet the revolution in Bahrain (Yaphe, 2011).

Nahum Barnea, an Israeli analyst, believes that: "the revolutions in the Arab world have led to instability in the region, weakening of governments," creation of hate and disappointment among people, including hate of Israel. Beside, this course was fateful for Israel's position in the world. Because, in one side, the United States' position has been weakened as a supporter of Israel, which has been unprecedented since the 1930s; on the other side, conflicts within Turkey, turmoil in Egypt, and good cooperation between Palestine and United Nations is all indicative of the fact that Israel has come to an end, and the international community has largely turned its back on Israel (Kayali, 2011).

Indeed, Israel which had taken advantage of the former dictatorial order that allowed it to challenge the order unilaterally and spread its domination and impose itself on the region as a democratic state without being convicted by the rulers, now is exposed to public opinion on the

interference and the issue of the Arab-Israel conflict. For example, new Egypt and its popular revolution showed that, contrary to the former regime, it does not accept the Israeli aggression and takes it as a reduction of its value, dignity, and its regional position (Kayali, 2011).

Meanwhile, what was particularly prominent in these upheavals was the popularity of revolutions and the importance of public opinion; In such a way that, other rulers in the Arab states were more concerned about people demands and public opinion because of the fear that the United States will abandon them and stop supporting them as did to Ben Ali and Mubarak. In fact, as the Israeli historian Tom Segev said, "Israeli peace was with government officials, not with all people". Thus, Israel felt insecure about observing the weight and importance of public opinion and its difference from the vision of political systems especially on relations with Israel (Al-Faouri, 2011: 121).

On the other hand, the emergence of Islamists in revolutionary countries, for Israeli decision-makers was accompanied by haze and uncertainty about Islamists' future policy. For instance, would the Muslim Brotherhood government be able to stop supporting of Hamas, which until now was a firm string in the Brotherhood's global perspective. After taking over the government, Mohamed Morsi has done nothing to repudiate the Brotherhood past remarks and actions (Brown, 2013: 9- 10). So, this is another factor that threatened Israel.

Many Israelis voiced the fear that the Sunni Muslim extremists would take over the political power. To them, the Arab world had no other model and choice for change but Islamic revolution as identified by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. Western Europe had organizations and civil societies and a history of liberal traditions to guide them through their revolutions but countries of Middle East have no similar conditions or experiences and no traditional civil society (Yaphe, 2011). Such fears get worst by the triumphant return of Sheikh Yusuf al-Qardawi, the most prominent Sunni scholar in the Arab world, to Egypt with longstanding ties to the Muslim Brotherhood (Basol, 2011: 511).

Israel considers the Muslim Brotherhood's ascent as a potential threat for two reasons: first, the possibility of an improvement in the Egyptian-Iranian relations, leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood has urged Egypt to upgrade its ties with Islamic Republic of Iran. In other words, foreign policy in Egypt of Brotherhood is aiming at preserving good ties with all main regional players, from Iran to Saudi Arabia. Second, the positive effect that Muslim Brotherhood's political power could have on Hamas.

Morsi's government played an important role in the compromise between Hamas and Fath and decision on forming an independent Palestinian state. Hence, Wining of Mohamed Morsi in elections who was largely perceived as far more antagonistic to Israel as his rival Ahmed Shafik, caused more anxiety in Israel (Berti, 2012: 143).

5. Israel's Response to the Ontological Insecurity Emergent of the Revolutions

Based on the theory of ontological security or existential security, governments turn to routine habits to overcome their identity insecurity. Israel too has made a variety of behaviors into routines in its foreign policy. The most important symbols of these behavioral practices that reduce its ontological insecurity are:

- Pushing Washington in any ways, to persuade it to change the military support policy of the Egyptian army and thereby weakening that army and reducing its power of threatening Israel;

- Changing the Israeli security and defense doctrine regarding to relations with Egypt, as well as to the borders between Israel and Gaza Strip, and relying on their own army instead of relying on the Egyptian army;

- Necessity of prompt action for a peace deal with the Arabs through an agreement with Mahmoud Abbas or a deal with Damascus to end Syrian relations with Iran and Hezbollah in exchange for recapturing of the Golan Heights;

- Promoting relations with the United States and other Western governments to strengthen a moderate axis within the region with representation of Jordan, Palestinian National Authority and Israel in order to reduce Israel's isolation in the region;

- Avoiding any action that prompts Palestinians and the Arab world against Israel, especially regarding the al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem (Al-Faouri, 2011: 122);

- Attempting to get close to the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and support for the overthrow of Morsi's government;

- Supporting the Syrian rebels against the Assad's system; indeed, Israel with extreme hostility to Syria for its unity with the Islamic resistance groups, considered it as a serious threat to its security and has repeatedly threatened the security of Syria;

- Benefitting from the growing Sunni- Shi'i rift; on Israel's vision, the recent upheavals in the region shows the increasing Shiite predominance

in Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, and even in the Eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia, and also growing Wahhabi, Salafi, Jihadi movements against Shiite groups (Bar, 2011: 21). The new emerging Sunni coalition in the region with Turkey and Egypt as central players, backed by the conservative axis -Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco- have several common interests with Israel, such as reducing the Iranian nuclear challenge, confronting the threats from Syria, ending the deadlock on the Palestine issue which might lead into a third Intifada (Podeh & Goren, 2013: 5);

Mark Heller believes that Israel must take the following steps to reduce its insecurity caused by the revolutions:
- Strengthening the alliance with Jordan in the replacement of Egypt, whose regime's character is largely congenial to Israel security interests and can overcome the Israeli challenges, and help it to alleviate economic stress especially with respect to water and fuel;

- To search for common perspectives on the implications of the Arab revolutions in hope of checking and reversing the deterioration in Israeli-Turkish relations;

- Trying to explore the channels of communication with Islamists and other emerging political forces in the region (like the United States) in an effort to reduce misunderstandings;

- At the regional level, it is necessary to seek a new way of understanding and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to lower the toxicity of Israel's image in light of ongoing political upheavals and uncertainty (Heller, 2012: 77).

Conclusion
Based on what has been argued, we can conclude that the democratic and popular movements in the Arab Islamic countries in the region, and moving towards modernity and building the future of countries based on national states and democracy pattern by peaceful tools, challenged Israel in new and unprecedented ways, and these democratic governments are in contrast to colonialist, racist and religious Israel. Success of these movements in creating such governments also increased their legitimacy in choosing a solution to the Arab-Israel conflict.

The collective identity in the Arab countries is settled mostly in the struggle for ethnicity, language and Islam. And while ethnicity leads to the weakening of collective identity, Arabic language and Islam have

serious influences on its solidity. If democracy would established in Egypt, the social identity of the Egyptian state will be more affected by its collective Islamic identity. Nearly 90 percent of Arabs see Israel as their greatest threat, so this anti-Israeli public opinion will remain as a common feature of identity among people of Middle East until a justly peace treaty according to people's opinion will be made. And if democracy is promoted in this region, it becomes a major characteristic of their social identity (Mousavi et al., 2012: 102- 104). So, identity threats will appear to Israel in two dimensions: substantial, as border and security disputes with its neighboring countries and abstract, as a conflict between Islamic identity and Jewish identity and between Arabic identity and Hebrew and Zionist identity as well.

When Israel succeeded in concluding an agreement with Egypt and Jordan, it was largely able to provide its national security and to remove its threats. However, with the outbreak of the revolutions, Israel lost its strategic allies and democratic governments came to power. Given the necessity of settling political and economic conditions in revolutionary countries, modern democratic governments were not seeking military confrontations, so these developments were not challenging the physical security of Israel, rather they are challenging its ontological security and in fact its identity as being the sole democratic government in the region! For this reason, the occurrence of revolutions and the movement of governments towards democracy not only did not make Israel happy, but from the outset it opposed them and tried to defeat them.

Attempt to normalize its relations with the changing countries, creating regional and international coalition against Iran and its ally Syria (weakening the axis of resistance), creating dispute among Islamists in the Egyptian presidential elections with the aim that liberal factors come to power, supporting the coup against the Morsi's government, supporting Syrian rebels, etc. are examples of Israel's actions to face the feeling of ontological insecurity caused by the upheavals and revolutions which show its strategy of closure against these upheavals.

In general, Israel policy in response to the revolutions has been a minimalist policy in this period. Especially for Egypt, it was only trying to maintain the peace treaty until it could bring security back to its borders. In fact it has adopted this policy for short term, and tried to lessen its presence against the dynamic changes in the region. This decision is due to two points: first, Israel is aware of its unpopularity in the region, so it wanted to emphasize that it did not want to interfere in local political processes. Second, Israel had not political and diplomatic

tools for exercising direct influence, thus it tried to act as an outside actor. Israel policy toward the Syrian developments was also largely passive because of concerns that direct intervention would have had a severe political reaction to Israel and would harm Assad's opponents.

In the end, Israeli regime has tried either to block the path of the revolutions and popular movements in the region, or to use the strategy of widespread chaos against them by Somali sating them. Direct and indirect interactions with the ISIS confirm this assumption. Therefore, blocking and closuring the path of revolutionizing the region is the most important scenario for the Israeli regime in the confrontation of the revolutions and the wave of democracy in the Middle East.

References

Al-Faouri, A. (2011). *al-Tahawolat al-Arabia al-Eghlimiya wa Atharha ala Nazariyat al-Amn al-Israeli fi al-Fatra 2006- 2012 (Arab Regional Transformations and its Impact on Israeli Security in 2006- 2012)*, Master of Political Science, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Middle East University (In Arabic).

Bar, S. (2011). "The Revolution in the Middle East: The Arab Awakening." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 17- 23.

Barnett, M. (2011). "Hoviat va Etehadha dar Khavarmiyaneh (Identity and Alliances in the Middle East)." In *Farhang-e Amniat Meli: Hanjarha va Hoviat dar Siyasat-e Jahani (The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics)*, P. J. Katzenstein (ed.), (M. Hadi Semati, Trans). Tehran: Pajoheshkade Motaleat-e Rahbordi (Research Institute of Strategic Studies).

Basol, D. (2011). "Arab Spring and Israeli Security: The New Threats." *Alternative Politics*. Vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 509- 546.

Bayat, A. (2010). *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, ISIM Series on Contemporary Muslim Societies. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Berti, B. (2012). "Israel and the Arab Spring: Understanding Attitudes and Responses to the New Middle East." *Al-Mesbar Studies and*

Research Centre and the Foreign Policy Research Institute. PP. 130- 146.

Bresheeth, H. (2012). "The Arab Spring: A View from Israel." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. Vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 42- 57.

Brown, N. (2013). "Evolution after Revolution: Egypt, Israel, and the United States." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 2, no. 7, pp. 9- 12.

Byman, D. (2011). "Israel's Pessimistic View of the Arab Spring." *The Washington Quarterly*. Vol. 9, no. 34, pp. 123- 136.

Dehghani Firoozabadi, J; Noori, V. (2013). "Amniat-e Hasti Shenasi dar Siyasat Kharehi-e Doran Osoolgaraee (Ontological Security in Foreign Policy of Principality era)." *Faslnameh-ye Motaleat-e Rahbordi (Strategic Studies Quarterly)*. Vol. 15, no. 57, pp. 149- 180.

Dorakhshah, J; Sadeghizade, K. (2013). "Asib Shenasi Sakhtari-e Regime Sahionisti ba Takid bar Asib-haye Farhangi va Ejtemaee (The Structural Pathology of Zionist Entity with an Emphasis on Social and Cultural Susceptibility)." *Faslname-ye Motaleat-e Farhang- Ertebatat (Culture- Communication Studies)*. Vol. 13, no. 20, pp. 87- 116.

Ebrahimi, N. (2013). *No-Salafigari va Jahani Shodan-e Amniat-e Khavarmiyane (Neo-Salafism and Globalization of the Middle East Security)*. Tehran: Pahoheshkade Motaleat-e Rahbordi (Research Institute of Strategic Studies).

El- Gendy, K. (2010). *The Process of Israeli Decision Making: Mechanisms, Forces and Influences*. Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations.

ESISC TEAM. (2011). "Israel: Security Analysis: The Implications of the Arab Spring on Israel's security." *European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center*.

Gavison, R. (2000). "Can Israel be both Jewish and Democratic?" *Moment Magazine.* Vol. 7, no. 25, p. 25.

Haji-Yousefi, A. M; Eslami, M. (2009). "Avamel-e Tasir Gozar bar Siyasat Khareji-e Israel: Eraeh-ye Modeli Tahlili (Factors Shaping Foreign Policy: an Analytical Model)." *Faslnameh-ye Siyasat (Political Quartely).* Vol. 39, no. 39, pp. 177- 200.

Heller, M. (2012). "Israeli Responses to the Arab Spring." *One Year of Arab Spring: Global and Regional Implications.* Y. Guzansky and M. Heller (Ed.). Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) Memorandum 113.

Herta, L. M. (2012). "Review of Ontological Security in International Relations: Self - Identity and the IR State by B. J. Steele," *Romanian Review of International Studies.* Available at: https: //www. researchgate.net/publication/293652237_Book_review_Brent_J_St eele_Ontological_Security_in_International_Relations_Self- Identity_and_the_IR_State_London_and_New_York_Routledge_2 008_p_215.

Javanpour, A; Bani- Hashemi, M. Gh. (2011). "Jonbesh-haye Enghelabi Arabi; Cheshm andazha va Chalesh-haye Olgoye Novin-e Dolat (Arab Revolutionary Movements, Prospects and Challenges for New Model of State)." *Faslnameh-ye Motaleat-e Rahbordi (Strategic Studies Quarterly).* Vol. 14, no. 52, pp. 79- 110.

Kayali, M. (2011, December, 17). "Al- Thawrat Toghayer al-Mohit al-Estrategy le-Israel (Revolutions Change the Strategic Environment of Israeil)." *Aljazeera.* Available at: https: //www.aljazeera.net/ knowledgegate/opinions/2011/12/17 (In Arabic).

Kinninmont, J. (2012). "Bread, Dignity and Social Justice': The Political Economy of Egypt's Transition." *Middle East and North Africa Programme.* Chatham House: Briefing Paper.

Mitzen, J. (2004, October 22- 23). "Ontological Security in World Politics and Implications for the Study of European Security." Prepared for *The CIDEL Workshop, From Civilian to Military*

Power: The European Union at a Crossroads? Oslo: Norway.

Mitzen, J. (2006). "Anchoring Europe's Civilizing Identity: Habits, Capabilities and Ontological security." *Journal of European Public Policy*. Vol. 4, no.13, pp. 270- 285.

Mousavi, S. M; et al. (2012). "Tahavolat-e Enghelabi Mesr va Jaygah-e Regime Sahionisti dar Mantagheh (The Revolutionary Upheavals of Egypt and the Status of the Zionist Regime in the Region)." *Faslnameh-ye Pajohesh-haye Siyasi-e Jahan-e Eslam (Quarterly Journal of Political Research in Islamic World).* Vol. 2, no. 2 and 3, pp. 87- 111.

Okasha, S. (2011). "Israel fi Mowajehat al- Vaghe al- Jadid fi al- Shargh al-Awsat (Israel in the Face of the New Reality in The Middle East)," *Siyassa Aldoaliya*. Available at: http: //www.siyassa.org.eg/ News/1825.aspx (In Arabic).

Podeh, E; Goren, N. (2013). "Israel in the Wake of the Arab Spring: Seizing Opportunities Overcoming Challenges." *Position Paper for the 2013 Israeli Presidential Conference*. Jerusalem, Israel.

Rajabi Gharegheshlaghi, J. (2009). "Tasir-e Shekaf-haye Ejtemaei bar Amniyat Meli Israel (The Impact of Social Gaps on Israel's National Security)." *Faslnameh-ye Motaleat Mantaghei (Journal of Regional Studies).* Vol. 2, no. 10, pp. 145- 176.

Razavi, S. (2011). "Ghiyam-haye Arabi va Chalesh-haye Fara Roye Regime Sahionesti (Arab Uprisings and Challenges to the Zionist Regime)." *Faslnameh-ye Motaleat-e Felestin (Palestinian Studies Quarterly).* Vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 9- 22.

Shofani, E; Abu Ramadan, M. (2004). *Nezam-e Hokomati va Ghanooni-e Israel (Governmental and Legal System of Israel)*. (S. H. Mousavi, Trans). Tehran: Markaz-e Pajohesh-haye Elmi va Motaleat-e Estrategic Khavarmiyaneh (Middle East Research and Strategic Studies Center).

Spierings, N. (2011). "Arab' or 'established' Democracies? Egypt's and Tunisia's post-revolutions elections." *Depts. of Political Science*

and Economics, Institute for Management Research, Radboud University.

Steele, B. J. (2008). *Ontological Security in International Relations, Self-Identity and the IR State*. London and New York: Routledge.

Tzadok, A. B. (2005). "Can a Jewish State be completely Democratic?" *Personal Empowerment through Torah- The Way of Torah for Personal and Communal Transformation*.

Vaezi, T. (2011). "Hoviat dar Ravabet-e Binolmelal (Identity in International Relations)." In H. Moshirzadeh and N. Ebrahimi, eds. *Tahavol-e Mafahim dar Ravabet-e Binolmelal (Concepts Transformation in International Relations)*. Tehran: Research Institute of Strategic Studies.

Yaphe, J. S. (2011). "Israel and the Arab Spring: A Trip Report." *Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)*.

Yazdanfam, M. (2011). "Tahavolat-e Jahan-e Arab: Sorat bandi Ghodrat va Hoviat dar Khavarmiyaneh (Arab World Developments: Configuration of Power and Identity in Middle East)." *Faslnameh-ye Motaleat-e Rahbordi (Strategic Studies Quarterly)*. Vol. 14, no. 52, pp. 47- 77.

Zeydabadi, A. (2002). *Din-o Dolat dar Israel (Religion and Government in Israel)*. Tehran: Ruznegar Press.