“A Habermasian Analysis of Arab-West Inter-Governmental and Inter-Ambassadorial Relations: Implications for Western Diplomatic Training”

By

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision.

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Dedication

For my dearest Mother, Father and

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Abstract

Throughout history, socio-political experts in the Arab-Islamic and Western worlds have embraced the prospect of fruitful Arab-West inter-governmental and inter-ambassadorial relations. In the fields of international relations and education, there is substantial research conducted for reconciling the socio-political and religious dilemmas in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Nonetheless, pondering the intransigent deterioration of affairs and the rise of extremism and terrorism, the region has become a focal point of mainstream Western media without evidence of political resolutions or sensible Western foreign policies. Moreover, much of recent critical Western works on the interpretations of political Islam from ontological perspectives require further attention. Nevertheless, misapprehensions about both historical and contemporary Islamic thought are evident, particularly among prominent Western diplomats and politicians. Therefore, it has become vital to devise a contemporary diplomatic training program for future Western representatives to the MENA region, largely since the methods of Western international relations theory (IRT) have been labelled as Eurocentric, unaccommodating and insufficient. The main objectives of this dissertation are as follows: to provide elucidations on how political Islam is observed, especially when Jürgen Habermas’s descriptive, interpretive and critically self-reflective methods of analysis are applied to it; to provide a holistic analysis of the historical factors that influence political Islam among Arab Muslims; to explore how these factors diverge from existing assumptions about political Islam in the Western setting; and, to pinpoint and elaborate upon extant hindrances in Western inter-governmental and inter-ambassadorial discussions. The findings revealed numerous shortcomings in current approaches to political Islam and also highlighted the factors behind
its popularity among Arab Muslims. The findings also identified apprehensions towards Islamic thought in the Western setting and pinpointed effective political and educational notions through the application of Habermas’s critical theory and theory of communicative action. Finally, the dissertation outlined the rationale for a diplomatic training program for future Western diplomats and politicians.

**Key words:** Arab-West inter-governmental and inter-ambassadorial relations, Western international relations theory, MENA region, Arab Muslims, political Islam and Jürgen Habermas.
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Abbreviations

DA: Democracy Assistance
DFID: Department for International Development
DS: Democracy, Development and Delivery
EAP: Eastern Partnership
ENP: European Neighbourhood Policy
ESS: European Security Strategy
HAMAS: Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah
IDF: Israeli Defence Force
ISIL: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
MB: Muslim Brotherhood
MENA: Middle East and North Africa
PfDSP: Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity
PLO: Palestine Liberation Organisation
SCAF: Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
UM: Union for the Mediterranean
WW2: World War II
WZO: World Zionist Organisation