Ex (War) Machina: Arab Spring

Authors : Deniz Alca

Abstract : This research aims to study the themes of autonomy, democracy and the legitimacy of power under the headline of Arab Spring. After the first wave of Arab Spring, among the frequently mentioned ideals of self-recognition, awakening, democracy, autonomy, freedom etc. main concern of the border neighbors and the western governments was to see a "legitimate power." Although the metaphor of spring was still pointing at emancipation, the principal focus was mostly not on the people but on the governments. So the question of what makes a government legitimate has come to the forefront. However, democracy and freedom, seems to be the main subject matters of the discussions, this rush about establishment of "legitimate governments" lead other countries, to indulge or worse endorse armed oppositionists. So essence of "power" changed from legitimate to rulership. It seems that the civil initiative or autonomy and clearly democracy are still far away from us. The need to a savior is overpowering. This cultural and traditional and almost hereditary miss orientation of the people, both the ones who are playing the role of god and the ones who believed the inevitable need to be freed by someone else, seems to be leading the Arabs to a new autocracy or worse. Middle East is waiting for the ex machina to operate. But what it gets is a spreading warfare. This darkness falling down on Middle East under the concept of spring may be explained by the confrontation of the concepts of emancipation and liberation. So the question is, if the era of emancipation really over or is there still a chance for autonomy and grassroots democracy operating as constituent power?