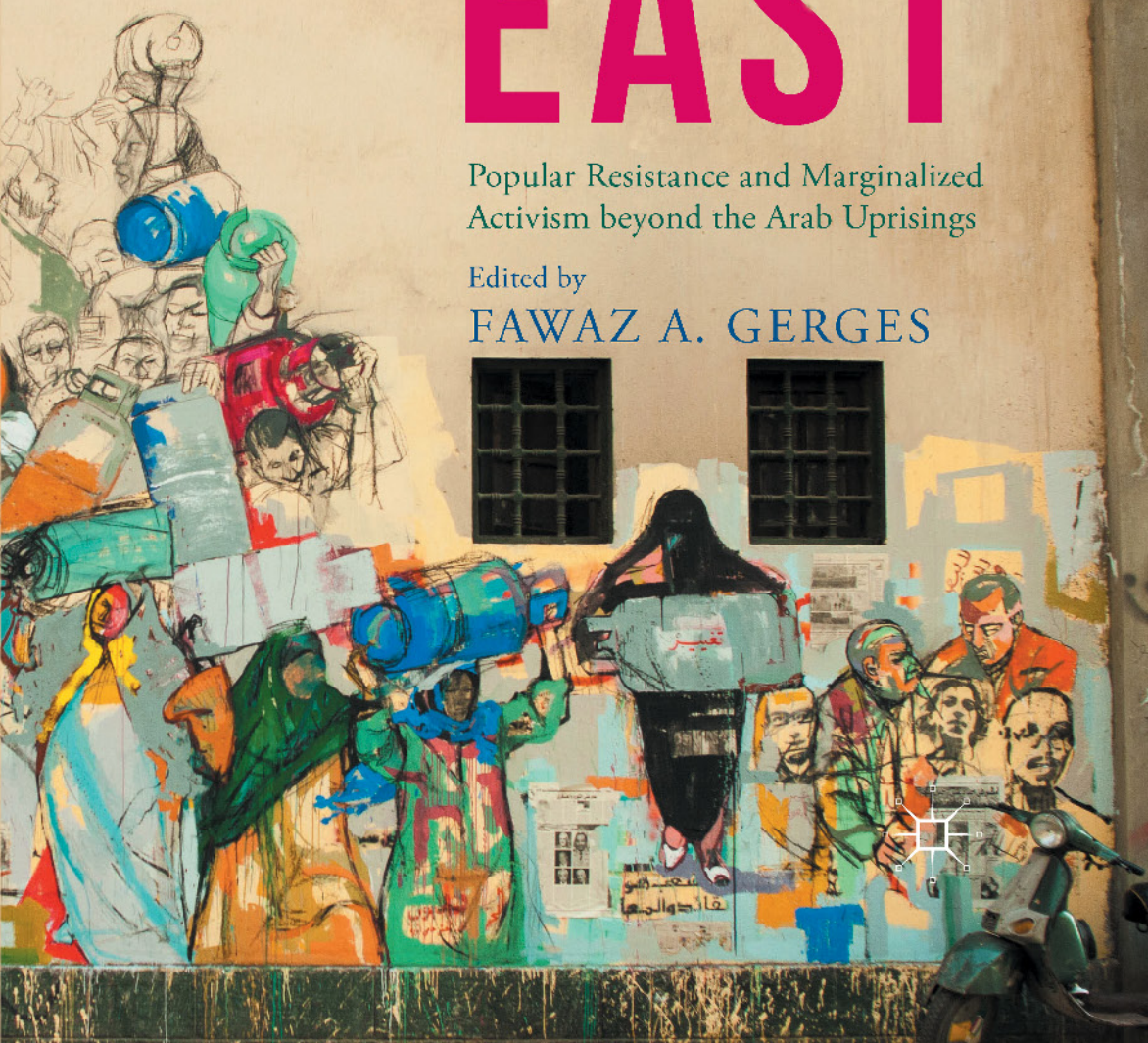
CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism beyond the Arab Uprisings

Edited by

FAWAZ A. GERGES



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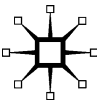

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During my time as the head of the Middle East Centre (MEC) at the London School of Economics in 2013, a conference was convened on Contentious Politics in the Middle East, which brought together dozens of junior and senior scholars. This book is the fruit of the collective deliberation and critical reflection on themes discussed during the conference and after. The idea behind the book is to showcase original, cutting-edge research done by doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, at the London School of Economics and other institutions, who have in-depth knowledge about the historical-sociological factors fueling waves of contentious episodes in the Arab Middle East from December 2010 onward. The contributors move beyond questions about the Arab uprisings' origins toward contextualization of 21 individual episodes in spatial and temporal terms on a local, regional, and global scale. In doing so, the book helps readers make sense of the complexity and diversity of the transition in post-Spring Arab countries, just as it broadens the view on normative transformations.

Edited volumes are a joint intellectual exercise, and this book is no exception. It would not have seen the light of day without the contribution and dedication of many promising young minds. I am particularly appreciative of the critical input and support of Dr. Filippo Dionigi, Leverhulme Research Fellow at LSE, who saw the project through from inception to conclusion. Filippo helped organize the Contentious Politics in the Middle East conference at LSE, assemble the contributors' chapters, and edit some of the rough drafts. I owe special thanks to my research assistants and doctoral candidates at LSE, Ms. Anissa Haddadi and Ms. Magdalena C. Delgado, for providing valuable support. My thanks also go Jan Wilkens, doctoral candidate and lecturer at the University of Hamburg, and Ms. Nawal Mustafa, doctoral candidate at LSE, for their critical feedback. The staff of the MEC—Robert Lowe, Ribale

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Fawaz A. Gerges
London School of Economics and
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INTRODUCTION

CONTEXTUALIZING THE ARAB SPRING UPRISINGS: DIFFERENT REGIMES, DIFFERENT REVOLUTIONS, AND DIFFERENT TRAJECTORIES

Fawaz A. Gerges

From 2010 until 2012, waves of protests spread across the Arab lands to the beat of demonstrators' chants, echoing demands that soon became impossible to ignore: the masses had come together to say loud and clear: *ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam*, or "the people want to topple the regime." These calls for more social justice, effective citizenship, economic opportunities, more rights, less repression, and more political freedom spread almost everywhere: from newspaper headlines to Twitter and Facebook; they appeared on protest banners or were simply written on walls: the message was clear and the struggle for a life of dignity was there to stay. It seemed as if a long-awaited implosion was taking place despite the best efforts of Arab rulers and their great power patrons to maintain the status quo and preempt fundamental change. As this episode of contentious politics struck the Arab region, it restructured regional relations and challenged long-held assumptions about Arab political culture, especially the lack of democracy and the propensity of the people to tolerate authoritarianism. In the eyes of the world, for a brief moment, by breaking their chains the Arabs belatedly regained their humanity and agency.

These practices of contention that occurred in numerous places at about the same period in history not only took different shapes but also were recognized by the international community in different terms. While protests in Egypt showed how paths of communication have changed dramatically in the region over the last decades and allowed social mobilization on a large scale, by the same token, as the most populous Arab country and the area's center

of gravity and cultural capital, Egypt determined the agenda of global media and world governments for months. Yet, contentious episodes in neighboring Arab states like Bahrain or Kuwait received far less attention in both respects.

How should scholars further explore episodes of contentious politics in the Arab Middle East? In this book, the contributors' conviction is that there is a necessity to go below the surface of what observers identify prima facie as the outcome of contentious events, be they violent riots in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq, or rather peaceful protests in Tunisia. Rather than delivering another explanation as to why the large-scale Arab popular uprisings happened, the particular strength of this book is that its contributors look beyond these episodes by contextualizing them in order to show that the narrative of the "Arab Spring" is in danger of narrowing the focus to only some cases. In this sense, the underlying principle of this volume is, as Alberto Melucci described in the first page of his book *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*, that

> contemporary movements are prophets of the present. What they possess is not the force of the apparatus but the power of the word. They announce the commencement of change; not, however, a change in the distant future but one that is already a presence. They force the power out into the open and give it a shape and a face. They speak a language that seems to be entirely their own, but they say something that transcends their particularity and speaks to us all.

Yet, Melucci's theoretical insight leaves open questions of conceptual and methodological frameworks aiming to decipher the variety of claims and desires protesters have articulated. This is not meant to turn people in the region into mystical objects of the Orient; it is rather a warning for critical researchers that empirical proof and knowledge are not readily available but are products of a process that includes deliberate decision about conceptual lenses. Thus, we also act as translators and offer one particular translation of what happened in the Arab Middle East and North Africa, though our translation is anchored in direct engagement with agency and a deep appreciation of the historical and sociological context that has fueled these recent waves of contentious episodes. This book is a dialogue between theory and history, an intellectual exercise in marrying a rigorous conceptual lens—the contentious politics program—with a diverse set of case studies.

Hence, the self-immolation in December 2010 by Mohamed Bouazizi, a young Tunisian street vendor, can be read in different ways. At one level, this was a powerful act of protest against decades of authoritarian state policies that had favored social injustice, supported widespread corruption, and claimed to represent the public. As such, the Bouazizi demonstration reminded the world of other historical situations in which this particular repertoire that is "diffused" throughout time was used in similar contexts of individual and collective suffering. Yet, such a painful act of self-sacrifice as part of a political struggle, in which no other repertoires were seen as available or adequate, is also a powerful message about the structure of the authoritarian state and the barriers in the system of governance that left no space for the life of human beings. Retrospectively, it is not surprising that this violent episode turned into a fierce act of communication that announced the commencement of change, to recall Melucci's phrase.

While the ruling elite responded violently, the self-immolation had the effect of a shock wave throughout the region, prompting and popularizing mass mobilization against various regimes. The people were set on retaking ownership of the political space and its symbols and seizing the state back from presidents-for-life. From Cairo's Tahrir Square to Sana'a's Tahrir Square, citizens focused on shifting from being passive to active agents, for if they were the nation, they were now going to play a role in it. The barriers of fears had been shattered, and Arab streets, which had long been characterized by their passivity in the face of autocracy, had now become a channel for collective and transnational actions and antiregime mobilization. Arab protesters exhibited solidarity toward each other and praised one another's revolutions, standing in unison against political repression in a show of popular legitimacy. The hegemonic and "over-stated Arab state" that had until then maintained a façade of legitimacy through violent practices and co-option of society—albeit limited—transformed into a stage where the populace fiercely negotiated their notions of legitimacy and struggle over different visions of governance.

Although these contentious episodes are interrelated in various ways, they are not part of a deliberate unified movement that is moving toward a common goal. It is this teleological understanding of history that particularly frustrates Western observers. This book seeks to show that processes are often contradictory as their contentious nature materializes in different terms. While the highly visible acts of protests lend themselves to the critical reflection of social movement theories, other cases may constitute parts

of "hidden transcripts," which are often only partially regarded as a form of resistance by dominant actors. Hence, the contributions in this volume not only (a) focus on the meaning of episodes that are directly linked to the events since 2010, but also (b) broaden its analytical lenses by moving beyond the spatial and temporal radar labeled the "Arab Spring." This approach allows us to shed light on the scope of contentious politics that alters conventional notions and conceptions about the Arab Middle East. Yet, the events starting in Tunisia constitute the substance with regard to the changes in the region as well as a renewed interest in the bottom-up politics within social science.

Within days of Bouazizi's death, in Tunisia, protests had transformed into a full fledged popular uprising, and in January, President Zine al-Adbine Ben Ali was deposed. As the protest movement continued to expand, its next wave swept through Egypt, where, following 18 days of confrontation between protesters and the state's security apparatus, Hosni Mubarak was also forced to step down. However, other rulers were unwilling to surrender power, and some used brutal force against peaceful demonstrators.

In Libya, government orders for security forces to fire at protesters only further strengthened antiregime sentiment and turned a largely political uprising into an armed conflict. Regime dissidents and army deserters took up arms against Qaddafi and launched a campaign to unseat him. The intensification of the violence led to an international military intervention by NATO, which ultimately forced Qaddafi to desert his presidential palace before being killed by the rebels. Despite supporting the armed uprising and the Libyan people in their quest for regime change, the NATO-led intervention and the meager assistance provided by European powers after Qaddafi's fall did not usher in national cohesion and social and political stability in the country.

Yemeni president Abdullah Ali Saleh was the fourth leader to be removed from power. Saleh, who had already had been battling secessionist movements in the north and the south, clamped down hard on protesters, which again led to a militarization of the uprising. Despite his attempt to cling on to power, in November 2011 Saleh finally agreed to sign a deal brokered by the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), a life-saving formula for the regime, to hand over authority to his deputy—Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. In Syria, President Bashar al-Assad decided to crush the uprising that had originally erupted in the agricultural city of Dera'a in March 2011. Blaming "terrorists" and "armed criminal gangs," the Assad regime powered through with a ruthless show of force. Far from pacifying the protests, the state's violent response militarized

society. In early 2012, Assad organized a referendum, a belated move that failed to prevent both the further militarization of the opposition and the internationalization of the conflict. Now Syria has plunged into all-out war, a conflagration that threatens the very survival not only of the country but of neighboring countries as well, particularly Iraq and Lebanon.

While protests had until now mainly wrecked the Arab republics, monarchies did not escape the tumult. In Bahrain, people gathered en masse to demand more rights and call for the end of state-approved discrimination against the Shia, a majority of the population. The royal regime, supported by troops from the GCC, cleared the streets of protesters and purged the political opposition, winning the first round in a costly and risky struggle. Meanwhile in the summer of 2011, protests had also emerged in Kuwait, where youth groups called for the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser al-Mohammed Al Sabah. Discontent escalated further following Sabah's alleged involvement in the payment of bribes to pro-government MPs, and by the end of the year Kuwait witnessed rapid escalation of political unrest, with demonstrators storming the National Assembly, which eventually forced the resignation of Sheikh Nasser Al Sabah.

The spread of popular discontent in the oil-rich Gulf States made analysts wonder if the nature of these events was similar to that of the uprisings elsewhere in the region, where protests had much to do with abject poverty, unemployment, and economic vulnerabilities in general, or if they were the result of different political and socioeconomic processes. When foreign actors got directly involved in Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, further questions were raised about the former's influence on the development and outcome of the uprisings, questions that implicitly challenged the general consensus during the protests in Tunisia and Egypt, which held that the latter were results of a spontaneous mobilization of the people.

While the aftermath of the uprisings is still unfolding and outcomes are uncertain, there is no uniform script for how the different contentious episodes will play out. The revolutionary moment has been interrupted by the complex reality of Arab societies weighed down by decades of political authoritarianism and economic mismanagement, and the early euphoria has been replaced by despair, uncertainty, and fear of state collapse. According to current received wisdom, the Arab Spring has turned into a darkening winter with some scholars penning the obituary of freedom itself in the Arab world. At the heart of these vacillating sentiments is a mistaken notion that social

phenomena, like physical nature, are mechanical and ought to produce ripened fruits or desired effects. In this sense, a proclaimed Arab Spring by commentators should have rapidly ushered in a new democratic dawn; instead, not only is there no closure to the contentious episodes unfolding in various Arab countries but also the spreading ideological, social, and sectarian fires have ignited civil wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen. It is no wonder then that skeptics keep reminding us that the Arab future is grim and that it would take a miracle to rescue this sinking ship. What this top-down structuralist argument implicitly suggests is that the Arabs cannot escape their destiny, a fact set in stone.

This is not to deny the uncertain meaning, impact, and paths of these revolutions. Even indigenous writers are perplexed and dismayed by the violent turn of events. As an Algerian author, Boualem Sensal, noted in his open letter to Bouazizi, both advances and retreats are made on a daily basis: "We're doing well, on the whole, though it varies from day to day: sometimes the wind changes, it rains lead, life bleeds from every pore. To tell the truth, I'm not quite sure where we stand; when you're up to your neck in war, you can't tell till the end whether to celebrate or mourn." Others, such as the prominent Syrian poet Adonis, question the hidden meaning of the uprisings without finding a clear-cut answer. Initially, Adonis had interpreted the uprisings as part of a broader historical, cultural, and civilizational struggle between Islamists and secular-leaning nationalists over the Arab identity; the pluralities of actors and outcomes soon left him asking: "Is the 'Arab Spring' an opening of an armed orchestra signalling a hundred-year internal Islamic war?"

As such it remains a challenging task to dissect and identify the assemblage of different and ongoing episodes of contentious politics, a task that requires researchers to critically reflect on the extent to which labels such as the Arab Spring or Arab Awakening do generate teleological, romanticized, or even orientalized notions, or whether they help us to pinpoint focal points for substantial assessments. Notably the events of 2010–2012 have also caused disagreement among scholars, as the processes of contention seem to call into question theoretical and methodological concepts just as they tear down long-held assumptions about the region.

Moreover, against this background a fierce debate has unfolded on the question of whether the episodes of contention in the Middle East are part of democratization processes. The field of democratization and transitional theories build upon a contending history and continues to be an often

emotionally oriented discussion over whether moral progress toward democracy in the region is possible or not. In particular, with regard to the numerous violent episodes and the ample appearance of extremist groups, like the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, some commentators still subscribe to a clash of civilizations reifying notions of "Middle Eastern exceptionalism." In contrast, scholars who have empirically shifted their focus to the politics "from below" noted already a decade ago how practices of contention against particular forms of governance have changed the terms of social contracts, albeit with limited success.

Following the uprisings in 2011 this bottom-up strand perceives the transition processes in terms of a "democratic faragh or void" that turned into a fierce power struggle. A critical challenge is that if scholars regard this situation as a void, how will then its democratic character unfold? There is no doubt, however, that social movements, civil society, and contentious indigenous actors are of crucial relevance with regard to any form of democratic transition as they are the subject of governance structures as well as the legal arrangements that people seek to change. According to Della Porta, "Collective mobilization has frequently produced destabilization of authoritarian regimes, but it has also led to an intensification of repression or the collapse of weak democratic regimes."[1]

Therefore, the choice and forms of repertoire by movements as well as their political opportunities are crucial; however, also important is how these uprisings are framed, like in the case of Egypt in which dignity was a central discursive intervention. Although the reference to fundamental norms of justice is certainly a call to be found in all of the uprisings throughout the region, their very meaning-in-use and normative substance remain hidden behind these frames and need further elaboration. A fundamental problem arises at the normative level of theory due to the question of (democratic) outcomes. In particular, researchers must clarify whether they regard "democracy" as a set of particular institutionalized settings to be reached or as ongoing processes of social practices in which normative premises are developed and which can play out in a variety of organizing principles. We must thus also take into account the growing and substantial literature that highlights the complex nature of the politics of "democratization" and point to the importance of developing theoretical approaches that reflect such complexity. This new theorizing aims to move beyond democracy, democratic consolidation, or transition literature, which again suffers from an in-built teleology, to

focus instead on process, state, and nonstate actors and their strategic choices. In his book *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization* (2007), Browlee, for example, takes a historical and institutional approach to look at the correlation between the existence of ruling parties and "durable authoritarianism" to show how the former are able to impede change. In his article "The End of the Transition Paradigm" (2002), Carothers provides a striking critique of the transition paradigm while authors like Diamond (2002) have used the hybrid-regimes framework to analyze Third Wave regimes. Recent contributions also clearly "warn against any easy assimilation"[2] of the Arab uprisings to past experiences like transitions in Eastern Europe.

However, the breakdown of existing governments is a crucial institutional and psychological moment, a part of the democratization puzzle. In a sense, this book seeks to highlight the effects of contentious politics as a social practice in its reshaping of ideas and normative premises that emerge among people in different contexts. This exercise will tell us more about the inherent changes of social order and the notions of legitimacy it created. Our core concern is thus to contextualize the episodes that are related to the uprisings in spatial and temporal terms on a local, regional, and global scale and thereby broaden the view on normative transformations. In contrast, a recent edited volume shifted its perspective on the explanation of the Arab Spring uprisings with a particular focus on the conditions enabling the pace and forms of mobilization in the region. Still, the types of repertoires have substantial impact on the very nature of protests and shape the trajectory of contention. Scholars have used repertoires to characterize the various tactics and strategies that contentious actors have developed and used in different historical periods to act collectively in order to make claims. This is a useful conceptualization, particularly in methodological terms because it allows researchers to approach episodes of contention.

Drawing on the knowledge about repertoires as ideas, practices, and frames, social movement theorists have then increasingly outlined the impact of internationalism and transnationalization on social movements and protests in the age of globalization. It is argued that the diffusion of repertoires between different countries also highlights the relation between global justice movements in Europe and the United States and the protests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and, hence, its transnational dimension. In his book *Why Occupy a Square? People, Protests, and Movements in the Egyptian Revolution* (2014), Gunning, for example, highlights how contacts

between some Egyptian activists with members of the Global Justice Movement who supported anti-Iraq protests in parts of the Middle East led to the diffusion of ideas between the different protest movements. While the regime initially tolerated the demonstrations against the war in Iraq, as well as protests against the Israeli occupation, activists saw an opening in the political space and began to form groups like Kefaya, shifting the focus away from external developments to the Egyptian regime itself.

Despite its methodological rigor, the state-centered focus causes normative problems with regard to the region as the very nature of the state is contested. In today's Middle East, Arab states are facing political upheavals, increasing challenges to the legitimacy of both state frontiers and domestic power structures, shifting and ever-changing political alliances, and sectarianism in a region fractured and plagued by interstate mistrust. While some states, namely Morocco, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, have for now—to some extent—managed to contain mass protests by either offering a few concessions and promising more reforms to come or lavishing on public spending, in most of them, the shadow of social explosion constitutes more than a threat; it remains a possibility. No country in the region is immune from the diffusion, even though some states are more resilient than others. Although country-based studies are one important way to understand the ongoing practices of contention and the way claims are communicated, it is crucial to place the struggles in a global context in which different forms of contention have been part of daily politics throughout history. Accordingly, structural differences shaping the possibilities of protest and hegemonic relations in the global realm do influence local varieties in the form and content of contentious politics. One of the aims of this volume is to show how particular realities are reproduced in which people perceive themselves to be acting and how they give meaning to their actions. As such, there is no essential difference between contentious politics and forms of resistance in the "Middle East" or in the "West" but for the different social contexts in which people act.

The notion of "diffusion" between states (and movements within these states) is therefore problematic because it is difficult for researchers to locate the beginning and diffusion of one particular repertoire. This challenge arises particularly in the context of the different social structures and socioeconomic conditions of protesters in the Middle East. In a sense, the term "movement" partly veils the dynamics of social interaction between people active in contentious politics, though they may not be part of an organized group. While

well-educated and young, urban citizens have played a substantial role in the creation of protests, the diversity of people participating in different countries is extensive in terms of age, gender, class, ideological background, level of education, and the urban-rural divide: "The movements to overthrow the dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Yemen were not characterized by a high degree of cohesion or formal institutionalization."[3] Against this complex background the variety in forms of contention and resistance is not always readily recognizable, but it needs careful contextual knowledge about the situation in which people find themselves. On the one hand, spectacular and visible acts of contention, such as violent struggles, demonstrations, or strikes are part of the repertoire used in the region. On the other hand, these forms are adapted only by segments of the protesting populace, and less "obvious" forms, such as acts of defiance, music, and art, have been identified as crucial for the formation of resistance as well.

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A HISTORY DENIED?

Despite the strength of their popular force, the uprisings came as a surprise. Both researchers and policy makers were caught napping. For years, waves of popular discontent calling for change and democracy had swept Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and even East Asia and Africa. In the absence of such revolts, in contrast, the Middle East had come to epitomize a despotic land where autocrats operated in their own political world, a universe where the people were pushed to the margins, with little agency or even hope for change, and where political apathy reigned supreme. The study of authoritarianism in the Middle East gained many converts as the region appeared frozen in time and space, with passivity becoming tautological to an Arab characteristic. Arab authoritarianism was seen as durable, thus distorting and biasing the lens through which political science looked at the area. Indeed, it is important to point out that countries like Egypt experienced a decade of protests that included preplanning and organization as well as brokerage among actors well before the 2011 uprising happened, none of which, however, came close to resulting in the regime change that took place in February 2011.

This dominant narrative failed to keep up with the social reality on the ground. A prime concern of the academics was the question of why people had taken to the streets. Economists have aptly shown that socioeconomic decay combined with political authoritarianism can trigger the revolutionary

aspirations of the masses to overcome the difficulties they encounter. Poor economic conditions, lack of basic needs, and unemployment of individuals belonging to various social classes turn participation in the political and social life for many into a difficult project. Yet, neoliberalism as a particular set of governance structures has been a striking condition of contention and has led to the political asphyxiation of the masses, creating an explosive mix of disillusionment, exasperation, and desperation. However, while this general feature created common objects against which people protested, the present book indicates how local contexts diverge in their reaction to the problems of severe economic crises caused by neoliberalism.

In this sense, it is crucial to highlight the structural economic policies and vulnerabilities of the region that have wrecked Arab societies over the last four decades, a dynamic that will continue to be a subject of contention for as long as the dismal social conditions remain the same. Movements decrying the policies of their government had for some time started to emerge, forcing political demands and debates into the public sphere. In Egypt, for example, the Kefaya (enough) movement appeared in 2004 and although it declined by 2007, the group had successfully transcended ideological barriers and overcome the taboos and apathy associated with political protests by uniting the Egyptians and forcing them out of their home and into the streets. The point to highlight is that the drivers behind the large-scale protests cannot be reduced to economic vulnerabilities, but have to be contextualized in a broader set of global dynamics, causes, and discourses. In particular, the power of norms, such as human rights, justice, equality, and dignity, has produced heated debates about its particular meanings in local contexts, as well as about the dynamics of (national) identities that have caused political struggles over existing borders and orders.

The first section of this book sheds light on how the region is contextualized through globalization and the (post-) colonial trajectories in a variety of aspects. In fact, contentious politics has a long history in the region where social movements have manifested themselves as short-lived popular uprisings and liberal openings as well. In Egypt, an anti-British Revolution took hold in 1919, followed shortly by the Great Uprising in Iraq in 1920, and later by the Great Syrian Revolt from 1925 until 1927. These movements may have been either prematurely crushed or forgotten by the dominant literature, but they have nonetheless shaped the politics of the respective countries in various ways within national settings and have also constituted a natural and powerful current in the Arab world's modern history.

When looking at the region and its protagonists, one ought to remember the Palestinian resistance movement and its struggle to end the Israeli occupation and establish the State of Palestine, a movement that has for long made use of the contentious politics repertoire. If, recently, Hamas's rocket attacks on Israel and the latter's crushing brutal response have dominated the headlines, one must not forget that the Palestinians have for decades been successful in mounting and sustaining a transnational protest movement within the framework of a coordinated organizational structure. While armed confrontation with the State of Israel and its security forces constitutes one tool of the movement's history, Palestinian resistance has been much more resourceful and diverse, and there are some Palestinian groups that identify themselves with nonviolent tactics of resistance. Perhaps, the ability of the Palestinians to sustain contentious politics can be explained in the diversity of the means they have used, with resistance becoming an everyday act, an act of survival. They provide a striking example of how different forces can come together to make use of the repertoire of contentious politics in different ways: look at the emergence of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which, following in the footsteps of South Africa, cultivates a collective action repertoire of boycott; or, take for example, protests against the Palestinian authority's neoliberal policies, the international aid industry, and the economic framework of the Oslo Peace Accords; or indeed the practice of citizenship as a strategy of resistance by the Palestinians living in Israel. The sources that provoke the emergence of contentious politics can also sometimes be unexpected. In Turkey, in 2013, for example, the attempted abolition of the Gezi Park in a central district of Istanbul gave rise to local protests that ultimately spread across the country, while in Lebanon, the planned reconstruction of Downtown Beirut by Soldiere led to vigorous local debates and grassroots mobilization against the project.

The dichotomy between the way we think about and perceive the Middle East and the social reality on the ground directly challenges the traditional epistemic and the oversimplified understanding of a very complex region and diverse peoples and communities. The upsurge of contentious politics in the Middle East and North Africa illustrates the need for an analytical framework that integrates informal notions and takes into account the restructuring power of popular forces as well as their diversity. One of the lessons learnt from the Arab uprisings is that far from being homogeneous, or only bifurcated along secularist-religious lines, the popular forces that came together

show a social in movement, where new and old identities mixed and used public space as a political space to express their demands. Notably, past social movement literature with regard to the region predominantly focused on modern Islamic movements. Although this scholarship has made important contributions, the recent uprisings remind us that it is more than just an axis for the coming together of women and men, poor and rich, urban and rural populations; the protests also provided a space for representation of ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and even provided an opportunity for the consolidation of a transnational Amazigh identity in North Africa. Others, more political but less-known identities, also came to the surface, breaking away from their marginal position in an attempt to inscribe their political discourse into the national political repertoire. Such cases include anarchist movements in Egypt or anticapitalist and revolutionary Muslims who took part in the Gezi Park protests in Turkey. Also, some forces, in contrast, did not stand out for their political ideas but for their long history of confrontation with the state security forces. Crucially, this indicates the necessity to engage with agency and its capacity to shape the form and trajectory of contentious politics, which structuralist perspectives are rarely able to explain.

In the context of the Arab uprisings, contentious politics can be used to analyze the role and complexities of popular agency, without neglecting its interaction and negotiation with structural factors such as the state or the nature of the regimes and the competing elite or foreign actors. This study can be a useful tool to bridge the structure-agency dichotomy and bring fresh perspectives in the literature of contentious politics. Yet, the framework to study contentious politics presents other questions that remain unanswered: How do we conceptualize power in the study of contextual contentious politics, especially with a colonial legacy in these environments? How do we move beyond the focus on domestic factors to look at global factors as well? How do we engage with the international? Is the study to be West-centric or Eurocentric with regard to its concepts, and how can we diversify the cases that are used to apply these concepts?

SCOPE OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into five parts. Part I examines the need to rethink the study on contentious politics. In chapter 1 ("Contention and Constitutionalization in the Global Realm: Assessing the Uprisings in West Asia and North Africa and Their Impact on International Politics"), Jan Wilkens reflects on existing

literature in the field of IR and Social Movement Theory (SMT) to argue that the Arab uprisings are not merely occurrences of claims making, but processes in which perceptions and imagination as well as normative assumptions central to dominant notions of international relations are substantially reshaped. The chapter argues that the uprisings show that an inductive and bottom-up research agenda sheds new light on the way IR scholarship is able to critically reflect on the constitutive effect of contentious politics in local contexts that are crucial for the normative substance of global politics. While protests take place in local settings, their norm-generative practice substantially reshapes notions of legitimacy in the global realm and, hence, affects processes of constitutionalization. In chapter 2 ("Reconceptualizing Resistance and Reform in the Middle East"), Mishana Hosseinioun offers a revisionist account of the Middle East and its dynamics. She examines the phenomenon of the diffusion and socialization of human rights norms and practices in the region, with particular reference to the case of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran to suggest that progressive movements desirous of human rights and freedoms form the natural current in the region's history. This chapter shows how fundamental norms increasingly create pressure on existing governments. The subsequent chapter by Anastasia Nosova ("Kuwaiti Arab Spring? The Role of Transnational Factors in Kuwait's Contentious Politics") shows how external dynamics have shaped and enabled contentious politics in Kuwait throughout the twentieth century. Accordingly, the processes in the region since 2011 have substantially facilitated the rise of the opposition, which utilizes the uprisings to mobilize movements within the country. The historical perspective in Aula Hariri's chapter ("The Iraqi Independence Movement (1918–1920): A Case of Transgressive Contention") indicates that contentious episodes are part of the region's history and that they took particular forms following the spread of European powers in the region. In Iraq noninstitutional patterns of contention have shaped the imagination of state-society relations despite the fact that colonial powers were able to underpin the fragmentation of social movements like the Iraqi independence movement.

Part II of the book looks at the effects and consequences of the internationalization of contentious politics. In Chapter 5 ("Contentious Politics and the Syrian Crisis: Internationalization and Militarization of the Conflict"), Jasmine Gani provides an analysis of the internationalization of the Syrian crisis, and considers the interaction between internal and external actors on both sides of the conflict and its impact on the outcome of the

crisis. In Chapter 6 ("Foreign Engagement in Contentious Politics: Europe and the 2011 Uprisings in Libya"), Inez von Weitershausen traces the activities of European powers throughout the 2011 Libyan uprisings to show that these ultimately reflect different European countries' national interests rather than a distinct set of common or more normative foreign policy objectives. In Chapter 7 ("Foreign Actors: A Double-Edged Sword Hanging over Contentious Politics in the Middle East"), Eugenio Lilli focuses on the protests in Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen and adopts a comparative approach to highlight the significant role and decisive influence that foreign actors played in the protests, their development, and outcomes. David Zarnett shifts, in the next chapter ("Transnationalized Domestic Contention: Explaining the Varying Levels of Western Solidarity Given to Kurds and Palestinians"), the perspective on to the international element of support for groups in the region, like the Kurds and Palestinians, struggling for their rights. In particular he problematizes the different abilities and limits of diaspora in the West and Western solidarity groups to mobilize and attract solidarity. In chapter 9, Suzanne Morrison ("The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement") provides an in-depth analysis of the international movement BDS, which employs a particular set of repertoires aiming to shape international politics toward Israel. She dissects the historical and political conditions that facilitated the emergence of this specific movement.

Part III of this book focuses on the role of collective identities and minorities in the politics of contention. In chapter 10 ("Contentious Copts: The Emergence, Success and Decline of the Maspero Youth Movement in Egypt"), Magdalena C. Delgado shows that, during the Maspero Massacre in Egypt in 2011, the Coptic movement Maspero Youth Union (MYU) reached a level of contention higher than that of any such movement in Egypt's modern history and argues that political opportunity theory goes a long way in explaining its emergence, success, and, ultimately, decline. In chapter 11 ("From Progress to Order: The 'Kurdish Openings' and the Limits to Contentious Politics in Turkey"), Oğuzhan Göksel analyzes the impact of the Kurdish social movement on the policy making of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) administration in Turkey and assesses its implication for the broader discourse on contentious and high politics. In chapter 12 ("Contentious Politics and Bottom-Up Mobilisation in Revolutionary Egypt: The Case of Egyptian Football Supporters in Cairo"), Suzan Gibril examines the ways by which a nonpolitical group of football supporters was brought to engage in a highly

political contentious struggle with the Egyptian authorities, alongside activists, protesters, and established social movements. In chapter 13 ("A Berber Spring: The Breakthrough Amazigh Movement in the Uprisings' Aftermath"), Cleo Jay studies the emergence of a transnational Amazigh movement and its development during and after the Arab Spring uprisings. The author analyzes the claim for a uniform Amazigh identity, in opposition to the pan-Arab one perceived as oppressive, and looks at the risks of co-optation of this movement both by regimes promoting it to counterbalance the rise of Islamism in the region and by foreign agencies.

Part IV of this book focuses on the role played by the social and political margins during episodes of contention. In chapter 14 ("New Modes of Collective Actions: The Reemergence of Anarchism in Egypt"), Laura Galián looks at the revival of anarchist movements in Egypt, with a special focus on the Libertarian Socialist Movement. In chapter 15 ("Muslim Groups in Gezi Park Protests: Identity Politics and Contentious Politics under Authoritarian Neoliberalism"), Ayşe Dursun examines the unprecedented antigovernment protest in Turkey in June 2013, which brought together activists from numerous social movement organizations and Muslim groups to test "identity politics" both as an approach to social movements and as a popular political discourse. In chapter 16 ("Claiming 'Marginal Space': The Contentious Politics of Citizenship among Palestinian Feminists in Israel"), Kim Jezabel Zinngrebe looks at how Palestinian feminists in Israel perceive and practice "citizenship" as a strategy of resistance and a tactic for realizing their personal and political interests and argues that these practices and perceptions demonstrate the contentious and contested nature of "citizenship" as an individual and collective claim and struggle for rights, duties, and opportunities. In chapter 17 ("Characteristics of Prolonged Social Movements: The Case of Gezi Park Protests"), Birce Altıok-Karşıyaka and Kerem Yıldırım also focus on the Gezi Park protests and argue that causal pathways for the initiation of the protests differed significantly from succeeding factors that prolonged the case. In chapter 18 ("Reassembling the Political: Placing Contentious Politics in Jordan"), Pascal Debruyne and Christopher Parker analyze the ways in which the wave of protests that emerged in Jordan in January 2011 is connected to the spatial rearticulation of statehood, and how these protests develop from militant particularisms to translocal assemblages of counterpower.

Part V of this book provides an account of the tools and strategies used to resist neoliberalism in the region. In chapter 19 ("Contentious Economics in

Occupied Palestine"), Alaʿa Tartir argues that in the aftermath of the post-2011 Arab uprisings, the political and economic protests in occupied Palestine constituted cycles of contention but failed to transform into a social movement for political and economic rights. Alaʿa also uses this case to operationalize the notion of contentious economics as an integral but distinctive feature in the concepts of contentious politics. In chapter 20 ("The Bottom-Up Mobilization of Lebanese Society against Neoliberal Institutions: The Case of Opposition against Solidere's Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut"), Hadi Makarem takes Solidere as a case study, the institution responsible for reconstructing Downtown Beirut after the end of the Lebanese civil war, and the debates and mobilization around it in order to identify the drivers behind them and what accounts for the bottom-up mobilization as opposed to top-down actions. Finally, in chapter 21 ("'Iftar' in McDonald's: The Everyday Encroachment of Cairo's Subaltern Cosmopolitans"), Harry Petit builds on everyday resistance literature in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as on the workings of Egyptian class dynamics, to show how the simultaneous incorporation and marginalization of the "subaltern cosmopolitan" middle class may ultimately be unleashing a new, as yet unseen consumption-orientated counterpower and the process of hegemonic contestation on the segmented urban landscape.

DEALING WITH A MOVING TARGET?

We, social scientists, are confronted with a moving target here. The changes that have taken place in the Middle East since 2010 are still unfolding with uncertainties and numerous turns. Tunisia seems to have regained relative stability and is the most equipped of the Arab countries to make the transition. This became evident following the election of a constituent assembly and the formation of a coalition government, which saw the Islamist party an-Nahda share power with two secular parties, and then the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2014 in which power was transferred peacefully. The mood in Tunisia's neighboring states, however, has darkened ominously.

In Egypt, the transition period has been tumultuous. In the aftermath of Mubarak's ousting, Mohamed Morsi was elected president but his inability to bring the country together under the leadership of the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood), coupled with deteriorating economic conditions, deeply polarized the country. As anti-Morsi protests surged, the military, keen to rehabilitate its image and prevent the Islamists from consolidating power, stepped in and

in the name of popular demand forced Morsi out, banning the Ikhwan and carrying out a systemic purge of the religious-based movement. Fresh elections and the reinstatement of another military man in power, Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, have done little so far to stop social decay, political malaise, and economic challenges and, more importantly, contention, though episodes have adopted different tools and strategies to avoid security crackdown and have become routinized, a frequent occurrence.

Dismal as they are, Egypt's conditions pale in comparison with the social, ideological, and sectarian fires, which are spreading in the Mashreq and the Maghreb threatening to devour existing states in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Sudan. In particular, Libya and Yemen face a precarious situation, oscillating between the risk of civil war and the threat of partition. Armed militia and tribes and parts of the armies battle one another for power and supremacy, with regional players, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and others taking sides and adding fuel to the raging fire. Meanwhile in Syria, the internationalization of the conflict and the militarization of the opposition did little to stop violence from spiralling and, with Assad at the helm, there is no end in sight. The large-scale and mainly peaceful uprising has turned into all-out war with the regional and the global war-by-proxy complicating an already complex conflict. The fragmented opposition failed to reach political consensus and efforts to build a diplomatic framework for negotiations collapsed with the failure of the Geneva-2 talks. Widespread chaos across the country and fragmentation of power among warlords have only helped the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and other militant groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, the affiliated arm of al-Qaeda Central.

In particular, ISIS has found a haven, a social base, in the heart of the Levant by exploiting the chaos in war-torn Syria and the sectarian environment in post—Saddam Hussein Iraq, as well as in a fierce new regional cold war between Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia and Shia-dominated Iran. It depicts itself as the vanguard of persecuted Sunni Arabs in a revolt against sectarian-based regimes in Baghdad, Damascus, and beyond, thus blending with the poor, local Sunnis. ISIS has amassed a sectarian army of more than 30,000 fighters, including core fighters and affiliates, and declared an Islamic caliphate in parts of Syria and Iraq, a landmass as large as the United Kingdom. It is also developing a rudimentary infrastructure of administration and governance in captured territories in Syria and Iraq and controls the life of approximately 5 million people. The puzzle is that ISIS' repertoires

of contention emphasize cruel and savage actions and tactics, which include beheadings, crucifixions, stonings, mass killings, abductions, sexual slavery, and religious and ethnic cleansing to the detriment of politics. In fact, ISIS's ultimate goal is to cancel politics altogether and install a totalitarian system of governance.

But for the purpose of this book, although ISIS is a manifestation of the political and sectarian turmoil triggered by the Arab Spring uprisings and the breakdown of state institutions, it is a creature of accumulated grievances and of ideological and social polarization and mobilization, decades in the making. As a nonstate actor, ISIS represents a transformative movement in the politics of the Middle East that will run its course. Its durability, even its future, is organically linked to internal and regional rivalries and power struggles that do not show signs of resolution soon.

In the meantime, there is a real danger that the Syrian fire might consume fragile Lebanon, which struggles to cope with more than a million Syrian refugees and a deepening internal rift fueled by the conflict in the neighboring country. Jordan is weighed down by a severe socioeconomic crisis complicated by more than 600,000 Syrian refugees and a blockage in the political system. Far from putting an end to contention, Bahrain's crushing of the opposition has postponed the evitable: a new social pact between the royal family and society. The government may have won the first round but street protests, petrol-bomb attacks, and other episodes of contention continue to roil the country, which hosts the US Navy's 5th Fleet and is part of the US-led coalition against ISIS. Although the Gulf monarchies have not witnessed episodes of contention on the same scale and intensity of Bahrain and the Arab republics, they are anxious about internal instability and Iran's ascendancy, as well as reverberations of the violent storms wrecking the Arab world. The new regional cold war between Saudi Arabia and Iran, coupled with the Arab civil war between the Islamists and the nationalists, has unsettled Arabia's rulers, despite their capacity so far to co-opt their public with financial incentives.

Despite important differences between Arab countries, none is immune to the diffusion of repertoires of contention. The Gulf monarchies have shown more resilience than the Arab republics, but are not bulletproof. A psychological and epistemological rupture has occurred in the Arab world in which the mood and temperament of the public have radically changed. The old social contract that governed relations between the rulers and those whom they ruled lies in tatters. A sense of empowerment permeates the ranks of

the youth and the poor, in particular, even though five years later despair has replaced hope and media images of beheadings by ISIS dominate the news cycles. It is extremely difficult to foresee the future turn of events given the disparity between high expectations generated by the revolutionary moment of 2010–2012 and the dismal socioeconomic and political conditions and counterrevolutionary efforts to maintain the authoritarian status quo.

One point must be made clear, however. This is a moment of contentious politics par excellence. Social turmoil, collective action, and politically driven violence will be a dominant feature of Arab and Middle Eastern societies in the next decade. There will be no closure in the foreseeable future and to expect otherwise would be to overlook the structural sociopolitical crisis that has been brewing for the last four decades and the fragility of institutions that have to be rebuilt and consolidated. Transition will be uncertain, prolonged, and fraught with risks and setbacks as the cases of Egypt, Libya, and Yemen show. Peaceful protests are being taken over by gritty violence and intense social and ideological struggles and the return of the military to politics, prompting commentators to question the impact and potential of the "Arab Spring" to move states away from authoritarianism. An underlying theme is that once again the Arab Middle East has reverted back to its original form of autocracy and factionalism. Even so, we as social scientists must be careful to not revert back to the tendency of political science of the Middle East, of employing structuralist explanations, lest we overlook important nuances and the complexity of the region's ongoing processes of transition.

As outlined in this introduction, the contributions seek to contextualize the uprisings in a broader historical and global web, rejecting teleological notions of development. The contributors empirically and analytically zoom into particular episodes to understand the diversity of social changes and unfolding turmoil in the region. The book contends that this approach is a substantial step to understand whether the "Arab Spring" has transformed the social in any way and if contentious politics can be understood as a form of emancipation. Moreover, despite theoretical innovation in contentious politics, key concepts in the literature need to be empirically applied to regions like the Middle East, and in that regard, it is hoped that this text makes a critical contribution.

NOTES

1. D. Della Porta, *Mobilizing for Democracy, Coparing 1989 and 2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 13.

2. See V. Bunce, "Conclusion: Rebellious Ctizens and Resillient Authoritarians," in *The New Middle East: Protests and Revolutions in the Arab World*, ed. F. Gerges (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 446–68.
3. J. Beinin, and F. Vairel (eds), *Social Movements*: *Mobilization and Contestation In the Middle East and North Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 5.

PART I

RETHINKING CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: HISTORY AND THEORY

1

CONTENTION AND CONSTITUTIONALIZATION IN THE GLOBAL REALM: ASSESSING THE UPRISINGS IN WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Jan Wilkens

INTRODUCTION*

This chapter introduces a reflexive research strategy outlining a critical approach that seeks to examine the impact of the uprisings in *West Asia and North Africa* (WANA)[1] on international politics. Although the protests and contentious politics are rather local in character, I argue that they are not merely occurrences of claims making, but processes in which perceptions and imaginations as well as normative assumptions central to dominant notions of international relations are substantially reshaped. Therefore, research on international relations has to engage with these processes and practices as they uncover normative shifts that are crucial for the legitimacy of politics, but are difficult to illuminate through dominant IR theories as they are often infused with a "Westphalian narrative."

The fact that *ordinary* people pour out into the streets and public places to articulate their claims and desires by contentious means is neither new in WANA and in other parts of the world, nor is it a recent phenomenon in history. The different ways in which people in various contexts have understood their current political situation and what according to them ought to be different in the future, as well as their opportunities and repertoires for

contention, have been analyzed by scholars of social movements in the past decades. While many contributions have produced multiple perspectives on the conditions of protest in national settings, globalization now seems to further change the "structure of opportunities, resources, and threats within which transnational contention is mobilised."[2] Hence, the increase in the number of transnational social movement organizations may indicate a growth in "global civil society."[3] However, are the recent uprisings simply another chapter in a series of events erupting in global politics? How can their transnational quality, which the collective label "Arab Spring" suggests, be assessed? Do the protests even indicate "globalization from below"[4] amplifying a new dimension of what has been described as processes of constitutionalization in the global realm?[5] Notably, scholars of Social Movement Theory (SMT) and Global Constitutionalism (GC)[6] are inspired by two crucial observations in world politics: (a) the changing nature of the state and its ability to conduct policies in national settings through processes of globalization and (b) how these undermine traditional understandings and forms of legitimacy since international governance structures claim authority without substantial checks and balances. As both fields of research are concerned with normative puzzles in the global realm, they are particularly enabling with regard to the study of recent protests. Notably, SMT invites scholars to reflect on available methodological frameworks and necessary indicators to grasp the diversity of contentious practices. GC, however, seeks to investigate the normative substance that emerges from these processes and to critically reflect on the quality of the changing relations between different forms of governance in the global realm and the people affected by them.

A critical examination of theories concerned with processes of globalization reveals, not only in light of the uprisings, substantial shortcomings caused by the predominantly "Western" context in which many concepts have evolved. I argue that the contentious politics unfolding in WANA since 2011 offers new insights to our understanding of international politics and its interrelation with processes taking place in nonformalized settings as opposed to those environments that many scholars of IR regard as more crucial for practices in global politics. However, many predominant IR theories fail to deliver a substantial grounding for an assessment because of their inherent *Eurocentrism* in assuming that particular structures and assumptions are impartial and are endowed with a particular normativity. Accordingly, it will be shown that a turn to Reflexivism[7] constitutes a fruitful

starting point to conduct the normative endeavor of evaluating constitutional quality in the global realm. This not only opens up an alternative to positivism but also helps to shed fresh light on the normative plurality and agency in settings "beyond the West."

Current research still has to come to terms with what has happened in the different countries of West Asia and North Africa. Yet, it appears as if many observers with a "global gaze" have already reconciled themselves to the comfortable and long-existing image of "Middle Eastern exceptionalism" in which the uprisings merely constitute a new twist in the narrative of anarchy and "resistance to progress," thereby constructing the image of an "Arab or Islamic winter" that has now affected the region. However, nonessentialist perspectives have identified several structures and processes in the global realm that shaped the possibilities of protest and continue to do so as events are unfolding. Accordingly, economic conditions,[8] the changing nature of communication,[9] and the international environment and its policies more generally[10] are identified as powerful factors. However, these—often top-down—perspectives tend to shed light on structures but fail to highlight the agency of the populace involved in contentious politics. It will be argued that the protests, uprisings, and contentious politics in the region create a powerful contestation of dominant narratives reflected in global discourses[11] and in itself is a process of constitutionalization in the global realm by the same token. Although it is unchallenged that the protests in different countries are interrelated, which led to the "Arab Spring" being described as a "domino effect [that] gained speed"[12] since 2011, questions about their transnational quality and their impact on international relations remain to be analyzed. This chapter seeks to contribute to and further the debate outlining theoretical and methodological considerations with regard to the protests and international relations. It also lays the ground for a research strategy that critically engages with the interrelation between the sociology and production of knowledge, the notion of scientific and theoretical objectivity, and normative puzzles emerging in the field of empirical research.

Given the simultaneous and transnational occurrence of the protests, it can be argued that they are potentially indicative of a changing constitutional quality in which *pouvoir constituant* and *pouvoir constitué* are decoupled. In the first place national constitutional orders and the institutions based upon them are being increasingly perceived as illegitimate, giving rise to strong movements of protest. However, international

governance structures have also turned into subjects of contestation. The protesting parts of the populace contest that the existing institutions (pouvoir constitué) really represent the people (the pouvoir constituant) and thus are calling for constitutional change. In these moves of contestation, I hypothesize with reference to the work on protest and social movements[13] that it is strongly inspired by protests going on in neighboring countries and submit that underpinning the process of protest are strong phenomena of mutual learning. Hence, a bottom-up mode of investigation in a nonformal environment allows us to uncover "hidden expectations"[14] by a multiplicity of actors. Accordingly, this endeavor seeks to show that an analysis of international relations and processes of constitutionalization has to account for social practices that take place not merely within more formalized settings, such as governments, international conferences (international) courts, international organizations, or among the diplomacy. Scholars of IR and GC have to take social movements and protests in a nonformalized environment seriously. While many approaches to global governance and processes of constitutionalization in the global realm follow a top-down logic, social movement literature indicates how societal practices of contention constitute a powerful element in the trans- and international realm, although they are often focused on protest networks that only partially reflect the involved actors in the uprisings.[15] However, at this juncture a critical engagement is necessary in order to assess the meaning of protests in the WANA region.

To this end the chapter is divided into the following sections in order to indicate, first, the complex issue of normativity with regard to research and second, it argues for a turn to Reflexivism. This constitutes the basic framework in order to introduce, in the third section, the concept of global constitutionalism that shows how contentious politics can reflect the process of constitutionalization. The subsequent sections seek to translate these theoretical considerations into methodological steps to outline a research framework for further study on the relationship between international and contentious politics in West Asia and North Africa.

REFLECTING NORMATIVITY

Attempts to make sense of past and currently unfolding events are, explicitly and implicitly, based on theoretical assumptions about reality. Hence, as any observation is structured through individual background knowledge as well

as constructed theories within academia, a "second-order interpretation" creates a particular puzzle in social science identified as "double hermeneutics."[16] Influential works in social science remind researchers across disciplines to scrutinize individually held knowledge and assumptions about reality. However, patterns in which background knowledge and normative assumptions have been operationalized within IR theories have only been discussed in a few works in which the ontologization of particular categories, like the state,[17] or the essentialization of culture and human being[18] have been contested. Yet, frameworks have often been constructed through hegemonic discourses into a specific "regime of truth,"[19] and they assume one particular modernity to be solely legitimate.[20] Thus, while offering "navigation," theory is a normative act in itself as it creates a particular story and constructs a narrative in order to give a specific sense and meaning to a context.

The "Middle East" appears to be represented[21] in different branches of social science. Crucially, this region has also been the empirical ground for major claims about the nature of international relations, ultimately underpinning dominant theories in this field. Kenneth Waltz argued in his seminal work that "whether in the second century before Christ or in the twentieth century after, Arabs and Jews fought among themselves and over the residues of northern empire, while states outside of the arena warily watched or actively intervened. To illustrate the point more generally, one may cite the famous case of Hobbes experiencing the contemporaneity of Thucydides."[22] Accordingly, the Realist's hypothesis of an anarchical international structure seemed to be *reality*, especially in this region.[23] With the emergence of Constructivist approaches, Michael Barnett criticized the sole focus on material power and showed how state identity is a further source of power in the "dialogues in Arab politics."[24] Reflecting both material and normative structures, another strand in IR sought to examine how "World Society and the Middle East"[25] as well as the 'International Society and the Middle East'[26] are interrelated. By emphasizing structures on a global scale these paradigms are focused on "important dynamics of contemporary globalization and how these affect the Middle East."[27] The aim here is neither an in-depth reflection on these accounts nor on examination tour de force through each theoretical claim about the region and IR theory. Rather, it is to highlight the relationship between the broader scope of theoretical contributions, as seen above, and the notion that the "Middle East" is imagined as a particular region from which a richness of "empirical data" can be derived. It is crucial to acknowledge

these approaches as an already available "mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imaginary, doctrines."[28] Accordingly, the present study is part of this discourse, but it aims to outline conceptual considerations that emphasize the relationship between theoretical assumptions and the production of knowledge. It is striking that many IR scholars, with different theoretical backgrounds, focusing on WANA have pointed to the problematic relation between theories developed in a Western academic discourse being applied on non-Western regions.[29] Nevertheless, because of the prime interest in (regional) order, the system, and the behavior of states, as well as international structures (a) little space is left to conceptualize agency and (b) this is a reflection on the theoretical shortcomings at a descriptive level but it factors out the normative substance of theories. As such "core categories familiar to IR, including the state, sovereignty, and territoriality, can be viewed as emergent phenomena, rather than as presocial, essentialized categories."[30] Hence, a *reflexive* approach to theoretical constructs that initially evolved in the European and North American contexts, like GC, is necessary in order to illuminate the underlying normativity. Notably, GC as an "academic artefact"[31] is a growing field of research that engages with normative puzzles in the global realm. It not only seeks to describe but also accesses the quality of social interrelations with regard to governance structures and the governed. Normativity is not limited to scholarship that explicitly promotes a particular project (e.g., a Kantian or Marxist) to mold global order but is also ingrained into many IR theories in an implicit manner. Accordingly, the epistemological and ontological conceptualization of many IR theories implies particular normative assumptions. However, they, first, do not acknowledge that the production of a given academic community is embedded in historical developments[32] and, second, tend to remain uncritical toward their Western background while marginalizing perspectives beyond the "West."[33] Why should GC then engender a critical debate, and how is it related to contentious politics?

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AS A PROCESS OF CONSTITUTIONALISATION?

Since globalization finds its expression in the increasing porosity of national boundaries and transgression of jurisdictions within states, scholars of international law, international relations, and global governance have turned their attention to the most visible outcome of these processes in the past decades:

international law and global institutions.[34] Grounded in legal theory, the notion of GC is predominantly discussed between international lawyers and political scientists to not only describe processes in the global realm[35] but also discuss normative problems[36] that emerge with constitutionalization.[37]

Accordingly, critical scholarship in the field of GC seeks to dissect three distinct academic fields, which are, however, interrelated in different forms depending on the context. Thus, such processes are identified in (a) most obviously, legal terms next to (b) political constitutionalization,[38] and (c) social processes in which the meaning of norms is shaped and constituted.[39] Crucially, there is a lack of substantial research on the latter, despite their constitutive effect on normative structures fundamentally shaping processes of constitutionalization.

Nevertheless, in most cases formal legal processes as well as the creation of new jurisdictions, or the reshaping of those already existing, serve as empirical grounds. Yet, fundamental puzzles of how legitimacy is constructed, whether with regard to particular legal arrangements or notions commonly related to modernity more generally, are not addressed. However, this forms a substantial element in the normative inquiry of constitutional quality. Accordingly, I argue that constitutionalization has to take into account social processes of norm solidification[40] in which fundamental norms and their meaning in the global realm hinge upon shared understandings evolving through social interaction[41] and are therefore not only likely to change over time but also give meaning to agency. These processes of normative changes also involve dynamics that reconstitute the imagination of groups and communities as these may reshape the sense of belonging.[42] Thus, a departure from state-centered and legal understandings is necessary in order to identify legal and normative pluralism that exists in local practices and that has not been fully reconstituted by "Western" discourses.[43] Thus, constitutionalization can be understood as a practice category that extends its empirical observation beyond legal processes and investigates contexts in which fundamental norms and their recognition as well as validation are reshaped.[44]

I, therefore, claim that mutual learning in contestation of existing constitutional orders can be described as a process of constitutionalization unbound, since notions of legitimacy and contestation travel across borders, offering protest movements in the WANA region a pool of shared values. In this regard they are international anchor points for these movements to rely upon in their contestation and to provide mutual assistance. The changing

quality of constituent power has to be explored as practices of claims making by the protest movements may indicate a new form of pouvoir constituant that is unbound from notions of the nation-state. Constitutional change on a national scale—and protest movements calling for such change—gradually becomes part of a transnational arrangement shaping these processes. However, it cannot be assumed that the protest movements are part of a deliberate act that is geared toward a determined goal but rather they represent an example of "a disorderly spread of constitutional principles and norms in the global realm (i.e. a terrain that is not traditionally linked to constitutional values, a constitution, or addressed by constitutional theory)."[45] Arguably, such constitutionalization challenges the legitimacy of constitutional orders and indicates actorship that is decoupled from the state. This argument is based on the indicators of constitutional quality, which are (a) the external source of authority and shared normative background as well as (b) the emergence of a constituent power legitimizing the existing institutional order and the norms governing their operations.[46] The processes of unbound constitutionalization bring a new plurality of actors to bear in on the global as well as the national realm. Ultimately, GC seeks to inquire the consequences of globalization with regard to the changing nature of global governance, yet moves further as it understands this as a normative puzzle for those who are affected by it. This reflects the point of convergence to classical constitutional theory that describes the institutional and legal framework of government (pouvoir constitué) but is fundamentally interested in its quality in relation to the people (pouvoir constituant) who are governed by it. GC accordingly highlights the need for scholars of international relations to engage with this normative puzzle because of the increasing number of structures that claim authority in the global realm.[47]

However, this perspective on constitutional quality contests traditional, state-based notions that emerged through legal scholarship in Europe and the United States. However, the centrality of the state and its perception as given in various other approaches of international relations[48] and international law[49] constitute severe weaknesses and obscure perspectives on practices in non-Western regions. Yet, the value add of GC also hinges upon its perspective on the state and related conceptions that carry certain normative understandings of a particular modernity. This can be seen, notably, in dominant notions that have been produced in the context of a *Westphalian discourse* in which a variety of perspectives has reflected on how the state is undermined

and whether global legal arrangements can adjust the "democratic deficit." However, this static focus on Westphalian modernity fails (a) to account for the emergence of the state system and related experience in non-Western regions like West Asia and North Africa[50] and (b) does not consider the variations of how legitimacy is constructed. Notably, as a result of colonialism and postcolonialism, the state in the region is substantially "endowed with external legitimacy, having fulfilled some requirements of the Westphalian and Weberian templates after independence, namely a combination of internationally demarcated and recognised borders (along with the regalia of state such as flags, armies, national anthems, coat of arms, etc.) and a centralised authority backed up by coercive and legal might."[51] Accordingly, the empirical inquiry into the uprisings needs to cut its ties from "state foundationalism" and "methodological nationalism" in order to enable itself to indicate how legitimacy is reconstructed through contentious politics,[52] which ultimately engenders power shifts in regional and global politics. A central element of the uprisings, I argue, is their transnational character with regard to processes of mutual assistance in their contentious repertoires[53] as well as the reconstruction of legitimacy through social interaction beyond state borders. However, at the same time the meaning of the state in the demand for justice, equality, and human rights by the protesting parts in the region can only be understood if the contentious legacy of the state system is acknowledged.

As "Westphalian modernity," including the state system and international governance structures, evolved; its power, especially through the normative claim, a "dialectical dual structure,"[54] emerged as it continued to create hopes for a better life and constituted a tool for the repression of people at the same time. Thus, it is not only the state that is key for "modernity" and "progress"[55] but also international law, which seems to be the path of emancipation in world politics. Eurocentric perceptions described the interrelation between progress, (international) law, and the institutionalization of sovereign states as a "natural" token that eventually implements "modernity." This teleological discourse conceptualized material, social, and moral "progress" as a conditional triangle and served to legitimize the colonial project.[56] This part of a process that is described elsewhere as a "practice of legality."[57] Accordingly, it is not only formal sources such as documents or courts that are decisive in creating laws, but practices of social interaction too generate perceptions of norms. Hence, with the Westphalian system, "export" international law discourses "established an economy of 'truth'"[58] denying the agency of other

polities and established their own as the sole possible framework for organizing societies in a "civilized" manner. Thus, it created modes of repression and imposed constraints on people in non-Western parts either in patterns of (a) direct control,[59] which have led to various protests in the region throughout its (post-) colonial history, or (b) imposed fundamental patterns of organization and a particular "legitimate" and "civilised" language.[60] This created a complex trajectory for people in West Asia and North Africa as it meant the "invisible constitution of politics,"[61] which often resulted in multiple struggles shaped by contending meanings attached to norms and ideological commitments claiming to take the right steps toward modernity. This legacy is often neglected or not taken seriously by "Western" observers. However, the current uprisings, I argue, constitute a radical new situation that is placed against this historical background as it creates new discursive and civic spaces for larger parts of societies in the region in which the meaning of modernity and legitimacy is (re-)negotiated, by violent and nonviolent means. The strong claim of the protesters for a "functioning and democratic state" not only amplifies the ongoing power of the dialectical structure but also characterizes the agency of the protesters as an "internal" legitimacy is reconstructed, reshaping the constraining nature of the dialectical process for predominant states in international politics. GC has aptly been criticized for telling a story about the development of international structures that "in certain ways evokes Romanticist landscape painting."[62] However, this criticism focuses on a narrow understanding reflecting normative debates and taxonomic approaches to *constitutionalization of law*. The uprisings in West Asia and North Africa exemplify the nonteleological and often contradictory processes of constitutionalization in the global realm, taking place in phases of the very contestation of hegemonic politics.

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

The interaction of state practices and those of the protesters no longer necessarily overlap through which predominant notions of citizenship become subject to change. Analyzing the meaning-in-use[63] of citizenship is crucial as it indicates that the community and its citizenry are the pouvoir constituant that ultimately constitutes the first indicator of constitutional quality. Although the notion of "Westphalian modernity," in which nation and state are inextricably linked with each other, is substantially contested in numerous

contexts within the region,[64] its perception nevertheless creates a strong influence on the imagination of space and, as mentioned, on the image of a modern and just society.[65] Accordingly, individuals in the region, as elsewhere, are primarily supported and constrained by their "national environment." Yet, protest and political engagement can be transformative and can become "the hinge between the world of states and one in which stateness is no more than one identity among many."[66] Political opportunity structures (POS), which "is regime structure as considered from the perspective of a potential maker of claims,"[67] in a national environment as well as in an environment that emerged through the imagination of internationalism[68] have substantial implications for the nature of the protests. However, if normative implications and the meaning of norms that people in the WANA region are protesting for and are enacting in their daily lives are taken seriously, a positivist inside-outside logic that state-centered approaches assume fails to uncover shifts in the imagination of the constituents. In this sense protesters, movements, and claim makers "are viewed as signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers."[69] However, in the current uprisings in the region research has also to account for the agency of "ordinary people."[70] Thus, it is argued that the weaknesses of many social movement theories are (a) their tendency to emphasize on structures, leaving agency aside and (b) their focus on networks and movements, whether loosely organized or institutionalized, which is unable to address large sections of the protesters in the region acting not merely within a "formal terrain that political science usually studies."[71] Further, the focus on repertoires is rather useful in methodological terms but (c) only pursues a "thin" analysis of norms being articulated in a particular context. This, however, is a substantial part for an empirical engagement in order to assess the transnational quality characterizing the relation among protesters across state borders that eventually make visible contexts of constitutionalization. It is crucial to identify the diversity of contentious practices enacted by "informal networks based on common beliefs and solidarity"[72] and "ordinary people." Approaches to "repertoires" are understood as an indicator in order to conceptualize the generation of empirical data. Here, the diffusion of repertoires may indicate a transnationalization of protests.[73] Interaction is based upon shared knowledge of existing opportunity structures and prior instances of political contestation.[74] The way claims are presented in contentious politics as well as their content, linking the claim and its addressee over

a particular issue, constitute a learning process that delineates forms of social knowledge and contains normative claims regarding the manner in which politics is to be organized.[75] However, drawing on critical scholarship of Constructivism the process of how norms are enacted and perceived—in these cases visibly expressed in claims—is at the ontological center that ultimately brings to the fore hidden expectations indicating processes of constitutionalization. Thus, discursive practices that are "borrowed, nurtured, translated, and transformed across borders"[76] reflect not only local specificities but also the transnational character of the uprisings. Yet, an initial puzzle is to identify contentious practices in the region that have been assessed from a variety of academic perspectives.

CONTENTIOUS PRACTICES IN WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA

Dealing with this variety triggers the need to get a better understanding of the relation between the different terms contestation, contentious politics, struggle, and resistance. A clearer description is not only required in theoretical terms but also conducive for a better understanding of political developments such as the "Arab Spring." *Contestation* describes the broadest understanding of objection against existing and predominant norms and their meaning. However, contestation can be articulated or unarticulated and hence takes place in different contexts ranging from formalized, such as legal objection in courts, to nonformalized settings, such as the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (*Bayat*) into public spaces, and social practices in which norms are "simply" neglected or disregarded.[77] In contrast, contentious politics, involving struggle and resistance, refers to visible and communicated contestations—although sometimes not readily recognizable—in order to achieve change from within a political context or is geared toward change of the political order itself. It refers to the *art of expression* and the *repertoires* through which contestation is expressed and hinges upon the political and social contexts in which it emerges. However, as "power clothes itself for much of the time in the guise of normality,"[78] research needs to be aware of diverse notions of normality in particular contexts in order to dissect contentious politics and its complex relation to hegemonic structures.[79] Accordingly, reflexive scholarship on international politics has the difficult task of critically engaging with its own predominantly "Western normality" expressed in theoretical approaches to identify enacted meanings in non-Western regions potentially expressing alternative understandings of modernity.

Literature about contentious politics in the region tends to remain within the confines of state boundaries or focuses on particular groups. Regarding the WANA region the issues of social movements, civil society, and resistance have in different accounts been dealt with in terms of their form and asked whether contentious politics are conducted by violent or nonviolent means. In this light, different countries like Algeria[80] or Egypt[81] among many others have served as country-based case studies. Further studies have focused on specific groups and their relation to violence, like Hamas[82] or Hizballah.[83] In this regard, it is not only important that instances of claim making have to be contextualized as they are embedded in a repertoire of performances but also that forms of claim making in the WANA region are more diverse, especially with respect to nonviolent practices.[84] Further, scholars have pointed out that not only particular groups, often perceived as hierarchically structured, but also "ordinary people" have to be considered as part of the protesting populace.[85] Hence, perspectives on nonformalized environments shed light on the meaning of societal structures for processes of constitutionalization.

A crucial normative frame and hence an important point of reference for claim making in the region is religious norms. However, according to the described approach of contextualized meanings in social theory, its actual enactment in social practices has to be assessed in particular circumstances.[86] Notably, "Islam" is a subject of research not only with regard to specific fundamental norms, like human rights[87] and (international) law, but also with regard to its meaning in "constitutional" terms.[88] Accordingly, it is crucial to investigate the meaning-in-use of norms in a given context. Yet, a perspective that is limited to religion, even if it acknowledges its diversity, may reinforce particular narratives as other normative frameworks are at stake too.[89]

In light of the events that have been labeled "Arab Spring" the discourse on religion, civil society, and claims to particular norms in the region has witnessed new turns and twists. At the current stage some observers find confirmation in metatheoretical assumptions based on the idea of a "clash of civilisations."[90] However, others have identified the "Arab Spring" as a major shift with regard to power in global politics and a turn toward more decentralized structures on a global plane.[91] Hence, these events may stand for another indicator of postmodernity in a globalized world in which certain norms are grounded.[92] But empirical work is lacking and research has to produce contribution as the actual meaning-in-use needs to be explored through extensive empirical studies as some contributions have pointed out with regard

to Egypt[93] and Syria[94]. However, the transnational character and processes of social interaction beyond state borders remain to be analyzed in depth.[95]

TRANSLATING THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO METHODOLOGICAL STEPS

In light of the politics of contention in West Asia and North Africa the question arises whether this is accidental or part of a process that envisions alternative forms of politics that may include forms of community other than the modern coupling of nation and state. On the one hand, research on politics of contention comprises theoretical findings in the realm of social movement theory, international relations theories with a particular focus on the "sociology of knowledge," and concepts of community, drawing on insights from social movements' literature regarding the inherent normativity of movements and the constructed nature of groupness as well as polities. On the other hand, it critically assesses empirical findings in the different cases of protests, but still needs to address "methodological nationalism," which prevents the emergence of new perspectives on social practices that are not limited to the nation-state. In contrast, this contribution seeks to further interpretive methodologies,[96] thereby paying special attention to the meaning of soft institutions as they are indicative for processes of constitutionalization with regard to societal structures that other approaches to constitutionalism do not consider.

Departing from the work on "citizenship practice" as a three-dimensional concept including rights, access, and belonging,[97] and on the contested quality of norms,[98] I argue that a perception of membership in a political community does not have to coincide with the structures of a polity.[99] Especially the notion of the "modern nation-state," assuming congruence between existing state structures and a pouvoir constituant that is bound by it, often expressed in constitutional texts, is increasingly contested because of the diversity of identities existing in a state.[100] In light of this, it has been argued that community refers to something that is imagined extending beyond face-to-face social encounters of an individual and often containing emotional commitments.[101]

In order to answer the question on whether and how contentious politics in different political contexts amount to a pouvoir constituant unbound from the state, further research needs to account for more sociological approaches. This position is demarcated by a commitment to the interpretivist and

sociological turn in IR claiming that "the only viable option [for Global Governance research consists of] opening up the positivist epistemology to more interpretive strains."[102] This argument prompted an engagement with meaningful action and with inquiries into the relationship between the social world and the construction of knowledge.[103] This commitment has consequences for research as it includes what is referred to as a "double hermeneutics": any *action* observed is regarded as interpreted interaction between socially embedded actors. Any observation that researchers undertake from such action is a second-order interpretation.[104]

The move toward interpretive approaches was undertaken in disciplines other than IR more thoroughly, which is why it is crucial to draw on them conceptually in order to advance research on protests in the region. The engagement with the formation of a pouvoir constituant and pouvoir constitué addresses questions of "groupness" and political order. The former usually portrays development in a bottom-up direction, while the latter reverses this scenario. Influential groundwork in this regard was laid by authors like Anderson, who discussed different accounts of nationalism and its emergence as forms of community (as a forerunner of a pouvoir constituant).[105] Questions of a pouvoir constitué that may be co-constitutive but also at times historically prior to a pouvoir constituant are addressed in analyses of emerging administrative organizational settings and cultural patterns to which the settings give rise.[106] What these strands have in common is a commitment to question primordialist and essentialist notions of group formation. They also reject a Hegelian teleology of the development of political order. At the same time, contextual settings are highlighted such as (a) existing administrative or educational organizations, (b) means of communication, which make it possible to create and circulate ideas and concepts giving rise to notions of belonging, and finally (c) the contested nature thereof addressing questions of legitimacy and participation. Accordingly, it is argued that research needs to focus on the way in which ideas and concepts of belonging are expressed and contested. It is crucial to find out how and where these are expressed as well as by whom and toward which audience. These questions converge around the fundamental norm of citizenship and on "citizenship practice," which has already been subject to different works in IR theory and community formation.[107] At the same time, and contrary to prevailing approaches in IR, these writings highlight that boundaries and forms of states as well as communities are historically contingent and cannot be taken for granted. The

following sections thus discuss, first, methodological concerns regarding the constructed nature of social relations. Yet research has engaged foremost in areas in which knowledge and normative connotations are not contested. The argument of contention with the existing literature holds that communities are taken as given and in existence. Hence the danger is to reify them through a particular research methodology. What is required instead is an open-ended approach that considers what is discussed previously in terms of processes of learning. Ultimately, this opens up the possibility of reconsidering agency in "non-Western" contexts, which may challenge previously held assumptions about globalization.

"SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE" IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Behavioral approaches hold that interaction occurs between autonomous and utility-maximizing individual units of analysis, usually states. Culture is considered as merely an independent variable that influences behavior. This research typically proceeds along a binary logic, asking whether actors comply with a particular norm or not.[108] Because this research takes socially constructed categories as a given, it does not provide empirical access points to questions that concern the construction of knowledge and shared meanings.

Hence, underpinning the critique of Kantian approaches to international relations, I argue that there cannot be an *ex ante* constellation for fundamental norms in which actors participate and whose meaning they share because of the inherent quality of these norms. An interpretive methodology holds that research "focus[es] on the social construction of a practice through the ability of individuals to create and act on meanings."[109] Accordingly, theoretical and methodological considerations have to account for "the ways in which social practices are created, sustained, and transformed through the interplay and contest of the beliefs embedded in human activity."[110] Norms are contingent on the situated agency in which they are meaningful and/or contested. Agency is situated because of the set of beliefs individuals inherit, commonly referred to as "tradition." As social movement research informs us, even forms of political contention need to be learned. Hence, the way claims are presented in contentious performances as well as their content, linking the claiming and their addressee over a particular issue, are constituted as learning processes that delineate forms of social knowledge.[111] Thus, recent contributions in IR have claimed that the analysis has to include documents. It further demands to look at practices, defined as "socially recognised forms

of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly and incorrectly."[112] Knowledge is a tacit resource, a "knowing-how" that resembles intuition, and is often unarticulated as people in particular discursive practices, such as the protests in North Africa and West Asia, hold a stock of background knowledge, which overlaps as a result of a common history of interaction.[113] Taken-for-granted meanings are recovered by way of an inductive process that follows the logic of inquiry of Grounded Theory.[114] Thus, with regard to methodology, scholars need to *re-construct discursive practices* in which particular intersubjective meanings of norms and shared beliefs have evolved and developed through social interaction in a spatial and temporal context. Accordingly, this approach offers an analysis of normative shifts that enable and constrain political processes. Such a methodological proceeding of discourse analysis seeks (a) to operationalize a structured view on interpretation[115] and (b) entails different methods in order to acquire empirical data.[116] In case of the "Arab Spring," a first hermeneutical step could be a series of "expert interviews" with social scientists and historians from the region in order to get a better understanding of the local processes and actors involved, which would complement knowledge gained from the analysis of secondary literature and the range of available resources published online. In a subsequent move, different actors related to the protests are to be interviewed to gain information about the normative structure of meanings attached to norms. At this stage a "thick" analysis of the claims made can be conducted. However, as the richness of produced and acquired texts is difficult to handle, a choice has to be made to limit data to be based on comprehensive arguments. Although this very brief outline of methodological considerations and methods that can be evoked is not exhaustive and needs a more precise description, it nevertheless indicates that (a) theoretical Reflexivism can be translated into methodological action, which (b) allows for new understandings and findings ultimately opening up the question about dominant assumptions in IR.

As the theoretical discussion has indicated, it cannot be anticipated how and if communities and political order develop unless we take a close look at how a common knowledge of the world and a sense of common identity that draws on such common knowledge emerges and circulates—giving rise to a pouvoir constituant and containing a vision of a pouvoir constitué. Hypothetically, such processes do not halt at what are conventionally identified as the boundaries of states—even less so if communication has become

transnationalized. In the case of the uprisings the question arises as to how normative structures and meanings of norms fundamental to international politics have shifted through contentious politics. The indicated steps are proposed as a prime move toward an answer to these questions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The region of West Asia and North Africa has experienced politics of contention throughout its history in different temporal and spatial contexts and in different forms. Nevertheless, social science has to grapple with the events now famously labeled the "Arab Spring." One challenge is to dissect the variety of developments in different countries. However, this chapter has sought to further the debate on the trans- and international quality of the uprisings and its potential meaning in the global realm. Contentious politics has only gained little attention in many IR theories. Yet, the uprisings do not simply involve interest-based or strategic groups that sought to advance their aims. I have argued that it is a specific moment in which processes of constitutionalization in the global realm take place. Especially in phases of contentious politics, notions of legitimacy and normative assumptions that are perceived as "modern" in international politics are reshaped through contestation in local contexts. These processes should not be understood as merely legal or political dynamics in settings that conventional political theories are often focused on. Departing from the observation about social movements and their inherent normativity as well as the changing nature of notions about legitimacy that are constantly reconstructed, a bottom-up mode of investigation not only promises to uncover hidden expectations by a multiplicity of actors but also indicates power shifts because of the changing constitutional quality in the global realm. As such it is a local site in which the global takes place and thus makes it inevitable for IR to refocus its attention.

In order to create a reflexive and contingent research framework, a substantial reflection on the situatedness of theory itself is proposed as a first step. This is indispensable as theories carry normativity, which constrains the perspective on contentious politics entailing normative claims. A case in point here is state-centered approaches that would obscure a perspective on the possible meanings of the uprisings. Generally, this indicates the danger of reifying concepts that are taken for granted in "Western" terms but fails to uncover the meaning of local practices. Given the inherent normativity of the uprisings, it is crucial to assess the normative puzzles of legitimacy in the global realm.

However, theories of global governance have rarely engaged with this problem; yet they often tacitly work with normative assumptions[117] that implicitly assume a particular modernity to be legitimate. An effort has been made in this chapter to outline an understanding of Global Constitutionalism that moves beyond its traditional provenance in Western legal theory in order to indicate the importance of social interaction in the process of constitutionalization that is unbound from the state. It further offers an approach to engage with the normative puzzles in the global realm as it not only analyzes governance structures and the governed but also seeks to qualify the relation between the two. The pouvoir constitué in national settings and also institutionalized authorities in the global realm are perceived as illegitimate by the protesting parts of the populace, which also reshapes the notion of the people or the pouvoir constituant. Here people are inspired by what is going on in neighboring countries and new discursive spaces are opened up in which notions of legitimacy cross borders and constitute anchor points for protesters to rely upon. However, the focus on the "state" by the protesters in different countries also indicates a shift in the construction of legitimacy, which ultimately engenders a power shift in the global realm and may reveal alternative and contending visions in contrast to the "Westphalian modernity." However, this implies substantial empirical research in order to bring the meanings of norms enacted by protesters to the fore and to account for a plurality of perspectives.

It has been proposed to draw on scholarship of social movements in order to conceptualize practices of contention as a first methodological step. This is crucial to understand where internationality takes places apart from settings usually examined and the patterns in which discursive practices take place within national settings and where they cross them. Accordingly, to account for a plurality implies the prevention of "methodological nationalism" that would rather contribute to the reification of taken-for-granted concepts. Yet, practices of contention can reveal the transnational character of the uprisings. However, departing from Social Movement Theory, interpretive approaches in IR reveal the process of how norms are enacted and perceived and brings to the fore the processes of constitutionalization. The aim of this chapter is to present a new perspective about research on IR and contentious politics in West Asia and North Africa. However, only initial steps have been outlined here for a broader debate in this field. The challenge and the next step is to translate this endeavor into a research program and to generate empirical data, which are still lacking, about the uprisings in the region.[118]

NOTES

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1. The terms "West" and "Middle East or MENA" have many connotations and are constructions contingent on sociopolitical contexts and processes. West Asia and North Africa (WANA) will be used instead; compare P. Bilgin, "Whose 'Middle East'? Geopolitical Inventions and Practices of Security," *International Relations* 18, no. 1 (2004); A. Adib-Moghaddam, *A Metahistory of the Clash of Civilisations: Us and Them beyond Orientalism* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2011), 172.
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2

RECONCEPTUALIZING RESISTANCE AND REFORM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Mishana Hosseinioun

THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS IMPERATIVE

Elements of a human rights discourse and culture are currently on the rise in the countries of the Middle East, which recognize the value of such norms and practices both internally in their own domestic affairs and internationally. Notably, there is an increased emphasis among Middle East states on ingratiating themselves with international forums, such as the United Nations, which place a high value on human rights as a marker of state legitimacy within international society. This soft power imperative is of particular salience in the post–Arab Spring era, when regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are scrambling to preserve their waning legacies and win back lost political capital. The *human rights imperative*, more specifically, has become central in the wake of heightened manifestations of mass civic dissatisfaction, which have only acted to highlight region-wide rights deficiencies. When state survival is at stake, the onus of rights responsibility is greater on regimes that have been exposed as the greatest violators of human rights. So, adopting the mantle of human rights is as much a matter of aesthetics as of ethics.

The rights dynamics witnessed today in the MENA region can be traced back to the genesis of the international human rights system in 1948. Historically, the participation of Middle East states in the drafting of the International Bill of Human Rights and of the Arab Charter of Human Rights flung open a virtual floodgate of universal rights norms and practices in the region. This had the effect of inviting greater international and local scrutiny of human rights practices in Middle Eastern societies and of generating greater demands for human rights reform by "norm-entrepreneurs" and the like. It also, in equal degree, resulted in much governmental backlash against the perceived infringement of state sovereignty or imposition

of "Western ideals." Yet, there is enough evidence pointing to an organic human rights current across the region to invalidate any arguments that seek to reject human rights principles on grounds of cultural relativism or imperial conspiracy. It would also challenge the prevailing view within the contentious politics literature that progressive social movements and rights-related reform only tend to emerge within democratic societies or, indeed, *Western* societies.[1]

The aforementioned current corresponds with Finnemore and Sikkink's explanation of the "life-cycle" of norms, involving a "norm cascade," which eventually reaches a "tipping point" and results in "norm internalization."[2] What the norm cascade model fails to account for, however, is the co-constitutive nature of the "cascade." This includes, namely, the fact that the cascade does not necessarily flow in a linear pattern or originate from outside influences; neither do norm-entrepreneurs arise "randomly." As this chapter will examine, with specific reference to the cases of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran, indigenous human rights cultures sprout up in direct, natural opposition to regressive and repressive forces and are often paradoxically strengthened by this diametric resistance. The element of contention, therefore, arises from bottom-up acts of resistance—some overt, others covert, some spontaneous, others organized, some individual, others collective—against the socioeconomic and/or political status quo that curbs individual rights, and from the top-down efforts to stem or to co-opt these growing progressive tides, which are steadily eroding the legitimacy of authoritarian systems.

The state system, on the one hand, and the subjects of the state, on the other hand, exist in a dialectical relationship in which decisions taken at the top are intimately connected to the acts and rights demands, for instance, of elements at the bottom. This dialectic is not outwardly apparent considering that these opposing top-down/bottom-up elements are often grossly misaligned and seemingly working against one another. Yet, upon closer inspection, they are linked by a battle over the allocation of rights, freedoms, and sovereignty, and other social and economic "goods" and entitlements. The power disparity between these countervailing forces also leads to the grassroots currents being obscured from view or stifled altogether.

Evidence of these contentious dynamics is to be found in the varied manifestations of region-wide calls for greater rights and freedoms in the Middle East and North Africa, and the equally varied responses of governments to these pleas. Acts of contention, however, are not limited to protests and demonstrations but are ever present (even if dormant) inbuilt as they are within

the state/subject dialectic. Seeing that the *raison d'état* of states, almost universally, is to maximize power, humans, by mere virtue of living and breathing, pose an inherent challenge to the state's ability to exercise unlimited control. Thus, the imagined, utopian global *social movement society* already arguably exists as an organic, universal metamovement of all of the world's citizens striving for the actualization of their lives and realization of their rights, in whatever form that may be.[3]

Domestic and regional human rights schemes and reforms, which appear to be the self-generated initiatives of governments, are most often shaped, directly or indirectly, by the normative, popular climate in which they find themselves. Similarly, while government participation in human rights schemes, domestically and internationally, is on the surface "voluntary," given the lack of any real global enforcement mechanism, the impetus for participation necessarily entails a combination of endogenous and exogenous factors. Sometimes civil society actors or other domestic or international actors nudge states along the path to progressive human-rights-based reform, often by first demanding more transparency, followed by greater accountability and, eventually, by legal guarantees and mechanisms for the systematic protection of human rights.

The bottom-up efforts of civil society, from labor movements to women's rights activists, and the unprecedented convergence of these different entities confirm the change from below thesis proposed by Asef Bayat, Sidney Tarrow, and other proponents of the social movement theory.[4] This includes, for instance the instrumentalization of the language of human rights, freedoms, and dignity for popular mobilization as seen during the 2009 Iranian Green Movement and the 2011 Arab uprisings.[5] As evidence of the increasing socialization of rights norms across the region, states will also independently recognize the prudential value of adopting a more "human-rights-friendly" set of policies, or acceding to international human rights protocols in an effort to attain the goals of enhanced legitimacy abroad, which translates into better political and foreign direct investment opportunities, for instance, and legitimacy at home. As will be seen, the extent to which states either uphold or fail to honor their rights promises serves as a central node of contention in modern Middle East statecraft.

THE PARADOX OF RIGHTS PROGRESS AMID REGRESS

The raft of violations tarnishing the rights records of Middle Eastern countries, from the states within the Arab League to Israeli-occupied Palestine and

the Islamic Republic of Iran, would on the surface seem to indicate an overall regression in the area of human rights and freedoms.[6] However, it becomes possible to view the situation from a different perspective than the one to which we might be accustomed. Such a view envisages a zigzagged staircase-like progression, with intermittent jagged landings, and roadblocks, but otherwise following an upwardly mobile path in the general direction of greater rights allowances.

This view is consistent with Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Ziblatt's conception of the "democratic turn" and, by extension, the process of liberalization as consisting of an amalgam of different steps, some jagged and recessed, as opposed to following a straightforward, linear path.[7] When examined from this holistic point of view, the international rights landscape since the two World Wars and the establishment of the international human rights regime follows an overall progressive, if nonlinear, trajectory speckled with intermittent pitfalls and drastic periods of regression. A similar "human rights turn" could be said to be underway in the Middle East region spanning from North Africa to the Persian Gulf, counting among its achievements the Arab Charter on Human Rights of 1994, as well as other local rights schemes. Formal and informal civil society movements and organizations dedicated to the promotion and protection of rights from free speech to gender equality form the bottom-up elements sustaining this turn toward greater rights and freedoms.[8] Yet, as will also be seen, cross-border normative diffusion and socialization are occurring, even absent such organizations, in some of the more authoritarian settings within the MENA region.

This understanding of events is further supported by Nazih Ayubi's hypothesis about liberalization and democratization as ongoing and open-ended processes as opposed to fixed-end goals.[9] That is to say that even existing democracies are never complete and require constant maintenance and preservation through democratic participation. So too are undemocratic systems, such as those in the Middle East, subject to constant transformation and redefinition as they too are maintained, challenged, and renegotiated on a day-to-day basis by subjects, rulers, and even detractors of the state alike.

Such a proposed Staircase Model further complements the Spiral Model of human rights norm socialization, put forward by Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, which merely explains the mechanism by which norms are diffused and socialized, without specific concern for the long-term implications for the political systems and societies in which they occur.[10] This

cumulative process is set into motion when rights norms come to be supported in principle, such as in the form of rights declarations. The normative pull that even these basic declarations generate is considerable, especially when the perceived gap between rights promises and practices become more pronounced and states have to increasingly answer to critics, both internal and external.

By contrast, this *Spiral or Winding Staircase Model*, as it were, goes a step further than the ordinary Spiral Model to explain the paradox of rights progress over time even in repressive political settings such as in the Greater Middle East. It provides a composite sketch of the trajectory of countries in relation to their ability to balance the rights demands of the people with the security needs of the state. It makes visible the cumulative impact of social and political movements in a country's history and the self-destructive cycle of authoritarianism, which makes progressive change inevitable. It also positively demonstrates that rights norms, which are being increasingly socialized and internalized, demand greater enforcement through the rule of law and through democratic institutions.

It concedes, however, that this process does not unfold in a direct or linear fashion, as the Spiral Model holds; it is contingent upon the twists and turns of the given sociopolitical and economic environment and is at once restrained by and *restrains* that very system. Thus, the spiraling effect, paired with the expectation of upward mobility even amid setbacks and obstacles can only result in a slow, labored, if not vertiginous, ascent toward greater freedom.

Almost counterintuitively, the rights dynamics in each country is more fluid than commonly imagined. During seemingly static or regressive periods, any sign of progress with respect to human rights is taken to be an exception to the general state of regression. By contrast, occasional openings in the domain of human rights, freedom, and democracy momentarily challenge the prevailing logic, which is to view stasis or backwardness as the constant. Fleeting and unsustainable as these openings tend to be, they are quick to be overshadowed by the lingering rights deficiencies in the country.

CYCLES OF RESISTANCE AND REFORM: THE CASES OF EGYPT, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Just as human rights violations tend to dwarf human rights victories and make them appear insignificant by comparison, state oppression has a way of

playing a trick on the mind into perceiving the state as strong, when in truth it reflects the strength of the masses that the state fears and wishes to repress. We would not know this were it not for the snapshot the Egyptian revolution provided of a fearful regime facing the fearless masses in Tahrir Square. Another such moment occurred in 1979 on the streets of Tehran when the balance of fear was tipped in the favor of the Iranian people against the Shah and his equally diffident royal military.[11] These historical episodes highlight the tenuousness of unrepresentative, absolutist systems, which govern exclusively through fear and empty rhetoric, and which resist the progressive normative demands of society.

Stopping to observe a freeze-frame view of a country lends considerable insight into its nuanced and vacillating inner workings, which are imperceptible to the naked eye. The cases of the UAE and the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) reveal just how vulnerable the political fabric is in the face of mounting pressures from below and above to heed domestic and international rights mandates. In some cases, as in Egypt, the fabric *itself* is liable to tear when it fails to carry the weight of responsibilities placed upon it. These different events in the region, pieced together, if somewhat imperfectly, form the elements of an emergent rights system. Nancy Bermeo's analogy of the process of democratization to a "collage" could also apply to the process of rights progress studied here.[12]

There is evidence of Iran's indigenous progressive human rights culture in its past and present domestic developments. There is nothing *green*—or new, shall we say—about the "Green Movement," also referred to as the "Green Wave" or *Jonbesh-e Sabz/Mowj-e Sabz*, that recently swept across Iran.[13] The uprising, which was spawned by contentious election results in the country in the summer of 2009, is in fact the culmination of a century-long struggle in the country for democratic representation and respect for constitutional rights and the rule of law.[14]

While the popular protests in 2009 have on the surface been suppressed by the unyielding might of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) and paramilitary units, the case of Egypt indicates that brutal force cannot be employed indefinitely without causing fissures within the regime. Unless properly regulated, the pressures on Iranian society will likely continue to grow to the point of rupture, as it occurred in Egypt. This is to suggest that the natural tendency of a society, unhindered by state violence and repression, is actually toward peace and freedom, not anarchy, as a realist worldview would

have it. Instability and anarchy are the result of and not the cause for extreme state oppression and suppression of human rights and freedoms.

The Egyptian *Kefaya!* or Enough Movement, which emerged in 2004 and fizzled out in 2007, is said to have been inspired by the opposition to Mubarak's impending, unconstitutional succession scheme and to Gamal Mubarak's *fikr jadeed* or "new thinking" program of privatization, which had destroyed the livelihoods of ordinary, working and agrarian Egyptians.[15] This movement was the first of its kind in Egypt to transcend ideological divides in the service of social justice; it also helped overcome a general state of political apathy and break the cultural taboo associated with political protest.[16] Having according to Shorbagy, "opened up the realm of the possible in Egypt," the Kefaya set a precedent for new forms of social protest to spring up in the country, eventually culminating in the uprisings of Tahrir Square in 2011.[17]

Elsewhere, as in the United Arab Emirates, the state-manufactured sense of security and freedom in itself was enough to deter people from challenging the status quo, but not in itself a long-term recipe for a peaceful social order. Where there is no social contract and there are insufficient avenues of legal recourse available to the people, there is arguably less of an impetus for change as a general level of apathy and acceptance of the status quo eventually sets in. With no alternate schemas of governance to draw from, the people are bound to remain complacent in their subjugation to the all-consuming, almighty, state-cum-military apparatus. Even then, benevolent rulers can create conditions that are comfortable and tolerable enough to engender a degree of loyalty and dependence in their populations, without having to offer them their full scope of political and other rights.

What is more, controlled reform and incremental progress may ensure that the pressures from below or above are never greater than the combined soft and hard power of the state. They cannot, however, take the place of the full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms, seeing as rights are, by definition, indivisible. In the case of Egypt, the explosive combination of outward benevolence and inward state oppression with inconsistent rights reform busted through the hallow shell of the state to reveal a peaceful underlying current gravitating toward freedom, democracy, and progress. This current had only been obscured until now and prevented from spilling forth.

As the contentious histories of Egypt and Iran show, for instance, civil society only gains momentum and muscle from the very resistance it encounters along its path of human progress.[18] Those societies that have suffered

the most in human rights violations are also those that paradoxically have given rise to equally forceful undercurrents determined to turn the socio-economic and political tide. Unless the governments can catch up with these movements or waves, as in Iran's green wave, the balance almost always lands in favor of progressive change. Even if the governments do manage to stamp out such movements, the national atmosphere is still irrevocably affected and does not as readily snap back to its old form. Additionally, the appearance of drastic regression or "going backward" might in some cases, such as in Iran or Egypt, be the necessary ebbing before the coming wave.

Unlike the UAE case, which contains clear attempts at reform, albeit limited in scope, the Egyptian case reveals a series of contractions and openings over the last three decades, culminating in its implosion in early 2011, and once again in 2013. It began with President Hosni Mubarak offering a degree of liberalization and controlled democratization early on, such as by allowing opposition parties banned under Anwar Sadat to rejoin the political arena.[19] It followed shortly with him declaring by 1987 that "democracy had to come 'in doses' and within 'limits.'"[20] Finally, it ended with him ruling the country under a perpetual state of emergency law. His official dominion over Egypt would subsequently be "ended" as a result of he remaining unaccountable to the people for so long. The breaching of the constitution on various fronts and the denial of a social contract between the Egyptian ruler and his subjects meant that Mubarak would not be beholden to the people; paradoxically it also guaranteed that the people would not indefinitely be beholden to the ruler. Stripped of their social and political agency, the people of Egypt were mere subjects, not citizens, as stipulated within their constitution. The Egyptian case reflects just what happens when a regime overstays its welcome and refuses to subject itself to pluralistic, democratic oversight and to the rule of law.

With no real stake in the political system and the running of their affairs, the Egyptian people would have little incentive for upholding a regime that did little to uphold their rights and to regard them as upstanding citizens of the Egyptian Republic. The failure to ameliorate the human rights situation in time led to the Mubarak regime having no other choice but to use increasingly oppressive measures in a desperate last-minute attempt to suppress the public uprising against him, inadvertently causing the situation to reach a boil.

At the same time, the pressures and demands on the state from below, which took the form of long-standing social and labor movements in the

country and "judicial support networks" acting in tandem with the Egyptian judiciary, gradually pulled the proverbial rug from under the state's feet.[21] By losing touch with the people and failing to heed their socioeconomic and political rights, and even to needs as basic as *food sovereignty*, and turning to increasingly oppressive measures to subdue the unruly masses, the Egyptian government, surer than not, guaranteed its own collapse.[22] In the end, it was, what some scholars have called the "explosion of the poor"—the combustive, shared misery, hunger, literal and metaphorical, of common Egyptians at the end of their rope—that created a counterforce great enough to compel the regime to release its mass stranglehold on the nation.[23] The long-standing Mubarak regime, once thought to be unshakeable, could no longer withstand the demands for rights and freedom of the populace, and, in the end, buckled under the pressure. Even the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood president who came to replace Mubarak was removed within months of assuming office, for much the same reasons, it can be argued.

This is similar but not identical to the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is under threat of a similar implosive fate due to the increasing stresses from within and without, pushing and resisting human rights–centered reform.[24] The principal contributing factor to this type of implosion is the breakdown in the implementation of constitutional rights guarantees and checks on arbitrary rule. In reality, however, it is never clear exactly what brings regimes to their knees. And it is rarely possible to foresee such shifts before they occur. Some would even argue that retrospective analyses are useless in such instances, advocating instead for what Kurzman has dubbed "anti-explanations" of such revolutionary phenomena or "anomalies."[25]

One academic examining the Egyptian "dilemma" from next door in Tel Aviv, less than one month before the overthrow, boldly claimed that, "to be sure, Egypt is not in a pre-revolutionary situation."[26] This would demonstrate just how out of touch everyone, from the scholarly community to Egypt's own neighbors, was with the actual state of affairs brewing under the country's deceptively calm surface. This "blind spot" in our understanding of the changes in the Middle East is why it is, in fact, imperative to look back in time, and even across space, to understand the recent transformations in the country's history as belonging to a metanarrative of human rights struggles occurring domestically, regionally, and internationally. Seen in this way, they can no longer be written off as a mere anomaly or pure chance, as the prevailing doctrine of Arab exceptionalism would dictate, but as the unforeseen by-product of suppressed popular sovereignty and the active ingredient of social and

political change. It is precisely that which is obfuscated—for instance, hunger and joblessness—that when brought to light acts as a destabilizing force for governments and as a coalescing and mobilizing force for civil society.

The increasing gulf between rights promises and practices demands that a government either use ornate rhetoric or greater force to remain in power; but in so doing, it creates a new set of normative expectations that it will struggle to legitimately fulfill without exposing itself to the risk of greater resistance from below, and even from abroad. In the United Arab Emirates, where representation exists without taxation, and where there is no private stake in public affairs, the mere reliance of the people on the benevolence of the rulers guarantees the continued existence of the "sheikhdoms." These governmental rights guarantees that underpin the "moral contract" between rulers and subjects act to preemptively absorb any potential blows to the regime's stability or legitimacy. Balancing the state's requirement for national security with a modicum of human security is what allows a regime such as the UAE or, with less success, Iran, to prevail against all odds.

The lesson that the Egyptian experience has to impart, however, is that forced, artificial balances are ultimately unsustainable and unreliable in an age of globalization, rapid information exchange, and growing collective consciousness. Despite exuding a semblance of stability and invincibility, as Mubarak's Egypt did for over 30 years, authoritarian states, which derive their legitimacy not from the people but from brute force and oppression, are merely buying time. The legitimacy that they may have once enjoyed is eroded by the diffusion and socialization of norms such as universal human rights and freedoms. Looking back, it is possible to see beyond the veneer of respectability and authority, which the now-deposed Egyptian government projected, at the insecurities and daily struggles it faced to prolong its hold on power. The same may one day be said of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which itself was the product of several arguably unfinished revolutions.

A comparison of the three cases reveals just how central human rights calculations and miscalculations are to the given fate of a nation. From the UAE case we note the importance of "cushions," such as new labor laws and improved housing conditions, to absorb the likely blowbacks from accumulated human rights abuses.[27] From the Iranian case we learn that popular rights demands, no matter how severely repressed, will always catch up with the regime, causing internal splintering and fallout among its ruling elite. From the case of revolutionary Egypt, we observe that the regime itself is the

first to suffer the repercussions of widespread disgruntlement when there is not adequate cushioning or rights concessions made to absorb those pent-up frustrations.

A REGIONAL NORM CASCADE AND REFORM WAVE?

The mass grassroots Arab uprising of 2011 along with the 2009 Green Movement in Iran positively demonstrate the intersection of diverse progressive currents across the region. As one Moroccan dignitary observed on the repercussions and implications of the region-wide Arab uprisings,

> However much we might agree or disagree in our evaluation of the Arab social movement, it is in essence a positive socio-political phenomenon, a civilizational transition if you will, and in stirring the waters and alerting us to the inevitability of change and reform it fulfilled its task. The movement has restored politics, in the best sense of the word, to the forefront of events, shaming traditional politicians and forcing parties of all stripes to question themselves. The movement is evidence of the awakening, the organized debate that takes place in all societies from time to time.[28]

Referring to the different Arab movements as a unitary *movement* offers a new conceptualization of isolated national struggles as inextricably linked and universal in nature, as suggested in the introduction. At the same time, what appears to be an isolated national struggle contains within it the struggle against regional hierarchy and an implicit challenge to the transnational capitalist order, which has spread across the region.[29] Underpinning the varied movements and uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa is a rejection of the larger neoliberal economic project that has stripped the masses of their basic rights and personal agency and threatened the region with policies, which, in the view of economist Ali Kadri, amount to an "indirect restitution of colonialism."[30]

The ripple effect in Egypt from neighboring Tunisia reflects the importance of shared identities, agendas, and expectations across national borders for providing collective-action reference points—the "framing" for the solidarity movements witnessed.[31] In this instance, the disenfranchised masses, facing a similar socioeconomic fate, and a mutual desperation for improving their lot, acted in direct or indirect solidarity with those in neighboring

countries with whom they share an identity of sorts. Even if no definitive link can be drawn between the different movements across the Middle East, such as between the Green Movement in Iran and the uprising in Egypt, it is at least possible to see the shared frames, identities, and modes of contention that they exhibit.

The combined influence of different local phenomena, however, is undoubtedly felt at the regional and international level, both in how governments collectively respond to them, as will be seen, and in how they highlight or *frame* the universal plight of individuals in a globalized world. In that way, separate movements come to be organically linked, even while originally occurring separately. The normative cascade phenomenon can thus be witnessed at the regional level, at the points at which these disparate movements intersect. The result is a metamovement with multiple epicenters, some overlapping, some free-standing, where knowledge and experience are imparted. As Stuart Hill and Donald Rothchild claim, the memory of "contentious forms" gains greater currency when different groups come to adopt them as frames around which they launch their respective social and political struggles.[32] What is more, one could look to "the emerging field of memory politics," which, according to Haugbolle and Hastrup, deals with experiences and memories stored in the collective unconscious across national borders for insight into the recent overlapping events across the region, including the emerging trend toward transitional justice.[33]

Viewed in this way, one can begin to see the once-hidden connection between the struggles taking place in the Gulf region such as in Iran or Bahrain and other places such as Egypt, rather than seeing them as isolated within the nation-state. As the peaceful slogans of protesters reveal, it is not necessarily the resurgence of pan-Arabism or Islamism we are witnessing but of a more universal call for freedom, rights, dignity, and justice in the Middle East and beyond.[34] Similar protests and calls for the restoration of socioeconomic rights were to be seen in various capitals across the globe from Madrid to New York, as part of the Occupy Wall Street or 99% movement.[35]

It is evident from the past and present popular movements that the demands of the Iranian and Egyptian people are almost identical to those echoed throughout the region and even across the globe. Often this entails the recognition of a loss of rights, paired with a loss of any fear of demanding those rights. The loss of fear, by extension, corresponds with a loss of state legitimacy, often stemming from a spike in the use of excessive force

against civilians paired with a protracted history of trampling on fundamental human rights and freedoms. The popular backlash resulting from a sudden spurt in state violence against its own people, however, can sometimes be lessened through the regime's acknowledgment of wrongdoing and attempts to provide justice and reconciliation.

One such attempt at retribution is the Kingdom of Bahrain's strategic move to set up an "Independent Commission of Inquiry" to investigate the 2011 crackdown on Bahraini protesters and to present its findings and recommendations to the king in the form of a 500-page report.[36] Elsewhere in the region, the Arab uprisings caused many regimes and monarchies to jump to action, providing hasty reforms and spouting promises, which the UN secretary-general Ban Ki Moon and others have branded as "too little, too late."[37] King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, for instance, announced that women would have the right to vote and run in future municipal elections for the first time in the kingdom's history.[38] Additionally, there would be women appointed to the Majlis Al-Shura or Shura Council in order to ensure female participation in public policy matters. The impetus for such concessions was seen as coming from the pressures of the movements in neighboring countries and from within the kingdom, which called for fundamental reforms, equal rights, and representative government.

The Moroccan king's proposal in 2011 for a constitutional monarchy, which significantly limits his direct rule, creates a separation of powers, an independent judiciary, and a new prime minister position, is an indication of the sheer extent to which the human rights normative paradigm has shifted in the region. It impels governments either to reform in order to stay in power, as in the case of Morocco, or to increasingly crack down on the masses, as in the case of Bashar Al Assad's Syria. If, however, these reform efforts are merely instituted in an effort to stave off popular unrest, which would appear to be the case, and not in a way that genuinely works to restrain state power and improve governance, they could be merely postponing the eventual, inevitable collapse of unrepresentative top-heavy state systems.

What is more, the popular uprisings in Turkey of June 2013, initially spurred by protests about the government's plans to redevelop Gezi Park and parts of Taksim Square, turned into a full-blown, countrywide demonstration for rights and freedoms.[39] Commentators have called this movement Turkey's "secular awakening" or the "Ataturk renaissance." It is "the first time that people from all walks of life have joined forces to constrain the power of their

country's leaders."[40] Prime Minister Erdogan's agreement to halt development plans, in a tactical effort to quell protests, suggests that protesters were partly successful in exacting concessions from the government.[41] Protesters in Turkey's Taksim Square, like those in Tahrir and other civic squares around the MENA region, were not only appropriating the language of universal human rights into their national struggles, they were exerting a palpable *collective* pressure on the international system. This suggests that it is not just the *language* of contention but the ethos or collective consciousness behind it—namely, the common human yearning for rights and freedoms—that serves as the organic driver behind such movements.

These transnational movements, bridged with the help of technological advances and the combined influences of old and new social media, mark the beginning of a social and political order transcending national borders. Or perhaps they reflect existing orders within nations, and local communities, which are suddenly more ubiquitous and interconnected than before in the age of information and digital revolution. Even while the role of new social media in the actual spreading of protests across the MENA region is questioned, it has certainly made such progressive trends more visible.[42] For within online social networks, for instance, it is possible to see more clearly the exercise of basic freedoms, namely, of conscience, expression, and association. Likewise, it is possible to appreciate the degree of collective yearning for cross-cultural exchange, learning, and action. Transnational activist networks (TANs), which have the almost suprahuman ability to affect change across borders, through a "boomerang effect," as Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have pointed out, are just one manifestation of this globalizing trend around universal human rights norms and practices.[43]

TANs can work to pressure international bodies, such as their own governments, the United Nations, or international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), to in turn exert pressure on governments seen as violating the rights of their respective citizens and subjects. The independently organized "Iran Tribunal," for instance, an unofficial ad-hoc truth commission held in London and the Hague to create a record of crimes committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran in its prisons in the 1980s, can be seen as one such instance of creative activism and resistance *beyond borders.*[44]

International criticism over labor conditions and human trafficking in the UAE has already begun to have its desired effect of encouraging the country to come clean about its human rights record and to adopt remedies to

redress rights violations such as in successfully eradicating the illegal and inhumane practice of child camel jockeying in the country.[45] Rather than adopting a defensive stance and further guarding its practices from international view, the UAE has opted instead for a cooperative and transparent policy, which is in its best interest. It was not until 2009 that the Emirates officially opened its doors to international human rights monitors, namely, to UN Special Rapporteurs charged with assessing human rights conditions in the country, firsthand. Pursuant to the findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, Githu Muigai, following the October 2009 mission to the UAE, it was noted that the United Arab Emirates has made significant strides in the direction of offering greater protection to minorities and worker rights.[46] While this is not to deny the ongoing plight of migrant workers or trafficked individuals, there still appears to be a concerted effort on the part of the United Arab Emirates to address these ongoing issues.

Shadi Mokhtari mentions the following instances of legal reform in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which are taking place within the regime as a result of top-down and bottom-up efforts:

> In 2002, a number of legislative initiatives seeking to bring Iranian laws into greater conformity with human rights standards were either proposed or passed. First, parliament passed legislation that raised the age of marriage for girls from 9 to 15 years of age. The Conservative Council of Guardians rejected the resolution on the grounds that it contravened Islamic law; however, the Expediency Council, a body that mediates between the reformist Parliament and the Council of Guardians, decided on raising the age of marriage for girls to 13. While this was not an ideal outcome, it was indisputably a human rights victory.[47]

Such reforms, although limited in scope, positively demonstrate a shifting normative human rights framework in Iran in the years since reformist president Khatami assumed office. In fact, they fall within a region-wide pattern of reexaminations and reforms of antiquated Personal Status Laws in the Middle East and North Africa.[48] They also underscore the potential for rights-related progress—however limited and inconsistent—within the existing political constraints of the regime. The fact that such questions of rights are even being revisited, reopened, and reevaluated attests to the greater socialization and acceptance of certain rights norms in the country over time. Thus, while

obstacles still prevail for the successful assimilation of rights practices in Iran, the normative current makes such progressive developments inevitable.

THE LIMITS OF CURRENTS AND COUNTERCURRENTS

The fact remains that human rights violations, which accumulate over time, are by the sheer force of trauma they inflict, stored and kept alive in the national psyche long after they have been committed, acquiring an almost permanent status. Meanwhile, occasional advances have the paradoxical effect of bringing greater attention to rights disparities. This, in turn sparks greater rights demands, highlighting once again the deficit of freedoms and rights. This phenomenon almost always trumps human rights victories, which are quickly taken for granted and assimilated into the glaring background of ongoing problematic rights practices.

There is a general sense that revolutions and reforms remain unfinished and that authoritarian systems are still deeply entrenched despite the removal of old regimes and a change of figureheads in some Middle East states.[49] For instance, continued Egyptian unrest and the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists following the revolution to unseat Mubarak highlight the challenges that stand in the way of achieving a genuine democracy. The 1979 Iranian Revolution represented a similar moment in history in which a call for representative government and the rule of law nearly succeeded, before being co-opted by reactionary elements, led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Promising democracy and respect for fundamental human rights, the new Islamic Republic failed to keep its faith with the people. As a result, today it is in a similarly vulnerable position as the Pahlavi dynasty, which preceded it. The 2009 wave of protests 30 years later arguably represents an attempt to finish the revolution that the people did not fully complete before the Islamic Republic came into power, thwarting the secular, democratic aspirations of the people. So too is the "second" Egyptian revolution of 2013 a direct consequence of the new regime's failure to deliver on its revolutionary promises. Nonetheless, that which is unfinished is also that which is *in progress*, so to speak. Therefore, these developments can be reconceptualized as belonging to a *process* marked with cycles of resistance as well as change.

There are also regional and international factors favoring the status quo ante that can be seen as blocking the natural flow of the region's human rights

current; these include, for instance, the impetus to maintain Egypt's cold peace with the United States' strategic partner in the region, Israel, among other jealously guarded foreign interests in the Middle East North Africa region.[50] Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for one, is resolutely opposed to the peaceful democratic wave in Egypt and across the Arab world, which he perceives as a threat to Israel's expansionist project. This, according to Avi Shlaim, "exposes the internal contradiction, not to say hypocrisy, of Israel's stand on democracy."[51]

Additional challenges to the progressive tide include counterrevolutionary forces supported by local ruling elites, in turn backed by foreign powers intent on maintaining the existing balance of power in the region from North Africa to the Persian Gulf, if not tipping the balance further in their favor.[52] This phenomenon has given rise to a new brand of international pseudo-organization, evidenced by the newly formed "Security Cooperation Forum," a strategic partnership between the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council.[53] Such an arrangement suggests that the advent of the large-scale Arab popular uprisings has caused authoritarian governments to spring into action en masse, with the collective intention of restoring the prevailing political order or controlling the political outcome in transitional neighboring states. Banding together with international powers such as the United States, with a vested interest in the region, offers a superior and mutually beneficial alternative to the burden of acting alone to ensure their individual stability. It also suggests that regional organizations are having to collectively respond to the very real normative pressures of the evolving rights regime to which they belong. As seen, however, the effort that goes into attempting to stop these natural currents is ill-spent, as it only emboldens these movements through their suppression.

The relative success of region-wide calls for dignity and rights, at least in instigating an overturn in certain Arab regimes in 2011, reveals the fallibility of authoritarian structures that rule through fear and perpetual emergency law. It also represents how "successful" state suppression and the prolonged denial of rights or entitlements result in compromised state stability and legitimacy. Thus, in a paradoxical twist, restraint, not impunity, would seem to be the best guarantor of state power and national security. Within this new paradigm, in order for a regime to achieve its ends, namely a dual hold on hard and soft power, it suddenly becomes necessary to act within a socially acceptable framework. Extreme cases of state impunity can work to actually

highlight once-invisible perimeters of acceptable and unacceptable state behavior. As soon as these boundaries are perceived by a core constituency as being violated it is as though it triggers a normative alarm, which dramatically raises the state of alertness among an otherwise seemingly dormant population.

Ironically, such trends in the region indicate that the highest potential for unity exists at the height of the state's oppression, and that the very oppression of the people serves as the main impetus for their mobilization. This realization problematizes the currently limited understanding of the actual process of the emergence and flourishing of social movements. It suggests that pluralist, grassroots movements can take root anywhere, even in authoritarian states, which are intent on preventing their growth (an anomaly by social movement theory standards). The influence they exert on the state structure, while appearing relatively small in comparison to the might of the state, is significant enough to summon the majority of the strength and resources of the state in order to suppress it. Interestingly, it also suggests that authoritarian structures are inherently built to fail, seeing as they are weighed down by their very own oppressive apparatus. Their projected strength, which is not to be confused with their actual strength and stability, therefore, truly reflects their internal weakness and attempts to compensate for the latter.

The oppression and annihilation of the people is ultimately the self-annihilation of the state. Figuratively, without the support of the people, the state loses its only source of legitimacy and, literally, the suppression and silencing of the people who make up the state can only spell the slow death of the state itself. While on the surface, the regime in power may appear to possess ultimate authority, only the people can confer such authority upon those in power. We know this because of the instances in which the people have taken away a regime's authority, such as that of Hosni Mubarak, or of the late Iranian Shah. Both rulers, it can be argued, suffered the greatest blow to their legitimacy following the blunt application of force on their own civilians during a period of benign initial uprisings, thought to be possible to contain with decisive, surgical blows. This readiness to unleash force on protesters at a time when both regimes were at their most seemingly "benevolent" and civil—revealing the state's dangerous disdain for normative expectations and the stark contrast between rhetoric and practice—is what eventually cost them their crowns.

CONCLUSIONS

Observing the cycles of resistance and reform in the Middle East and North Africa helps to shed outdated preconceptions about the status of rights and freedoms in the region and shine a new light on emerging developments. While these countries each have their own distinct histories and distinct trajectories, the common bond that they share, as we can now begin to see, is the desire of their peoples for much of the same rights and freedoms—rights that their governments are finding increasingly prudent to grant.[54] This is in keeping with the *winding staircase* model of rights socialization and Saad Eddin Ibrahim's *open door* model of liberalization, which, even prior to the Arab Spring, envisaged liberal democracies "taking hold in the Arab world—and surviving."[55]

In retrospect, it is clear that governments that were incapable of keeping up with popular demands and that governed through fear rather than popular legitimacy would inevitably face their end. Other regimes such as those in the oil-rich Gulf nations have adopted a combination of controlled reform and governmental handout policies meant to placate the people and restore the prevailing social "pecking" order, mimicking but not guaranteeing any long-term progressive change.

In spite of attempts to stem the progressive tide in the Middle East, powers in the region are slowly having to come to terms with the new sociopolitical landscape. They are learning that they cannot indefinitely manipulate or adapt conditions to suit their own agendas. Instead, they are starting to adapt their modes of governance to the burgeoning human rights culture, which has already begun to uproot authoritarian systems across the region. At best, states can but "delay" the natural trend toward freedom and dignity. When rights demands reach a critical mass, states are forced to respond. And how they respond is contingent upon normative as well as strategic factors, on soft and hard power motives alike. As seen, resorting to violent crackdowns provides but a temporary fix and is proving to be far costlier to state survival. The incentives for pairing *realpolitik* with *realpolitesse* and rights concessions have thus never been greater in the region than today.

Resistance at the top to "change from below," it seems, is the actual incendiary ingredient sparking contention in the region. In the case of Egypt, the failure to adapt can result in regime change—in this instance, twice, within a short period; and in cases such as the Islamic Republic of Iran the resistance to the natural human rights current results in an internally compromised and

insecure state. Countries such as the United Arab Emirates have taken note of these realities and have sought to adjust their rights practices accordingly. This would indicate that the new paradigm of governance operating in the twenty-first century is one that is continuously and irrevocably shaped by the ongoing global diffusion and local assimilation of human rights norms.

As the cases studied demonstrate, resistance to the rising rights expectations and claims of the masses forms the central bone of contention within Middle East politics. It also serves as the proverbial *Achilles' heel* of antiquated regimes that are standing on their last leg, so to speak, in their endless quest to consolidate power. The determinant of the fate of regimes in the new millennium appears to hinge on the respect for or lack of respect for the fundamental human rights and dignity of their people. In the cases where the regimes fail in their constitutional responsibility toward the people, they are finding it increasingly difficult to function with any authority or legitimacy in the international system. The age-old rule still holds—*adapt or perish.*

NOTES

1. See S. G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18–19, on the conditions of political struggle: "Political process models were seldom systematically applied outside the liberal democracies of the West." See also C. Tilly and S. G. Tarrow *Contentious Politics* (Boulder, CO.: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).
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3. The notion of a global social movement society is viewed as a utopian ideal within social movement theory, and not as the universal starting point of all of humanity, as I argue. See D. S. Meyer and S. Tarrow "A Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century," in *The Social Movement Society: People, Passions, and Power,* ed. D. S. Meyer and S. Tarrow (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.), 1–28.
4. A. Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).
5. See S. G. Tarrow, *The Language of Contention: Revolutions in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) for a discussion on the mobilizing force of language in popular resistance (albeit limited to case studies in the Western-democratic context, and limited in its explanation of the underlying forces that make such contentious language "stick").
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3

KUWAITI ARAB SPRING? THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL FACTORS IN KUWAIT'S CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

Anastasia Nosova

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of 2011 saw a sudden and rapid spread of popular uprisings against the ruling powers across the Middle East. By and large, the protests swept many countries of the region, and very few remained completely untouched.

During the peak of what has been conventionally (although disputably) called the "Arab Spring," Kuwait seemed immune from any large-scale anti-government protests. However, later in 2011, the oil-rich Gulf state witnessed the escalation of political unrest, resulting in mass street protests, the remarkable storming of the Parliament in November 2011, and resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser al-Mohammad al-Sabah. Such rapid spread of popular discontent in one of the wealthiest countries in the world has made analysts wonder about the nature of this event: Is it similar to the "Arab Spring" uprisings in the rest of the region, where protests had much to do with high poverty and unemployment, or was the crisis in Kuwait the result of absolutely different political and socioeconomic processes?

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the relationship between recent developments in Kuwait and uprisings in the rest of the region by revisiting the 2011–13 protests through an analysis of Kuwait's contentious politics during the twentieth century. The major argument is that throughout its history, Kuwait's contentious politics has followed a distinct pattern and has been defined by a combination of internal discontent and the influence of external (regional and global) contentious processes. The external factors play the key role of a trigger or a catalyst—an essential condition for the transformation of

a mere popular discontent into a contentious act. They facilitate the process of reinterpretation and signification of the domestic situation (factors that cause discontent) and push the opposition forces and actors to seize opportunities and "question the old arrangements"[1]—the social contract with the ruling powers. At the same time, as John Chalcraft notes in his work on Egypt's uprising, in order for this triggering mechanism to fulfill its function and for the local population to respond to the regional/global contentious processes with local political mobilization, the public should be able to identify itself with the grievances, which led to the contention, and subscribe to the demands of the regional/global protests.[2] What it means is that, on the one hand, we are dealing with transnational factors, which form the major common basis for contention across the region, while on the other hand, the contentious act is not possible without local interpretation and the signification of those transnational processes.

The example of the recent protest movement in Kuwait underlines the role of the transnational/external factors in setting off the local contentious processes. It is obvious that in case of a small oil-rich rentier state, it is difficult to talk about any profound structural economic strains or fettered development, which the protests elsewhere in the region were largely attributed to.[3] However, it was the emergence of the new forms of regional popular politics—the ideology and specific organizational patterns of the "Arab Spring" uprisings—that resonated with the Kuwaiti population and interacted with long-standing internal contentious issues, such as oil revenues distribution, corruption, and popular demands for a greater say in political decision making.

The chapter further shows that the path-dependent development of Kuwait's opposition movement has also played an important role as an intervening variable in shaping the country's contentious politics, including the recent protests. Contention is always contextually conditioned[4] and is "a product of a particular historical moment"[5] and path dependency. Structures and structural malfunctions are perceived and interpreted through local context, therefore contextualized factors and path dependency, including the existence of historical precedents, are absolutely crucial for the understanding of contentious politics of any given country.

Thus, the present chapter attempts to go beyond the analysis of contentious politics strictly along the lines of structuralist and relational/socially constructionist approaches. Referring to this fundamental ontological debate on the roles of structure and agency that have been long evolving in the field

of contentious politics and social movements studies, this paper attempts to show, with taking Kuwait as an example, that more attention should be paid to the interaction of external and internal factors that define the rise of protest movements. Leaving aside the efforts to identify whether it is structure or agency that is the primary force of contention, we argue that contentious processes never happen in isolation, and therefore it might be much more fruitful and revealing to analyze the contentious politics of any individual country by considering a combination of transnational external factors and internal contextualized causes.

KUWAIT DURING THE ARAB UPRISINGS (2011–2014)

Like most of the other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Kuwait is an oil-rich rentier state, which derives its income almost solely from oil export. The country is currently the third largest oil producer among OPEC members after Saudi Arabia and Iran;[6] it has the tenth highest GDP per capita in the world and the third largest sovereign wealth fund (SWF) in the GCC, constituting 32.6 percent of the global SWF[7]. The government is the main receiver and distributor of the revenues among the country's tiny national population. Consequently, nationality in Kuwait has a "real economic worth."[8] The emergence of the welfare state due to the massive income from oil has allowed Kuwaitis to enjoy extensive social and economic privileges, such as free education and health care, guaranteed state employment, generous subsidies from the state, absence of income tax, marriage money, social allowance for each child, and so on. Therefore, Kuwaiti nationals are generally quite well off, and one might think, they would be unlikely to revolt against the regime in order to change the status quo. Indeed, in the beginning of 2011 the country did not witness any significant protest movement.

However, this is not to say that in Kuwait there is no room for potential sectarian, social, and political disagreements. First of all, about 30 percent of Kuwaiti population are Shi'a, while the majority, including the al-Sabah ruling family, are Sunnis. Therefore, the Bahraini unrest, which started in February 2011 and since then has gradually radicalized along sectarian lines, potentially could have had an overspill effect in Kuwait. Indeed, during the Saudi troops' invasion of Bahrain, Kuwait did witness some aggravation of sectarian tensions. Shi'a members of Parliament were naturally supporting Bahraini opposition, condemning the decision of the government to send forces together with Saudis to help suppress the uprising. At the same time,

Sunni Islamist members accused the government of inaction in responding to Bahraini events and insisted that more substantial forces should have been sent.

Moreover, in terms of the social structure, Kuwaiti population is far from being equally wealthy: one very sensitive issue for Kuwaiti society is the problem of bidoons—a group of stateless residents, who, despite being born and raised in Kuwait, are not considered "original" Kuwaitis and do not possess Kuwaiti citizenship, thus being deprived of basic rights and privileges. There are currently over 110,000 bidoons in Kuwait[9] among the country's 3.8 million population,[10] and their case continues to be unresolved by the government. In February 2011, following the protests in Bahrain, Kuwait briefly saw a number of bidoons' demonstrations, which were fiercely dispersed by the elite special forces.

The above-mentioned factors could have potentially triggered a wave of public protests following the regional tendency, particularly because Kuwait has historically possessed a vocal and politically active civil society. However, the conflicts did not produce any further escalation and did not result in a mass protest movement. On the whole, Kuwaiti population did not follow the pattern in neighboring countries and refrained from organizing serious protests against the government and the ruling family.

Yet, the main source of instability, which overwhelmed Kuwait later in 2011, was rooted in the very political system of the country. Since achieving its independence in 1961, Kuwait's political development has been visibly different from that of the other GCC states. It is the only country in the region with a relatively functional parliamentary system. At the same time, it is still a monarchy, with the emir having the right to dissolve the Parliament and appoint the prime minister, and a great number of the highest governmental positions is occupied by members of the ruling family. For this reason Kuwait is sometimes called a "semi-democracy."[11]

The parliamentary history of the country dates back to the early twentieth century: since the pre-oil era Kuwait has possessed a clearly stratified society with a distinct merchant elite characterized by economic superiority and great political influence. These merchants opposed the expansion of the ruling family's power and pushed for parliamentary development in the early twentieth century. The National Assembly was established in 1963 and, ever since, with the development of parliamentary system and the overall spread of education, new social elements have become inevitably politicized: Islamists,

progressives, tribal elements, and Shi'a started to gain power and enter the political ground. As a result, by the 1980s "the policymaking playing field was considerably more populated than in previous years."[12] Though some social elements were initially directly supported by the ruling family in order to counterbalance the old merchant elite, they soon turned into an opposition force themselves, gaining vast popular support and severely constraining the government's decision-making process.

The specificity of Kuwaiti Parliament is that, despite possessing real political power, this power tends to be more negative/destructive, rather than positive/constructive: according to Kuwaiti legislation, the Parliament is not able to appoint ministers or propose laws, but it can remove ministers and object to government's legislative proposals.[13] Almost since the very emergence of the National Assembly, various opposition forces (at times merchants, nationalists and liberals, Islamists, and tribal elements) used the Assembly as a venue to oppose the government appointed by the Emir and to demand greater political powers. This practice has led to increasing antagonism in Kuwaiti society resulting into a prolonged political crisis and a subsequent economic stagnation that has been afflicting the country in the recent years. Due to repeated dissolutions of the Parliament and resignations of the Cabinet members, the current emir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, has already presided over six elections and eleven Cabinets since he assumed power in January 2006, while the Parliament has not completed its full four-year term for ten consecutive years[14].

Thus, the events that took place in November 2011—mass demonstrations and the brief storming of the Parliament building—were not a spontaneous act, but a culmination of this long-lasting political conflict, triggered by scandals of corruption scandal that involved alleged vote-buying and bribing of the members of the National Assembly.[15] As a result, the prime minister had to give up his post, the Cabinet resigned, and the Parliament was dissolved. The elections to the National Assembly in February 2012 brought victory to the opposition candidates, mostly of Islamist and tribal background. However, these elections were soon deemed unconstitutional and the Assembly was dissolved by the decision of the court, bringing up a new wave of mass protests. Prior to the new elections in December 2012, the emir introduced an amendment to the electoral law using his right to issue emergency decrees,[16] which reduced the number of votes per person from four to one, making it difficult to run lists of candidates[17]—this measure was aimed at weakening the

opposition and diminishing its representation in the Parliament. As a result, the opposition boycotted the elections and, therefore, the newly elected Parliament was predominantly pro-government and did not include any opposition MPs. The amendment of the electoral law also allowed smaller tribes and social groups, which were politically sidelined previously, to gain seats in the new National Assembly, thus automatically increasing the support base of the ruling family.[18]

Although the election of the pro-government Parliament might have seemed a sign of success of the "divide and rule" strategy of the ruling family, it obviously has not put an end to the political crisis in the country. The abrupt removal from the official political scene has clearly antagonized the opposition further, and the protests demanding the dissolution of the illegitimate Parliament and the reversal of electoral law (articulated in the slogans like "the people want repeal of the law") continued unabated.

The National Assembly elected in December 2012 was, indeed, more cooperative with the government and managed to pass a relatively large amount of pro-government legislation regarding various infrastructural and investment projects that were blocked by previous Parliaments on the basis of allegation of corruption. However, in June 2013 the Constitutional court annulled the Assembly again claiming that there were technical irregularities in the emir's electoral decree. New elections took place in July 2013 and were again boycotted by some opposition groups. However, this time large pro-opposition tribes and some of the liberal opposition candidates decided to participate. As a result, the new Assembly, which started its term on October 29, 2013, is more representative of liberal and opposition-leaning forces than its predecessor. However, it is still predominantly pro-government, and has become even more so after five of its members resigned in April 2014, protesting against the Parliament's decision to vote down their request to question the prime minister over allegations of corruption. The by-elections that followed brought more pro-government members to the Assembly, further strengthening the government's grip over the Parliament.[19]

After a period of relative inactivity the opposition reemerged on the public scene in March 2014, creating a new political group—the Popular Action Movement—which was meant to be more open to public and inclusive for various opposition streams.[20] In June 2014, the demonstrations and sit-ins in front of the Parliament building resumed triggered by the revelation of documents allegedly showing illicit financial transactions and bribes

by government officials. The situation was largely exacerbated by the open conflict within the ruling family itself, when in April 2014 one of its senior members and former minister of Oil, Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah, claimed to possess evidence of public funds embezzlement and coup-plotting by top government officials, including the ex-prime minister Sheikh Nasser al-Mohammad.[21] The government responded to the new wave of demonstrations by arresting one of the prominent opposition leaders and former Parliament member Musallam al-Barrak. This measure pushed thousands of his supporters to the streets protesting the arrest until he was released on bail a few weeks later. The authorities further targeted the opposition by revoking the citizenship of over 30 of its members and supporters, which proved to be an effective crackdown measure leading to the gradual winding down of the group's activity.[22]

An analysis of the recent exacerbation of political struggle in Kuwait shows that, although the mass demonstrations in the country began while the Arab Spring uprisings were still unfolding, the nature and character of the turmoil were indigenous to Kuwait. Kuwaiti protesters took to the streets not because of economic vulnerabilities and grievances, such as poverty or unemployment, as was the case in other countries of the region, but, rather, demandings greater political participation, elimination of corruption and corrupt politicians, and for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, all of which were reflected in the slogans of the rallies: "Dignity of the homeland" and "We will not let you [take Kuwait into the abyss of autocracy]." Furthermore, unlike in other countries, there were generally no anti-monarchical slogans or calls for the fall of the regime in Kuwait[23].

At the same time, one definitely cannot dismiss the triggering role of regional/transnational factors in the rise of the Kuwaiti protest movement. The regional unrest has most certainly contributed to the increase of popular support for the opposition in Kuwait[24] and partly shaped the form in which the discontent was expressed, for example, by shouting slogans starting with "the people want…" The latest contentious movement erupted as a result of the combination of internal discontent and an external trigger. The Kuwaiti protesters were generally highly supportive of the regional uprisings, while the ruling elite became increasingly alert to the visible similarities between the "Arab Spring" events and Kuwaiti protests.[25] However, in order to see a fuller picture, the underlying reasons behind recent developments and the relations between the local and regional processes, it is necessary to analyze them in

the context of historical continuity—as Zachary Lockman puts it—to explore "the tangled web of past and present representations and practices."[26]

KUWAIT'S CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

An analysis of the history of Kuwait and its major episodes of contention in the twentieth century shows that the recent developments actually follow a certain pattern of contentious politics, which has been specific to the country throughout this time. Since Kuwait was placed under the British rule in the end of the nineteenth century, it has become more integrated into regional politics and exposed to the influence of international political processes.

The most important episodes of contention that happened in Kuwait in the first half of the twentieth century were related to the merchants' opposition to the growing power and financial autonomy of the ruler. As mentioned previously, Kuwait witnessed the establishment of a political and economic hierarchy and the emergence of a powerful merchant elite as early as in the middle of the eighteenth century. The wealthiest merchant families controlled trade and pearl industry—the main source of income for Kuwaiti society at that time—and it was these prominent clans that selected the al-Sabah family to rule the country. The ruling family was chosen by equals and from equals and, moreover, they were financially dependent on merchants' revenues, receiving them through customs dues, taxes, and loans. Al-Sabah could never suppress the merchant elite because the latter's "political power grew from [its] economic strength,"[27] and such a pattern of relationship ensured the elite's participation in policy making.

The first signs of a change in those ruler-merchant unwritten social pact came with the establishment of the treaty with Britain in 1899. An alliance with a powerful protector led to the significant growth of the political power of the Kuwaiti emir (at that time, Sheikh Mubarak al-Sabah, 1896–1915) and the establishment of his economic independence due to the British financial support,[28] which started to undermine the very basis of his relationship with the merchant elite. Furthermore, such reinforcement of the ruler's political and economic power within the country was also followed by his unpopular unilateral decision making, such as introduction of new taxes, price controls, and attempts to directly interfere in merchants' businesses.

Such a development inevitably alienated the Kuwaiti merchant community from the ruler and ultimately solidified its opposition against him. This

was expressed in several noticeable contentious acts through which the merchants tried to restore their economic positions and political power to ensure their participation in political decision making. Thus, in 1909 several prominent traders and pearl brokers decided to protest the ruler's policy by using the traditional tactics of secession;[29] so they left Kuwait for Qatar and Bahrain. Emir Mubarak, who was still largely dependent on merchants' economic power, canceled the newly imposed taxes and personally wrote letters to the dissident merchants inviting them to return.[30] Although, the 1909 merchant protest dissipated quickly and involved only a small part of Kuwaiti society, it was the first evidence of the gradual emergence of merchants' coherent opposition group that could further act as a contentious political force.

The next wave of opposition activity emerged in 1921, when a group of merchants tried to use the political vacuum created after the death of the ruler Sheikh Salim al-Sabah, 1917–1921, as an opportunity for empowerment. They organized a council and forwarded a petition to the ruling family, demanding the establishment of a consultative body that would ensure their participation in political decision making[31]. The newly chosen emir, Sheikh Ahmad al-Sabah (1921–1950), promised to rule in accordance with merchants' advice and in cooperation with their council, but did not keep up the promise for long: the irregular activity of the council and the lack of attention paid to it by the ruler finally resulted in its dissolution after just two months of existence.[32] The attempt of the merchant elite to actively participate in the state's policy making eventually failed.

Nevertheless, in the 1930s, Kuwait witnessed one more, by far the most remarkable, wave of merchant opposition in terms of the scale of the protest and the significance of its consequences; it culminated in the establishment of a Legislative Assembly—Majlis—in 1938, and for this reason is referred to as the Majlis Movement. Similar to what occurred in 1921, the opposition movement in the 1930s expressed itself in the form of establishing new administrative institutions, namely the Education Council and the Municipality,[33] of which the latter was an elective body, financially independent from the authorities.[34] These newly established institutions gave birth to the Majlis Movement and the first calls for administrative reforms. In June 1938, the leading families of the country elected a Legislative Assembly of 15 members, all being prominent Kuwaiti citizens. The elections were followed by the organization of Kuwait's first political party—the National Bloc[35]—and the preparation of the Basic Law. Opposed by such a highly organized political movement, the

ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmed al-Sabah, had to accept the Legislative Assembly and sign the Basic Law.[36] Although the work of the Assembly lasted only six months, this remarkable historic period is still remembered and referred to in Kuwait as the "Year of the Majlis."[37] Indeed, these six months were extremely fruitful in terms of legislative activity. Apart from establishing the Basic Law, the Assembly introduced a number of important reforms in such fields as jurisdiction, finance, education, public health care, security, and so on.[38] Eventually the Assembly tried to gain control over oil concessions, and it was this very attempt that brought it to an end. The merchants' claims for controlling the oil revenues, which had recently started to flow into the country, could not be tolerated by the ruler who eventually dissolved the Assembly. The council that was later established by the ruler to replace the Assembly faced a similar fate, and its dissolution triggered clashes between the council members and the police, which resulted in the death of one participant and the imprisonment and exile of others.

Despite its failure, the Majlis movement left an important state-building legacy by establishing the pattern for further parliamentary-constitutional development of the country: the Legislative Assembly is fairly considered the predecessor of the present-day National Assembly, while Tétreault calls the merchants' petition to the ruler (1938) the antecedent of the 1962 constitution.[39]

The culmination of the merchant opposition movement in Kuwait coincided with the discovery of oil in 1938, which completely changed the nature of state-society relations in the country. The flow of oil revenues ultimately broke the ruler's financial dependence on the merchants' income from trade. Instead, all groups of the population, including the business elite, became financially dependent on the rulers—the possessors of the new source of wealth. It allowed the rulers to guarantee the merchants' economic prosperity—both through a special distribution policy and by providing direct state support for their business. These guarantees of economic support overwhelmed the claims for political participation putting an end to the merchants' opposition movement. This marked the onset of a new power balance in the society: from then on, the field of contentious politics in Kuwait became dominated by different social forces.

When compared, the contentious acts of the first half of the twentieth century do have visible similarities to the opposition movement in Kuwait at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Like the recent protests, the

Majlis movement was also caused by a combination of both internal factors and external processes. One of the most obvious and important reasons for merchants' mobilization was that in 1934 the ruler of Kuwait signed preliminary oil concessions and started to receive regular revenues without sharing them with the rest of the population.[40] Moreover, during the interwar period, Kuwait suffered from a serious economic crisis mainly caused by the decline of pearl industry as a result of the introduction of Japanese cultured pearls in the 1920s. The country's economy was further hit by the Saudi embargo combined with frequent raids by the Ikhwans from Central Arabia (due to the Saudi-Kuwaiti border dispute in 1919–20), and the consequences of the Great Depression later on in the 1930s. The situation was further aggravated by the ruler's unpopular policies: despite the economic difficulties faced by the Kuwaiti population, he introduced new taxes[41] as well as some religious regulations that interfered with business interests.[42]

However, the rise of the Majlis movement was determined not only by the economic vulnerabilities and the struggle of merchant families against political and economic marginalization on the eve of the oil era. Other important factors were the rise of anti-British sentiments and the independence movements in the whole region triggered by the Palestine conflict and the consequent Arab Revolt in 1936–39. During this period, Kuwaitis were the most active among the Gulf residents in supporting Palestine, and the Kuwaiti ruler greatly alienated himself from the population by prohibiting the collection of financial aid for the Palestinians in accordance with his pro-British political orientation.[43]

Furthermore, many of the merchants who participated in the Majlis movement had strong economic and political ties with Iraq, which by that time had already gained its independence in 1932 and was facing bloody uprisings against the British presence there. Iraq had its own interests in supporting the merchant opposition against the Kuwaiti ruler, as it hoped that such political destabilization would facilitate its planned annexation of Kuwait to Iraqi territory. Therefore, the merchants' close ties with Iraqi king Ghazi (1933–39) partly explain the harshness of the Kuwaiti authority's response to the rise of the opposition movement in the country. Although Iraq tried to play an active role in shaping Kuwaiti discontent, its participation was mostly propagandist, rather than material.

It is also important to mention that, as in the case with the recent regional uprisings, the reform movement of the late 1930s was not limited to Kuwait,

which further underlines its transnational nature. In 1938, similar opposition movements and uprisings arose in Bahrain and Dubai.[44] In Bahrain, the rise of opposition forces was caused by the increased British control over the country's internal affairs, to the extent that in 1923 the Bahraini ruler was forced to abdicate by the British political resident Stuart Knox.[45] While the reform movement in Dubai was not as straightforwardly anti-British as the Bahraini one, in terms of its major demands, namely the establishment of a legislative and executive bodies and a greater share in oil rents distribution, it was very similar to the Kuwaiti Majlis movement[46].

Thus, the rise of the pro-reform merchant opposition in the late 1930s in Kuwait was not an autonomous episode of contention caused solely by internal political and economic factors, but was closely linked to and, to a certain extent, triggered by the regional processes. By the late 1930s Kuwait had become increasingly integrated into regional affairs[47] and, as a consequence, more concerned with and responsive to political mobilization elsewhere in the region.

This tendency became even more obvious in the 1950s, when Kuwait saw a new wave of opposition uprising. In 1947 the United Nations' partition plan for Palestine was announced, and the State of Israel was declared in 1948, which became an important trigger for political mobilization across the region. Furthermore, in the beginning of 1950s the Middle East witnessed the rise of Arab nationalism, which became an influential ideology after the Free Officers coup in Egypt in 1952. As the public face and voice of pan-Arabism and anti-imperialism, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser enjoyed great popularity and support across the region, particularly during the Suez Crisis in 1956, after the nationalization of the Suez Canal. The spread of Arab nationalism gave rise to opposition/independence movements in various parts of the Arab world, and Kuwait was no exception. In fact, Kuwait became the "birthplace of…[the Gulf] revolutionary moment": it housed the Gulf headquarters of the Movement of Arab Nationalists, which was the main branch of Nasserism in the region[48].

An important factor that facilitated the transmission and spread of pan-Arabism in Kuwait and in the Gulf region as a whole, and further encouraged the establishment of underground political organizations and participation of Gulf nationals in demonstrations, was the presence of a great number of Arab migrant workers in the area (mostly from Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq).[49] What is more, the return migration of the Gulf citizens who

went to study in other Arab countries and then came back to the region also contributed significantly to the spread of Nasserist ideas.[50]

A number of strikes and demonstrations occurred in Kuwait in 1956, in support of Nasser's policy during the Suez Crisis, and in 1959 to commemorate the anniversary of the United Arab Republic. Some of the Kuwaiti members of the opposition even suggested that the country should also join the UAR.[51] As was the case with the previous episodes of contention, protests were not limited to Kuwait. During the same period, protests and strikes took place in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.[52] Moreover, throughout the 1950s the Kuwaiti branch of the Movement of Arab Nationalists played a crucial role in the ideological preparation of the revolutionaries of the Dhufari insurgency, which began in 1965 in Oman and continued until it was defeated by the government forces in 1976.[53]

Pan-Arab nationalist ideology, which intensified anti-British sentiments in Kuwait, intertwined with local factors and caused discontent among the Kuwaiti population. The demands for representation and establishment of a legislative body, which were articulated in the late 1930s, have not been fulfilled, and the desire for reforms and a greater role in oil rents distribution became ever increasing with the growth of oil revenues. The government's administrative inefficiency, as well as corruption within the ruling family,[54] also played an important role in the increase of popular discontent and the rise of the opposition calling for an elected National Assembly.

The consequences of the 1950s contentious movement were significant for Kuwait's further political development. In 1961, under the pressure of the reform movement, the emir (at that time Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Sabah, 1950–65) formed a Constitutional Assembly to draft the main law, and an organizing body to control the transition to the new parliamentary system of the government. Subsequently, in 1963 the general election was held to choose 50 members to the National Assembly, which marked the launch of the new stage in Kuwait's political development.

The next wake of contention in Kuwait started in the early 1970s and resulted in the dissolution of the National Assembly in 1976. The pattern of this contentious development was similar to that of the previous movements and uprisings, and once again originated with a combination of local discontent and the influence of regional events. Toward the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the National Assembly, which then included a substantial nationalist constituency, became increasingly vocal, particularly

with regard to such issues as oil concessions, relations with oil companies, and political alliance with the United Kingdom and the United States.[55] The Parliament led the struggle against foreign oil companies, and it greatly helped the government to secure better concession agreements.[56] The reasons behind such an aggressive policy by the National Assembly clearly lay in its desire to control the source of economic power. However, they were also tightly linked to the regional development at that time. The Palestinian question continued to be one of the major factors that shaped the political attitudes of Kuwaitis, and the Arab-Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973 naturally had a strong mobilizing effect on the Kuwaiti population. Moreover, Kuwaitis publicly expressed solidarity with opposition movements in Bahrain (where the Parliament was dissolved in 1975) and Lebanon, condemning the intervention of the Syrian army there.[57] Such overwhelming concern and solidarity of the Kuwaiti public with the regional processes, on the one hand, and the aggressive attempts of the National Assembly to acquire more power and control over local Kuwaiti affairs, on the other, eventually resulted in the dissolution of the Assembly by the ruler.

The major episodes of contention in Kuwait until the 1980s show that by the middle of the twentieth century the merchants were replaced by the nationalist/liberal elements as the main opposition force. The latter dominated the scene of contentious politics in the country until the end of the 1970s. However, during the next decade Kuwait saw the rise of an opposition force of a different character, namely a religion-based Shi'i and Sunni one. The emergence of these new opposition groups was a direct consequence of regional and global development, specifically the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, which had a great empowering impact on Shi'i movements all across the Middle East, the Iran-Iraq war of 1980–88, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979–89, and the rise of religious opposition in neighboring Saudi Arabia, resulting in the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. These regional tendencies seriously intensified sectarian tensions in Kuwait, causing a series of terrorist attacks in the mid-1980s, such as the hijacking of a Kuwaiti airplane, the assassination attempt on Emir Sheikh Jabir al-Sabah (1977–2006), and attacks on the French and American embassies in Kuwait.[58]

To co-opt and control the newly rising religious opposition groups, Sheikh Jabir encouraged them to participate in the official political scene, id est, to be represented in the National Assembly. However, instead of producing a co-opted obedient Parliament, such a policy once again led to the

election of an obstructionist, opposition-oriented one.[59] The struggle between the National Assembly and the government was further aggravated by the economic and political difficulties that the country was going through—the Souq al-Manakh stock market crash in 1982, which led to a serious recession, the decline of oil prices in 1986, and the succession dispute between the two branches of the al-Sabah family.[60] As a result of this turbulent political and economic development, the ruler once again dissolved the Assembly in 1986. This decision gave rise to a large-scale pro-democracy Constitutional Movement in 1989, which consisted of various opposition groups (former Assembly members, Islamists, liberals, and so on) and which called for the restoration of parliamentary work.[61] The movement was successful in mobilizing large numbers of Kuwaiti citizens—thousands of supporters participated in the protests.[62] Analyzing the reasons behind the emergence of this movement, Mary Ann Tetreault notes that, apart from the mentioned internal and regional economic and political factors, Kuwaiti pro-democracy opposition movement was also greatly influenced and inspired by the success of the democratization process in Eastern Europe.[63]

Despite the potential power of this movement, which managed to unite most of Kuwait's various opposition groups, its political path was abruptly terminated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. After the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, the country went through a difficult process of restoration, but the disputes between the government and opposition resumed as soon as the new Parliament was elected in 1992. The main driver that provoked the contention was the Assembly's allegations of corruption within the government and the ruling family (namely, financial irregularities in such spheres as reconstruction, privatization, public funds handling, and investment). These contentious political relations were maintained throughout the 1990s resulting in the dissolution of the Assembly in 1999.

Once again Kuwait witnessed a gradual rise of popular discontent and opposition sentiments at the beginning of the 2000s with occasional protests organized by youth groups. A remarkable youth-led campaign for reducing the number of constituencies from ten to five in order to fight corruption and vote-buying during elections took place in 2006, and it was called the "Orange movement," inspired by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004–2005). However, it was not until 2011 that Kuwait, following other countries of the region swept by popular movements, saw mass protests and demonstrations calling for the elimination of corruption and the resignation of the prime minister.

CONCLUSION

What are the lessons learned from Kuwait's contentious politics throughout the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century? First of all, it is clear that all the mentioned contentious acts in Kuwait have followed a particular pattern of development. One can observe a specific consistency in the combination of internal and external factors, the parliamentary form the opposition takes to express its demands, the major issues of confrontation with the ruling powers, and the reaction/response of the authorities. As Mary Ann Tetreault puts it, "some of the patterns…[are] repeated in…clashes between Kuwaiti amirs and parliaments":[64] the confrontation would normally start with the Parliament's attempt to acquire greater powers and control over the country's finances, triggered both by internal economic or political problems and external regional or transnational processes, and would end up with the dissolution of the troublesome National Assembly, suspension of the constitution, changing of the electoral law and, subsequently, the electoral base of the Parliament, or limiting its political powers by other means. Thus, it is obvious that the recent protests in Kuwait do follow the historical pattern of Kuwait's contentious politics.

Yet, what does such a historical analysis tell us about the relationship between the recent Kuwaiti protests and the Arab Spring uprisings? Having identified that, in terms of causes, demands, form, and response of the authorities, the 2011–13 protests comply with the indigenous Kuwaiti contentious politics pattern, one might argue that the recent Kuwaiti protests had little to do with the Arab Spring uprisings, if the latter is understood as a series of contentious acts caused mainly by economic vulnerabilities and discontent with political stagnation, and ultimately aimed at the overthrow of authoritarian regimes. As mentioned previously, Kuwaiti protests did not seem to be driven as much by economic problems and were not targeting the monarchy. Nevertheless, the historical analysis of Kuwaiti opposition movements shows that all significant episodes of contention that the country has witnessed in the twentieth century were closely linked to certain regional or transnational events and processes, which facilitated the opening of opportunities for local mobilization and expression of discontent. In this regard, Mary Ann Tetreault argues that "the political opportunities [in Kuwait]…ar[i]se as much from the skill of Kuwaiti citizens at exploiting the situation as from the deus ex machina himself."[65]

In this sense, the recent protest movement has followed the rule. The contentious issues that caused the rise of the opposition, such as corruption,

financial maladministration, and lack of public participation in the management of resource, wealth, and policy making in general, are all not new and have been causing popular discontent for decades. However, serious contentious processes have started to evolve only recently triggered by the regional protests. This fact further shows that the Kuwaiti population is responsive to regional developments and uses them as an opportunity to mobilize politically and organize a relatively large protest movement, appropriating regional patterns (e.g., in slogans) to express demands and discontent. This signifies that the connection between the regional uprisings and Kuwaiti protests is strong, and that behind the recent turbulent political development of Kuwait and the prolonged struggle between the elected Parliament and the appointed government lies a complex and fundamental socioeconomic conflict between the ruling elite, which holds the main source of wealth, and the rest of the population, which is the dependent subject of wealth distribution by the ruling powers. The contention, which arises from such a state of power balance, and the subsequent demands of Kuwaiti population for justice, elimination of corruption and, for equitable wealth distribution, reveals the similarities between Kuwait's protests and the uprisings elsewhere in the region, contrary to conventional wisdom.

The ability to challenge the government in Kuwait has shifted to younger, less urban, less privileged groups of population, which have been previously politically and economically marginalized.[66] Having become more educated, politicized, and aspiring to occupy a decent place in the country's socioeconomic system, these new social forces have also become more aware of the existing inequality of resources distribution that is based on social hierarchy and on having informal ties with the ruling powers. They have come to see themselves "getting crumbs of the piece of cake that merchants and ruling powers are dividing among themselves."[67] The more privileged groups among the population, in turn, see these challenging forces as a threat and get increasingly allied with the ruling powers.

Due to the largely tribal and Sunni Islamist nature of the current opposition movement, the authorities have been successful in alienating other social groups (such as the urban population and the Shi'a) from the movement, utilizing the old "divide and rule" strategy. However, as the country's oil-based resources to provide for its rapidly growing population are getting more constrained with time, the disparity between the ruling and merchant elite and the rest of the population is further increasing, deepening the socioeconomic conflict. Therefore, although the current opposition wave has been largely

suppressed and driven out from the formal political field, the issues that it has voiced will sooner or later be raised again. Analyzing this fundamental socioeconomic conflict, the authors of some of the most recent works on Kuwait, and on the Gulf region in general, convincingly propose an argument about the increasing class-based division of these relatively wealthy Gulf societies,[68] where classes are formed not around the means of production, but around the means of distribution.[69]

All in all, the present chapter makes an effort to show that the recent episode of contention in Kuwait was caused and shaped by three major factors. First of all, it was the long-lasting internal socioeconomic conflict evolving mainly around the control over the country's oil wealth and its distribution. Second, this episode of contention was a response to the inevitable influence of the external (regional) uprisings of 2011–13, which had an important triggering and stimulating effect on Kuwait's protests. Finally, the path-dependent development of the local contentious politics field, with historical confrontation between the Parliament and the government, was another important factor that to a large extent explained the form and shape of the contention that was expressed in Kuwait. Kuwait's contentious politics clearly shows that in order to get an overall picture of any individual episode of contention, it should be necessarily analyzed within the frame of both internal factors, including local historical path-dependent development, and the regional/global context. This analysis reveals that external transnational factors inevitably influence individual contentious acts.

NOTES

1. J. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.
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3. See G. Achcar, *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).
4. J. Beinin and F. Vairel, "Introduction: The Middle East and North Africa," in *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. J. Beinin and F. Vairel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 8.
5. E. Burke, "Islam and Social Movements: Methodological Reflections," in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, ed. I. M. Lapidus and E. Burke (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 18.
6. OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2013.
7. "KSA Holds GCC's Largest SWF Assets at $64.1bn," *Arab News*, August 13, 2013.
8. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 79.
9. "21 Kuwait Groups Back Call for Bedoon Protest," *Kuwait Times*, September 29, 2013.

10. Kuwaiti national population constitutes only 32 percent (approximately 1.2 million) of the total amount of residents, the rest 68 percent (2.6 million) being expatriates (according to *Kuwait Times*, "700 Companies Face Visa Trading Charges," *Kuwait Times*, July 20, 2013.
11. J. Kinninmont, *Kuwait's Parliament: An Experiment in Semi-Democracy*, Chatham House briefing paper (August 2012).
12. P. W. Moore, *Doing Business in the Middle East: Politics and Economic Crisis in Jordan und Kuwait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 121.
13. G. Power, *The Difficult Development of Parliamentary Politics in the Gulf: Parliaments and the Process of Managed Reform in Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman*, London School of Economics Kuwait Programme Research Papers, 2012, 5.
14. K. C. Ulrichsen, "Kuwait's Doomed Parliament," *Al-Majalla,* December, 14, 2012.
15. M. Herb, *Kuwait's Endless Elections: the Opposition in Retreat*, POMED Project on Middle East Democracy, 2013, 1.
16. Ibid., 2.
17. Political parties are banned in Kuwait. Instead, there are loosely connected political blocks that some members of the Parliament are affiliated with.
18. Herb, *Kuwait's Endless Elections*, 2.
19. "3 Former Members Return to Assembly—but No Women," *Kuwait Times*, June 27, 2014.
20. Author's interview with Musallam al-Barrak, Kuwait, March 2014.
21. "Conspiracy Video Sends Shockwaves in Kuwait—MPs, Opposition Demand Full Truth or PM's Resignation," *Kuwait Times*, April 8, 2014; "Kuwait Corruption Claims Divide Ruling Family," *Al-Monitor*, June 17, 2014.
22. "Kuwait Targets Opposition by Revoking Citizenship," *Al-Monitor*, October 3, 2014.
23. J. Kinninmont, "Giving Democracy a Bad Name," *The Economist*, December 6, 2012.
24. Power, *Difficult Development,*, 10.
25. Author's interviews with representatives of Kuwait's business community and participants in 2011 protests, Kuwait, February-March 2014.
26. Z. Lockman, "Imagining the Working Class: Culture, Nationalism and Class Formation in Egypt, 1899–1914," *Poetics Today* 15 (Summer 1994): 157–90, 187.
27. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 4.
28. J. Onley, "Britain and the Gulf Shaikhdoms, 1820–1971: The Politics of Protection," *Occasional Paper No. 4*: 1–44 (Doha: CIRS, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar), 12; M. A. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 39.
29. The secession (or "exit") was one of the merchants' most effective tools of influence: protesting the ruler's policy, the merchants could leave Kuwait to another port-city taking a significant part of population involved in pearl-diving with them and depriving the ruler of his source of financial income. This tactic has been used by merchants since as early as the second half of the eighteenth century.
30. B. J. Slot, *Mubarak al-Sabah: Founder of Modern Kuwait, 1896–1915* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2005), 337.
31. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 39.
32. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 45.
33. Both the Education Council and the Municipality outlived the Majlis movement itself and were ultimately successfully incorporated into the country's administrative system, Crystal *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 58–59.

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35. Ibid., 48
36. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 63; Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*,, 48.
37. R. S. Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 29.
38. Moore, *Doing Business in the Middle East*, 39.
39. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 62.
40. Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 28.
41. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 44.
42. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 63.
43. Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 27–28, 54.
44. K. Almezaini, "Private Sector Actors in the UAE and Their Role in the Process of Economic and Political Reform," in *Business Politics of the Middle East*, ed. S. Hertog, G. Luciani, and M. Valeri (London: Hurst, 2013); Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States*.
45. Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 50.
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48. A. Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution: Republicans, Sultans, and Empires in Oman, 1965–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 49, 51.
49. J. Chalcraft, "Migration and Popular Protest in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf in the 1950s and 1960s," *International Labor and Working Class History* 79, no. 1S (2011): 28–47.
50. See Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*; Chalcraft, "Migration and Popular Protest," 28–47.
51. J. S. Ismael, *Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspective* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 87.
52. Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution*, 51; Chalcraft, "Migration and Popular Protest," 38.
53. Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution*.
54. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 74, 81.
55. Ismael, *Kuwait*, 87.
56. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 91; Ismael, *Kuwait*, 95.
57. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 92.
58. R. Azoulay, "The Politics of Shi'i Merchants in Kuwait,"in *Business Politics of the Middle East*, ed. S. Hertog, G. Luciani, and M. Valeri (London: Hurst), 82.
59. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 105.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 179.
62. Ibid.
63. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, 68.
64. Ibid., 66.
65. Ibid., 2.
66. Author's interview with Dr. Shafeeq Ghabra (Department of Political Science, Kuwait University), Kuwait, April 2014; Author's interview with a representative of business community, Kuwait, November 2014.
67. Author's interview with a Kuwaiti academic and political activist (Kuwait University), Kuwait, March 2014.
68. M. Herb, "A Nation of Bureaucrats: Political Participation and Economic Diversification in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 3 (2009): 375–95; A. Hanieh, *Capitalism and Class in the Gulf*

Arab States (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); S. Hertog, *The Private Sector and Reform in the Gulf Cooperation Council*, London School of Economics Kuwait Programme Research Papers, 2013; Hertog, "Introduction: The Role of MENA Business in Policy-Making and Political Transitions," in *Business Politics of the Middle East*, ed. S. Hertog, G. Luciani, and M. Valeri (London: Hurst, 2013).

69. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 7.

4

THE IRAQI INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT: A CASE OF TRANSGRESSIVE CONTENTION (1918–1920)

Aula Hariri

INTRODUCTION

The onset of World War One (WWI) in 1914 transformed the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire into a battleground that facilitated the rapid spread of European power across the region. The subsequent collapse of Ottoman power following the end of the war in 1918 consolidated the hold of European power in the region and inaugurated the rise of new episodes of contentious politics. The Egyptian Revolution unfolded in 1919 followed shortly by the Iraqi revolution against the British occupation in 1920, and subsequently by the Great Syrian Revolt against the French occupation between 1925 and 1927. This early postwar period was thus characterized by momentous political changes accompanied by the rise of new patterns of political contestation. As such, this period offers a fertile ground for analyzing the emergence of new political actors and the rise of new patterns of resistance vis-à-vis the spread of European power across the region. Accordingly this chapter focuses on the case of Iraq in the postwar period and examines the emergent patterns of contention during this pivotal historical moment.

The onset of WWI ushered in momentous changes for the inhabitants of the Ottoman provinces of Iraq—Mosul, Basra, and Baghdad. The Ottoman Empire's decision to ally with Germany during the war transformed Iraq into a battleground, marked by the British invasion of Basra in 1914, and its subsequent occupation of Baghdad in 1917 and Mosul in 1918. The rise of British power in Iraq garnered different responses from its inhabitants, most notably encouraging the growth of discrepant political demands among Kurdish and Arab inhabitants. Understanding contentious politics vis-à-vis the British

administration throughout Iraq would require a holistic study that takes into consideration these different political trends. What is presented here is an analysis of the contentious mobilization that emerged against the British administration primarily in Baghdad and the mid-Euphrates region, the area spanning from Samawah in the south to Musayib. Within these areas, a broad political movement began to emerge following the end of the war in 1918, as Britain began to consolidate its power in Iraq. This paved the way for a major phase of "contentious politics" against the British administration in Iraq, namely the rise of an Iraqi independence movement demanding the establishment of an Iraqi state based on "unconditional independence" (*al-istiqlal al-taam*). The movement's activism began after the end of the war in 1918, initially adopting peaceful claim making against the British authorities until the outbreak of an uprising in the summer of 1920, known invariably within Iraq as the "The Great Iraqi Revolution" and Iraq's "greatest uprising."[1]

Drawing on the concept of "transgressive contention," this chapter focuses on the Iraqi independence movement during its heyday from 1918 until 1920. Transgressive contention refers to the mobilization of *new or recently emergent political actors* in contentious claim making involving *unprecedented* or *innovative* collective action, all of which increases the movement's scope for generating substantial political change.[2] Through a detailed analysis of the independence movement's demands, methods, and patterns of mobilization, this chapter demonstrates how the movement qualifies as a strong case of transgressive contention. The concept of transgressive contention is useful since it recognizes the limitations of the state's control over political mobilization, and yet it avoids the danger of romanticizing society's agential capabilities by connecting political change to new forms of political mobilization and extra-institutional methods. The core argument of this chapter is that the Iraqi independence movement was at the center of a process by which an accepted model of political community was being forged through contentious claim making, and it was the convergence upon a particular model of Iraqi polity that meant the movement had potential for substantial political change.

THE DEMANDS OF THE IRAQI INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

The Iraqi independence movement comprised three distinct yet connected social forces, the Shi'a *ulema*[3] of the holy cities, the mid-Euphrates tribal leaders, and urban nationalists, particularly within Baghdad. The Shi'a ulema, and

in particular the *mujtahids*[4] among them, most notably the Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi, played a leading role in undermining the authority of the British occupation and mobilizing support for the demands of the movement. Their influence was particularly felt among the tribal leaders of the mid-Euphrates region, spanning Samawah up to Musayib. These tribal leaders were involved in peaceful demands against the British authorities until the summer of 1920, when they provided the independence movement with its indispensible fighting force during the Iraqi uprising. Unlike the tribal forces, the Baghdadi nationalists did not partake in armed fighting against the British, yet they played an equally indispensible role in mobilizing innovative and unprecedented displays of patriotic and religious unity through gatherings in mosques and street demonstrations. To some extent events in the mid-Euphrates and Baghdad developed a momentum of their own; yet this disjuncture was bridged through common goals and their shared communications, particularly through the Shi'a ulema.[5] Thus each of the three social forces played a decisive role in the longevity, momentum, and spread of the independence movement.

The independence movement brought together these three social forces in a collective struggle not only *against* the British occupation but more importantly *for* a very specific conception of Iraqi statehood and political community. These conceptions emerged as part of a conscious and directed process through which the independence movement forged an agreement on the accepted model of statehood and political community in Iraq.[6] The first clear indication of this process surfaced during the British Referendum of 1918–1919. Civil Commissioner Sir Arnold Wilson had organized the referendum to garner notable opinion on the political future of Iraq. Accordingly select notables of each district were asked to specify the geographical boundaries of Iraq, their preferred form of future government, and their preferred leader for Iraq.

Although the referendum was officially aimed at garnering local opinion, the Civil Commissioner was uncompromising about what he considered, and thought the Iraqi populace believed, to be the most suitable form of governance in Iraq. His views were distilled in a telegraph to the British Government in November 1918, where he declared, "The Arabs are content with our occupation…our best course is to declare Mesopotamia to be a British Protectorate."[7] Indeed for Wilson, direct British rule was the only viable option in Iraq. Such a view stemmed not so much from his belief that Iraqis were incapable of self-government, but rather from his belief that the character

of any indigenous government would be antithetical to European standards. Wilson's colonial mind-set made British tuition essential for enabling Iraq to "move forward" in line with European cultural and constitutional "progress."[8] For Wilson, direct British administration was the only desirable outcome from the referendum.

Determined to secure favorable responses to the referendum, the Civil Commissioner personally traveled to the holy city of Najaf a few days after issuing the referendum, to influence the local response. Wilson's actions reflected his awareness of the political weight of Najaf, and the broader mid-Euphrates region more generally. The city had witnessed an anti-British rebellion in 1919, and moreover many of the Shi'a ulema resided in Najaf. These Shi'a ulema, in conjunction with surrounding tribes, had participated in an armed – *jihad* – movement against the British invasion of Iraq in 1914/1915. Against this backdrop, Wilson put forward the referendum questions at a meeting with leading notables and tribal heads of the surrounding Shamiyah area.[9] In response the local delegation requested to consult the Shi'a ulema before offering definitive answers to the referendum.[10] That the tribal leaders sought a consultation period suggests that there was no widespread consensus about Iraq's preferred political future, and that the referendum had ignited a process of consultation and agreement over Iraq's preferred model of political community.[11] Equally significant was the Shamiyah leader's request to consult with the ulema on such political matters, an indication of how integral the ulema's political direction was to the mid-Euphrates tribes.

Among those consulted was Ayatollah al-Shirazi, who issued a *fatwa* stating that "a Muslim cannot choose a non-Muslim king over Iraq."[12] By prohibiting non-Muslim—hence British—rulership over Iraq, the fatwa directly challenged the moral hierarchies underpinning Wilson's support for British control over Iraq. The decision to seek the 1918 fatwa and the widespread response it garnered were indicative of the widespread authority of the Shi'a ulema in political matters. The involvement of the ulema in the independence movement did not represent a new phenomenon, and it can be understood as a continuation of their historic role in opposing the rise of European imperialism in the region since the nineteenth century.[13] Tens of thousands of copies of the fatwa were distributed throughout Iraqi cities and villages, leading to scores of resignations of Iraqi officials from the British administration.[14] The fatwa directly undermined the legitimacy of the British administration in Iraq, and accordingly it has been described by an Iraqi participant in the

movement as the "first spiritual bullet" to be fired against the British occupation after the war.[15]

The referendum had thus facilitated a process of consultation and agreement over Iraq's political future in the mid-Euphrates, and this process was paralleled in many major cities, including Baghdad. The petitions submitted in response to the referendum bore the imprint of an emergent movement with clear and specific political goals. Accordingly in many cities, including Baghdad, Kadhimiya, Najaf, and Karbala, the referendum resulted in almost identical petitions defining Iraq's geographical area as spanning Mosul to Basra and outlining the choice of a constitutional monarchy bound by a national legislative assembly and headed by one of the sons of King Hussain al-Sharif of Hijaz.[16] In the mid-Euphrates cities the petitions were signed by leading tribal leaders, notables, and the ulema, while in Baghdad the petitions were, crucially, signed by members of both the Sunni and Shi'a communities.[17] That the same demands were echoed throughout different towns and cities and endorsed by members of different sectarian backgrounds suggests the emergence of a movement working toward a unified national framework for future politics in Iraq. Indeed, the ideological framing of the referendum petitions within an overarching national Iraqi framework—surpassing tribal and regional affiliations—suggests that a developing sense of Iraqi political community lay at the heart of the independence movement.

The key demands of the independence movement were thus articulated through the referendum process, namely the establishment of a constitutional monarchy bound by a legislative assembly and headed by a Sharifian king. The call for a constitutional monarchy partly reflected the influence of the constitutionalist movements in neighboring Iran and Turkey.[18] Strong parallels can also be traced to the constitutionalist debates among the Shi'a ulema during the Iranian Constitutionalist Revolution (1905–1911).[19] Meanwhile the choice of a king from a Sharifian family was explained during a speech delivered by the Fatlah tribal leader Abd al-Wahid al-Hajj al-Sikkar following the issuing of the referendum. Al-Sikkar stated that as Arabs they desired to be ruled by an Arab ruler, and a son from the Sharifian family was chosen since it was the greatest Arab family known.[20] Since King Hussain al-Sharif's son Faisal was already king of Syria, his brother, Abdullah, soon emerged as the preferred candidate for the throne in Iraq, and in the subsequent months declarations were signed by the leading tribal leaders of the mid-Euphrates proclaiming Abdullah as the king of Iraq.[21] The specificity of these political

demands undermines the notion that anti-British contention was primarily a reactive movement led by disenchanted Iraqis who were united mainly by the fact that "they all knew what they did not want."[22] Rather, the specificity of the movement's demands suggests that the independence movement was a proactive movement impelled by a specific notion of Iraqi statehood.

The demands of the Iraqi independence movement were perceived by the Civil Administration as a reactionary response to the American and European declarations endorsing the ex-Ottoman territories' right to independence.[23] These included the British Proclamation issued following the capture of Baghdad in 1917, and the Fourteen Points speech delivered by American President Woodrow Wilson in January 1918.[24] Yet it was the Anglo-French Declaration issued following the war in November 1918 that posed the greatest concern for the Civil Commissioner.[25] The declaration was unequivocal in its support of Arab self-determination:

> The aim of France and Great Britain…is the complete and final liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and the free choice of the native populations.[26]

Wilson attributed great agential power to the declaration, viewing it as having implanted nationalist ideas among the populace who otherwise would have "taken it for granted" that Iraq would remain under direct British rule.[27] The significance of the declaration lay partly in its undisputed support for Arab self-government and partly in the timing of its publication following the end of the war. This meant that it commanded greater belief among the population than the wartime Baghdad Proclamation or the Fourteen Points, which could have been interpreted as wartime expediencies.[28]

The Anglo-French Declaration, along with the Allied wartime declarations, undoubtedly played a crucial role in encouraging nationalist demands in Iraq, particularly in the towns.[29] In his recollection of events, Shaikh Muhammad Mehdi al-Basser, who played a leading role in anti-British mobilization in Baghdad, maintains that these declarations had a decisive influence on the demands and momentum of the independence movement.[30] While the declarations may have increased the confidence and momentum of the independence movement, they cannot account for the specificity of the political demands of the movement, namely for a constitutional Sharifian monarchy. Indeed the significance of these declarations was limited by the extent to which

they resonated with existing local, regional, and ideological trends. Locally, the political vacuum left by the collapse of Ottoman power had encouraged the politicization of Iraqi frameworks of self-reference.[31] The regional situation further encouraged this process, particularly the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 and the establishment of the semi-independent Arab Government in neighboring Syria in 1918.[32] Internationally, the declarations' support for self-government was symptomatic of broader ideological and political changes in international relations, namely the rise of American power and the emergence of the nation-state unit for organizing international relations, at the expense of empire building.[33] Against this backdrop the impact of the European declarations encouraged domestic political trends and provided a legitimate international platform for contesting British power in Iraq.[34]

The intertwining of international and domestic trends was evident in the early phase of the independence movement, where the focus was on peaceful claim making based on Britain's fulfillment of European and American promises of independence. Keenly aware of the implications of the rise of American power and its opposition to colonial rule, the mid-Euphrates tribal leaders and ulema attempted to fulfill their political objectives by influencing the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Since the Peace Conference would decide the political status of Iraq and its relations with Great Britain, the ulema, the tribal leaders, and the notables produced documents addressed to Sharif Hussain outlining the oppressive situation in Iraq under the British administration and asking the Sharif to relay the reality of the situation at the Peace Conference. These political documents were signed by prominent ulema including Ayatollah al-Shirazi and Shaikh al-Shariati al-Isfahani, as well as notable leaders from the Shamiyah district including al-Sikkar and Sayyid Alwan al-Yasiri, and sent via a representative to the Sharif in Mecca in 1919.[35]

Political grievances against the British administration were compounded by the colonialist style of administration in Iraq, conducted via British Political Officers who ruled over Iraq's districts. British labor practices were particularly resented since they involved the use of tribesmen from different areas for carrying out labor-intensive projects such as the digging of rivers. This was a source of widespread grievances in Diwaniyah where the Political Officer, Major Daly, used the tribesmen to dig rivers in labor camps. Daly's insistence on the uncustomary presence of the tribal heads at these camps was seen as an act of purposeful contempt and humiliation by the tribal heads.[36]

Daly's policies were despised by the tribes, nor did they go unnoticed by the British administration, as the British Oriental Secretary Gertrude Bell confirms: "I think they were quite right to hate him—he was quite intolerably autocratic."[37]

Such colonial practices served to further alienate tribal opinion, and in fact proved greatly counterproductive to Britain's aims of subduing the tribes. The influential Shamiyah leader Sayyid Muhsin Abu-Tabikh recounts in his memoirs how Daly's labor policies contributed to strengthening anti-British feeling:

> Daly failed to achieve his goals, instead his actions . . . provided an opportunity for the tribal heads and tribesmen to gather in one place, and under the conditions of tyranny and oppression [in the labor camps] discussions unfolded among the tribes on what we could each do to fight this loathsome [British] occupation . . . and after a short time in the labor camps we agreed to unite our word . . . and we collectively elected [an elder tribal shaikh] . . . who was entrusted to represent us to Major Daly . . .[38]

As Abu-Tabikh's account suggests, although labor practices were resented by the tribes, such practices created shared experiences of colonial oppression that cut across tribal lines among labourers; simultaneously it also presented an opportunity for tribal heads to meet and unify their anti-British stance. British policies highlighted the colonial hierarchies underpinning British power, which served to accelerate the move toward armed revolt among the tribes and hardened the attitudes toward the British administration. Yet while resentment toward the policies of the Political Officers "precipitated matters," they did not *cause* the tribal opposition to the British.[39] Ultimately, for the anti-British tribal leaders, all the Political Officers represented the same British colonial order, and as Abu-Tabikh put it, "They were all English who came from India and treated us like Indians."[40]

Outside of the mid-Euphrates region, important developments were underway in Baghdad, through the growth of secret political societies in early 1919. The most influential of which was the *Haras al-Istiqlal* (Guardians of Independence), which demanded the establishment of a constitutional monarchy headed by a Sharifian son.[41] The popularity of the Haras was evident from its rapid growth and spread across Iraq as branches were established in Najaf, Kadhimiya, Shamiyah, Deltawa, and other areas in 1919. Among the

most influential members who joined the Haras were Ali al-Bazirgan, Yusuf al-Suwaidi, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr, and Ja'far Abu al-Timman.[42] The al-Haras's leading members were townsmen, mainly from Baghdad, and included religious figures, poets, intellectuals, and former government officials.

Important lines of communication were established between Haras, the mid-Euphrates tribal leaders, and the Shi'a ulema. At a meeting on April 21, 1920, two representatives of the tribal leaders met with Haras' members, including al-Timman, in Baghdad. At the meeting, the Euphrates leaders relayed the decision of the tribes and the ulema not to bow to foreign rule; in response, al-Timman affirmed the Baghdadis' readiness to open communications with the mid-Euphrates leaders.[43] Accordingly, al-Timman was selected by the Haras as their representative to travel to the mid-Euphrates and meet the leading tribal notables and the Shi'a ulema.[44] Among those he met during his travels were Abu-Tabikh and the Fatlah tribal leader al-Sikkar.[45] His travels ended in a meeting with Ayatollah al-Shirazi and leading tribal leaders on 4 May 1920. This pivotal meeting culminated with delegates taking an oath of commitment to the demands for complete independence of Iraq, even if it necessitated the use of arms.[46] The delegates later visited the shrine of al-Abbas in Karbala, where an oath of their commitment was taken on the Quran.[47] Such meetings brought together political developments in the mid-Euphrates area and Baghdad under the orbit of one independence movement with shared core objectives.

THE INCLUSIVE PATRIOTISM OF THE MOVEMENT

As the Civil Administration's unwillingness to concede to demands for self-governance crystallized, the independence movement altered its methods of contention. The turning point was the news that a League of Nations mandate had been granted to Britain on April 28, 1920. The mandate legalized the presence of British troops in Iraq, permitted Britain control over Iraq's foreign relations, and conferred on Britain supervisory functions to facilitate "the progressive development of Mesopotamia as an independent State."[48] As news of the mandate trickled into Iraq, anti-British street demonstrations and gatherings erupted in Baghdad, organized primarily by the Haras members. In addition to street demonstrations, anti-British mobilization took place through joint Sunni-Shi'a ceremonies characterized by displays of religious and patriotic unity.[49] The British records are replete with detailed references to these Sunni-Shi'a gatherings that took place primarily in Baghdad's mosques,

notably the Haydar-Khana mosque, and were attended in the thousands.[50] Significantly attendees at these gatherings were not exclusively urban or resident in Baghdad, as individuals traveled from the surrounding regions to participate, including tribal leaders. Among those who attended these gatherings was the shaikh of the Duwalim tribe in Rumaitha, Sha'lan Abu al-Chlon, whose actions would spark the beginning of the anti-British uprising in late July.[51]

Sunni-Shi'a unity was the distinguishing feature of these ceremonies, fostered through convening of joint religious rituals held by members of both communities. Sunnis participated in Shi'a-led commemorations of the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussain known as *Ta'ziya,* while Shi'a attended Sunni-led celebrations in honor of the birth of the Prophet, known as *Mawlid.*[52] According to the British authorities, such displays of unity were historically unparalleled in modern Iraqi history:

> …the "Mawlud" was read by Mulla Uthman and the "Ta'ziyah" by Shaikh Muhammed Mehdi al Basir al Hilli both Shi'a and Sunni taking part. Such a thing has never before occurred…People who objected were silenced and told that all must combine as long as the common enemy—Britain—is before them.[53]

Through such joint gatherings and practices, calls for political and religious unity in the face of the British administration went beyond abstract ideals and were transformed into tangible realities. Their influence reached beyond the politically active elite and spread among Iraqis. The political significance of these developments were not missed by the British authorities, who viewed Sunni-Shia unity as antithetical to their political interests in Iraq:

> …whilst [Sunni-Shi'a union] lasts there is a certain amount of danger. Political matters are now discussed everywhere and by everyone and with little reserve. They have gained confidence by this union whether imaginary or real—and criticize Government with far greater license than before. The great object of these "Mawluds" is to reach the lower classes and excite them to take an interest in political affairs. It is from this class that danger threatens.[54]

Members of both sects were well represented during the gatherings, which partly reflected the sectarian mix of the organizers themselves, most

of whom were drawn from Haras, and included, notably, al-Timman, Shaikh Muhammad Mehdi al-Basser, Shaikh Ahmad Al-Hajj Daud, Ali al-Bazirgan, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr, and Yusuf al-Suwaidi.[55] Through displays of historically unprecedented Shi'a-Sunni unity, these gatherings formed part of the Iraqi independence movement's innovative collective action, through which it fostered inclusivity and presented a unified opposition to the British occupation. [56]

These dynamic gatherings also featured patriotic poetry and anti-British speeches. Shaikh Muhammad Mehdi al-Basser, a Haras member, played a leading role through his passionate orations of patriotic and anti-British poetry.[57] These practices mobilized patriotic and anti-British sentiments among their audiences, who responded energetically with cries of "Down with Britain, Down with the Allies, Down with the Imperialists," as well as "Long live Abdullah King of Iraq."[58] The fact that religious rituals formed the primary mechanisms through which contentious mobilization occurred was reflective of the importance of religion in the contentious repertoires of Iraqi society. To acknowledge this does not detract from the authenticity of the overarching "Iraqi" framework within which political demands were being made.[59] Rather, the centrality of religion to the Iraqi independence movement should serve to undermine the simplistic and a priori ideological division between the "national" and the "religious" frameworks, itself an extension of the simplistic analytical division between "religion" and "politics."[60]

Significantly the inclusive framing of the uprising went beyond Sunni-Shi'a unity and included the Jewish and Christian communities who predominantly resided in Baghdad. Efforts at increasing the inclusivity of the uprising were encouraged by Ayatollah al-Shirazi, who wrote to nationalist leaders in Baghdad exhorting them, among other things, to respect the sanctity of churches and the rights of Jewish and Christian citizens.[61] The British records refer to a letter from Ayatollah al-Shirazi to al-Timman dated June 1, 1920, in which he states:

> You must preserve the rights of Christians and Jews…and respect their religious feelings as was ordered by our Prophet. You must also preserve the rights of foreigners in your country and respect them so that your enemy must have no charge against your treatment of minorities.[62]

The British records indicate that attempts to incorporate the Christian and Jewish communities into the independence movement appeared in the

form of letters and notices distributed in coffee shops frequented by these communities, inviting them to join the calls for independence, which were welcomed by their recipients. [63] One such letter read:

> We, our fathers and our ancestors lived in friendship and mutual help. Do not consider in any way that the demonstrations carried out by the citizens effect any of your rights…We again invite you in the name of the Fatherland and patriotism to unite, in order to form a single hand to work for the realisation of our principle and our future happiness.[64]

More direct attempts to incorporate the religious minorities into the independence movement were also evident. The Haras played a prominent role in such initiatives, as suggested by the British description of displays of Christian-Muslim unity during a Corpus Christ procession in Baghdad in June 1920:

> The deputation of Mohamedans (composed of Muhammad Jafar Abu Tumman, Shaikh Ahmad Al Daood and Ali Barzingan)…assembled a band of "enlightened" young Sunnis and Shi'as who threw flowers and scented water on the procession as it passed, and shouted "Long live the Glory of Our Lord the Christ Long Live the Fathers of the Church. Long live our brothers and Christians. Long live the Iraqian Union. Long live the Patriotic Union. Long live the Society of Iraq" when the Christians including priests replied "Long live our brothers the Muhammadans—long live the Arabs."…There was a good deal of sentimental talk over this unprecedented spectacle and many said that thanks were due to the British for thus unwillingly being the cause of such a union.[65]

Such examples demonstrate the degree of reconciliation achieved between the different religious communities within Iraq, as the forging of an overarching national framework took precedence over religious differences. Indeed the independence movement gave rise to a sense of unified national awareness among increasing numbers of the populace, which gave the movement an inclusive character.[66]

These innovative displays of patriotic inclusivity and religious unity during the summer of 1920 suggest that peaceful contentious interaction vis-à-vis the British authorities was a constitutive site for the spread of inclusive and pluralist conceptions of political community.[67] These contentious practices

solidified the boundaries between the inhabitants—as Iraqis—and the British civil administration—as colonisers of their homeland. Equally they helped deactivate the boundaries of difference between religious groups inside Iraq and push disparities to the background, as the establishment of an independent Iraqi state took precedence.[68] Through the unprecedented and innovative nature of Sunni-Shia gatherings, the independence movement thus adopted transgressive practices, which helped promote and spread inclusive notions of political community in Iraq.

In terms of the independence movement's relations with the British administration, here too its commitment to inclusivity was mirrored in Baghdad through the formation of the *mandubin* (delegates), a delegation of 15 prominent Sunni and Shi'a Iraqis who were chosen in late May 1920 to represent the demands of the independence movement to the British administration.[69] These figures included notable Haras leaders such as al-Bazirgan, al-Timman, and Shaikh Ahmad Al-Hajj Daud. On June 2, 1920, a meeting between the Civil Commissioner and the delegates took place, where Wilson set out the British Government's intention to establish a

> Council of State under an Arab president, to hold office until the question of the final constitution of Mesopotamia has been submitted to the Legislative Assembly, which we propose to call…Mesopotamia has been under an alien Government for 200 years, and with the best will in the world, an indigenous National Government cannot be set up at once. The process must be gradual, or disaster is certain.[70]

This top-down and "gradual" establishment of an Iraqi state fell far short of the delegates' demands for establishing an Iraqi state free of British interference. Theirs was a far more inclusive approach, as demonstrated by the document of demands put before Wilson during the meeting. The document demanded the immediate convening of an elected and representative Iraqi conference in Baghdad, with the aim of drawing up proposals for the country's internal administration and foreign relations.[71] It is worth noting that prior to this meeting, Wilson invited 20 Christian and Jewish notables with a view to leaning on their support to undermine the delegates' demands during the meeting. Aware of Wilson's actions, the delegates approached the Christian and Jewish invitees and were able to convince them to endorse their demands, thereby thwarting Wilson's plan.[72] Such examples demonstrate the degree of reconciliation achieved between the different religious communities within

Iraq, as the forging of an overarching national framework took precedence over religious differences.

The idea of organizing representatives into *mandubin* in Baghdad was replicated in other cities as Ayatollah al-Shirazi ordered the formation of such delegations to represent the movement's demands.[73] *Mandubin* were thus formed outside of Baghdad, including in Karbala where the delegates included Ayatollah al-Khalesi and Ayatollah al-Shirazi.[74] In the mid-Euphrates area the delegates made efforts to unite the demands of the tribes with the demands emanating from Baghdad. They also played a crucial role in mobilizing demonstrations, particularly in Karbala, which, as the religious center in Iraq, became the arena for anti-British demonstrations.[75] Moreover, like the Baghdad *mandubin*, the mid-Euphrates counterparts petitioned the Civil Administration with their demands. For example, in Najaf, the local delegates forwarded their written demands to Wilson through the local Political Officer in early June, which—mirroring the demands in Baghdad—included the establishment of a conference with an elected delegation for the purpose of establishing an independent Arab government. However, Wilson refused to provide a formal response to the *mandubin's* demands, or to hear them in person when some members traveled to meet him in Baghdad. Wilson's lack of foresight in refusing to negotiate the demands emanating from the mid-Euphrates cities served only to further harden local attitudes toward the British administration and to make armed action the more likely route to independence.[76]

The tense situation was not helped by Wilson's announcement of a scheme to establish a British-dominated Council of State under Sir Percy Cox, with an Arab president.[77] Wilson publicly announced details of this scheme on June 20, 1920, where he set out Britain's intention of establishing

> an independent State under the guarantee of the League of Nations and subject to the mandate to Great Britain [which will have responsibility] for the maintenance of internal peace and external security, and will require them to formulate an organic law…The inception of this task [will be entrusted] to Sir Percy Cox.[78]

Public awareness of British intentions to replace Wilson and to establish an Arab state did nothing to stem the rising tide of opposition to the British administration. This reaffirms that the independence movement—and later the uprising—was not an indirect result of Wilson's intransigence

in his preference for direct (as opposed to indirect) rule in Iraq.[79] Rather, as has been shown, the independence movement's raison d'etre was the vision of an Iraqi state outside the framework of the British mandatory authorities altogether. Moreover had the independence movement been motivated by a greater degree of political devolution, then Wilson's announcement on the establishment of a Council of State should have dampened discontent.

Up to this point in June, Ayatollah al-Shirazi had consistently stressed the need to adopt peaceful means of contention against the British, and had exhorted against the use of force unless used defensively in response to Britain initiating a war against the Iraqis.[80] Yet, toward the end of June relations between the British authorities and the independence movement deteriorated drastically. The rising tensions were fueled by the British dispatch of armored cars to Karbala on June 22 and the arrest and subsequent deportation of anti-British individuals, including Ayatollah al-Shirazi's son. A silent British warning was also conveyed to Ayatollah al-Shirazi himself in the form of three warplanes hovering above his residence.[81] Despite this Ayatollah al-Shirazi was very clear that the use of force was only permitted under very strict conditions.[82] When tribal heads wrote to him after the capture of his son asking permission to use force against the British, he responded unequivocally that no swords should be withdrawn even if

> you see me [Ayatollah al-Shirazi] captured in the hands of the English, unless the English are preparing an army to fight you for demanding your taken rights. Then you will have to fight in defense. You should not refer to anything in your fight except for the Iraqi cause and complete independence.[83]

As the tribes became increasingly restless with the Civil Commissioner's refusal to concede to their demands, a meeting was organized on June 28 between the leading notables of Shamiyah, including al-Sikkar. According to Fariq al-Mizhir al-Firon, who took part in the subsequent uprising, it was decided during this meeting that a final warning would be sent to the British administration, calling on them to implement their demands, which now included the release of the detainees. It was also allegedly agreed that a fatwa would be sought from Ayatollah al-Shirazi to endorse an armed rising against the British.[84] Finally the Shamiyah notables agreed to send letters to two Rumaitha tribal leaders, including Sha'lan Abu al-Chlon, asking them to spread the calls for Abdullah's throne in Iraq.[85] It appears that these letters

were indeed written and sent to Rumaitha but their arrival coincided with the outbreak of armed fighting against British forces in Rumaitha, inaugurating the second episode of contentious politics in Iraq, "The Great Iraqi Revolution."[86]

THE "GREAT IRAQI REVOLUTION" OF 1920

The immediate trigger for the Iraqi uprising was a relatively trivial dispute in the town of Rumaitha, part of the Diwaniyah district, over the arrest of a shaikh of the Duwalim tribe, Sha'lan Abu al-Chlon, on June 30, due to an allegedly unpaid loan borrowed from the British administration.[87] Following his arrest, Abu al-Chlon was able to mobilize his tribesmen to free him, provoking a tribal uprising in Rumaitha. The tribes destroyed the railroad lines north and south of Samawah and soon after they declared an all-out-revolt against the British administration. [88] Although the arrest of al-Chlon concerned a non-political issue, the escalation of events against the British thereafter was in line with al-Chlon's own political opposition to the British. It should be remembered that al-Chlon was a participant in the 1914/1915 jihad against the British army, and was an active supporter of the calls for independence in Iraq.[89]

In an attempt to deter further hostilities, the Assistant Political Officer in Rumaitha mounted an unprovoked attack on a neighboring village belonging to the Abu Hassan tribe. Some 1,500–2,000 neighboring tribesmen came to the defense of the Abu Hassan tribe, resulting in a wide-scale war between the adjacent villages and British forces in Rumaitha.[90] Meanwhile the tribal notables of the Shamiyah district had met with the Assistant Political Officer of Shamiyah, Captain James Mann, on July 5, and put forward their demands for independence, a national government, and cessation of hostilities in Rumaitha. The meeting ended with a pact between the leaders and Mann stipulating that they would not commit any armed action until their demands had been communicated to Baghdad. However, when news of the British attack on the Abu Hassan spread to the Shamiyah leaders, the pact was annulled. This opened the path to their participation in the uprising on July 13.[91] It was the subsequent British response to the Rumaitha uprising, rather than the arrest of al-Chlon, that spread the Rumaitha battle into a large-scale uprising throughout Iraq.

The mid-Euphrates tribal mobilization against the British was led by tribes from the Fatlah, Khazail, Bani Lam, and the southern Bani Hasan tribes.

Notable leaders among these included al-Sikkar, Abu-Tabikh, and Alwan al-Haj Sa'dun. Armed mobilization against the British forces led to a major victory at Raranjiyya—between Hilla and Kifl—on July 24 and 25, which increased the enthusiasm for the uprising. By the end of the month the tribes had captured Samawah, Rumaitha, Diwaniyah, Shamiyah, Abu Skair, Kufa, Kifl, Najaf, and Karbala. Apart from the mid-Euphrates towns, the uprising's other significant stronghold was in the Diyala district, north of Baghdad, where significant tribal mobilizations in August provoked an early British evacuation of the town of Baquba.[92] Among the upper Euphrates tribes in Faluja, limited tribal mobilizations against the British were witnessed during the uprising, resulting in the killing of a Political Officer, yet it is unclear to what extent this incident was connected to developments in Baghdad and the mid-Euphrates.[93] Only the tribes of the Muntafiq district that lay in the marshes of the Euphrates, and the tribes along the Tigris River, remained largely absent from the uprising.[94] In the Muntafiq, the British authorities evacuated three towns to avoid a siege, and tribal raids occurred on the railway line between Nasiriya and Basra; yet overall the tribes made no major attempts to expel the British from the Muntafiq area.[95] In total some 130,000 armed men were mobilized against the British during the uprising which persisted until the end of November, when it was finally suppressed by the British authorities at the cost of over 6,000 Iraqi and 400 British fatalities.[96]

Tribal mobilization during the uprising, as was the case during the 1914/1915 jihad, is best conceptualized as part of a continuation of the contentious politics of the independence movement. The mid-Euphrates tribal leaders' adoption of extra-institutional methods of contention—armed mobilization—can be conceptualized as part of the independence movement's transgressive patterns of contentious politics. Tribal mobilization was greatly influenced by the Shi'a ulema, and in particular the mujtahids. The leading role of the Shi'a mujtahids and their indispensability in the degree of armed tribal mobilization is one of the most agreed upon features of the Iraqi uprising.[97] Tribal mobilization was facilitated by a fatwa issued by the Grand Ayatollah al-Shirazi on the permissibility of defensive force against the British in Iraq.[98]

Although the precise date of the fatwa is unclear, there is little doubt that a fatwa was sought by the mid-Euphrates tribal leaders to enable their participation in the uprising.[99] Indeed when news of the British deployment of arms to supress the tribes spread, the mid-Euphrates leaders consulted Ayatollah

al-Shirazi on the permissibility of their armed participation and were told that it was obligatory to defend themselves against British attacks.[100] The fatwa gave the tribal leaders a moral religious backing to mobilize their tribesmen against the British.[101] The fatwa was widely distributed as confirmed by the future nationalist politician Muhammad M. Kubbah who recalls in his memoirs the role he played in helping distribute the fatwas in Baghdad and Diyala.[102] The importance of the Shi'a mujtahids' mobilizational capacity for the uprising demonstrates again the importance of religion as the dominant idiom through which political demands and political identity was conceptualized in Iraq.[103]

That the fatwas resulted in broad mobilization among the mid-Euphrates tribes may be explained by the close historic relations between these tribes and the Shi'a ulema in the holy cities. By contrast, that the tribes of the Gharraf and along the Tigris River did not take part in the uprising may partly be explained by the fact that the Tigris area had been in far closer contact with British power. The British Army had directly occupied the area since the early days of the war, unlike the mid-Euphrates region. It is thus likely that the Tigris tribes were far more aware of the realities of the strength of British military power and their control over the rivers and railways. Moreover the Tigris area had undergone a historic process of commercialization—unparalleled in the mid-Euphrates area—marked by the expansion of British commercial interests.[104] Significantly, the tribes along the Tigris were, like the mid-Euphrates, predominantly Shi'a, which underscores the variability of "tribal" behavior in Iraq and the heterogeneous socioeconomic and ideological influences shaping tribal behavior.[105]

The internal organization of the tribe and the associative behavior it produced were vital for sustaining the armed campaign against British forces. Typically, tribal mobilization would take place following the decision of the tribal shaikh—in conjunction with other shaikhs—to mobilize his tribesmen against the British.[106] Unlike the urban population, the tribes were numerous, generally well-armed, and resided across a wide geographical terrain. These features made it impossible for British forces to round up tribal fighters or place them under siege.[107] Moreover the military logistics and direction of the uprising largely followed tribal lines, as tribesmen were directed by their respective leaders.[108] In some cases tribal mobilization followed different lines, such as in Diyala, where Ayatollah al-Khalesi played a central role in leading the uprising; yet the overall impression is that tribesmen during 1920, were generally mobilized to fight along lines decided by tribal leaders.[109]

However this was not simply a matter of mobilizing tribesmen in obedience to tribal orders, since the authority of tribal leaders in the mid-Euphrates region was still largely dependent on the acquiescence of tribesmen. A degree of consensus between tribesmen and tribal leaders on the need for anti-British action characterized tribal mobilization, as suggested by the observations of one British commentator, who noted that the "chiefs of tribes in Hilla and Diwaniya Divisions have mostly followed their tribesmen rather than led them."[110]

Finally, the most concrete evidence for the political nature of tribal mobilization lies in the establishment of a temporary national government during the uprising. In southern cities where the British Political Officers were evacuated or expelled during the uprising, such as in Najaf and Karbala, local governing and administrative systems were established; these included councils responsible for the collection of taxes and the provision of services.[111] Following the expulsion of Political Officers from Karbala in late July, two councils were formed under the authority of Ayatollah al-Shirazi, the first was a Council of Scholars (*Majlis al-Ilmi*) formed of Islamic scholars for the religious promotion of the uprising and for adjudicating disputes. The second was a National Council (*Majlis al-Milli*) comprising notables tasked with administering the territories under their jurisdiction.[112]

Following the death of Ayatollah al-Shirazi on August 13, these councils were dissolved and the ensuing disorder that prevailed led to the formation of a temporary national government in Karbala. Abu-Tabikh, from the Shamiyah area, was chosen to head the government, and he traveled to Karbala to assume his administrative responsibilities.[113] That a leading tribal leader was chosen to head a government demonstrates the degree of politicization among the tribal heads. Moreover it refutes the Orientalist notion, advocated most forcefully by Wilson, that the uprising represented the tribes' "revolt against settled government of any kind."[114] Rather the establishment of a temporary government during the uprising suggests that the tribes did not oppose *any* settled government but in fact were driven by demands for a *particular* type of Iraqi government—one independent of the British.

The temporary government that was formed in Karbala enjoyed full authority to administer justice, collect taxes, keep the peace, and perform all the functions of an independent government, and its jurisdiction extended to territories once captured by tribes.[115] That the temporary government was formed as a *national* rather than a local government is suggested by the celebrations that took place to mark the establishment of the new government,

and where the first Iraqi flag was raised. According to al-Bazirgan, these celebrations occurred on October 8, and were attended by around 20,000 people.[116] Among those who attended the ceremony were leaders from outside of Karbala, including Baghdadi leaders such as al-Bazirgan, al-Timman, and Yusuf al-Suwaidi.[117]

The urban nationalists' acceptance of Abu-Tabikh as the leader of the new government suggests a high degree of political convergence between themselves and the mid-Euphrates leaders. Indeed it demonstrates a genuine alliance between the Baghdadi nationalists and rural leaders that transcended urban-rural dichotomies.[118] Al-Bazirgan's account of the events is revelatory:

> It is our duty to assist [Abu-Tabikh] in the governance and obey him so that he may be capable of governing the kingdom and the news of its [successful] governance will reach the occupying British so they realise that we are a people capable of managing the affairs of our own homeland and not, as they believe us to be, that we have not matured yet and that our culture is backward.[119]

The establishment of a temporary national government was both an innovative and historically unprecedented act and offered one of the most powerful contentious practices of the uprising. It provided a potent demonstration of the genuine possibilities for political cooperation between the mid-Euphrates tribes, the Baghdadi nationalists, and the Shia ulema.[120] That such distinct social forces converged upon the need to establish an Iraqi state within the context of the inclusive patriotism of the independence movement demonstrated the strength of people's sense of belonging to an Iraqi polity. This put to rest once and for all the notion, advocated by the future king of Iraq, that "there is no Iraqi people in Iraq. There are only groups of people without any patriotic ideas."[121]

Finally, while the Baghdadi nationalists did not partake in armed combat against the British army, the Sunni-Shi'a gatherings and anti-British demonstrations continued in Baghdad during the uprising. In other urban areas, religious gatherings were also organized along similar lines. According to a British intelligence report, the holding of a *Mawlid* in Mosul in August precipitated the "re-awakening of anti-British activity" and provided the platform for voicing opposition against the British administration.[122] The political impact of these gatherings on anti-British mobilizations was such that the *Mawlids* were eventually banned by the Civil Administration on August 12, 1920.[123]

That the British felt compelled to ban them signified the extent to which the British perceived such transgressive contentious practices as a threat to the stability of their rule in Iraq and equally the extent to which such practices were increasing the scope for political change in Iraq.

The banning of *Mawlids* was part of the British administrations non-coercive politics of demobilization and yet it formed only a small part of their overall strategy for suppressing the uprising. The primary mechanism through which the British sought to demobilize the uprising was the deployment of vast coercive power against tribal fighters. When the uprising began there were 34,000 British troops stationed in Iraq; however, as tribal fighters began to make successive gains, British troops were supplemented with reinforcements from India, which began to arrive in August 1920.[124] Crucially, the arrival of troop reinforcements in Iraq was indirectly facilitated by the relative quiet among the Kurdish tribes in the north, and more importantly by the quiet that persisted among the tribes of the Gharraf region and their neighbors along the Tigris. This quiet made it possible for the British to maintain a line of communication between Baghdad and Basra via the Tigris route. [125]

In addition to its military power, the British also relied on local friendly forces to quell the uprising. The British Levies in Iraq, numbering almost 5000 in 1920, played a "small but important part in the suppression of the revolt."[126] More important were the local, friendly tribal forces who, in exchange for a subsidy, took on the role of quelling the resisting tribes.[127] In his account of the uprising, Sir Aylmer Haldane, the General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia in 1920, notes the indispensible support of the Dulaim tribes for the quelling of the uprising.[128] Indeed, the response of the tribes to the uprising varied across Iraq, reflecting the ideological and socioeconomic heterogeneity of the tribal population.

Finally, the suppression of the Iraqi uprising provided the British with a testing ground for the application of a new type of coercive force—air power. Through the Royal Air Force (RAF), British air power allowed rapid deployment of bombs against rising tribes, with very little risk to British personnel.[129] For Wilson, air power offered "an inexpensive, efficient, and merciful means of maintaining order," and he credited "the silent warning" conveyed by flying warplanes for deterring the tribes along the Tigris from participating in the uprising.[130] Of course from the perspective and experience of the Iraqis, air power's distant and indiscriminate bombing of villages and crops, was anything but "merciful."[131]

The extent to which Britain was forced to deploy such extensive coercive powers to halt the 1920 uprising demonstrated the centrality of coercion to patterns of colonial domination in Iraq.[132] The British rationale behind the deployment of coercive force was often linked to ideas of imperial prestige and strength, as suggested by a Political Officer's account of the events in 1920:

> Until we show the tribes that are against us that they are pitting their puny strength against a powerful nation … [they will not be] content with anything short of turning us ignominiously out of the country … the only arbitration possible now is the arbitration of the sword … after we teach our enemies to respect us maybe we can come to some sort of peaceful agreement with the people.[133]

Beyond the discourse of imperial prestige, the reality of Britain's resort to the "arbitration of the sword" in Iraq was however far more somber: it was an implicit acknowledgment of the limited ability of the British colonial authorities to govern. [134] Indeed British deployment of the "sword" in 1920 offers a potent reminder of the primacy of coercion in colonial patterns of domination.[135]

The explicit use of force was thus the decisive factor in the British demobilization of the 1920 uprising, which began to draw to a close on November 5, when the British issued their terms of surrender to the tribes. [136] By February 1921 the last vestiges of resistance to the British had been successfully suppressed.[137] The demobilization of the uprising had been far from a foregone conclusion, and was only achieved at a great human cost, and at a material cost of a staggering £40 million to the British Treasury—a sum far greater than what had been spent on the Arab allies in the Hijaz and Syria during WWI.[138]

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that the Iraqi independence movement was at the center of processes through which an inclusive conception of political community was being forged in Iraq. It has been argued that the movement's patterns of mobilization and practices of contention render it a strong case of transgressive contention, that is, a case of contentious politics mobilizing new political actors and employing innovative practices, all of which increase its

scope for producing political change. The independence movement brought together the Shi'a ulema, the Baghdadi nationalists, and, most importantly, the recently politicized mid-Euphrates tribal leaders. The innovative and unprecedented practices of the movement—from the Sunni-Shia gatherings to the establishment of a temporary government—all acted as platforms for the spread and strengthening of inclusive political conceptions of Iraqi statehood. With such broad mobilizational capacity and an inclusive framework of political community, the independence movement had the potential to generate political changes in line with its notion of Iraqi statehood.

Although the movement's capacity for change was greatly weakened by the British suppression of the 1920 uprising, it is nevertheless worth considering the political changes that many of its protagonists believed to be within its scope during its heyday. By fostering a genuine alliance between three variable social forces and by fostering inclusive models of political community, the independence movement offered a microcosm of the possibilities for political change based on an inclusive framework of Iraqi statehood. [139] The significance of the inclusive model of political community that underpinned the independence movement lies in how it demonstrated the possibility for societal cooperation within a national framework that transcended tribal-urban, sectarian, and ethnic divisions. As such it suggests that future sectarian conflicts were not the result of an inherent and unchanging confessional psyche, but were more likely the result of how the Iraqi state would relate to the independence movement and whether it sought to institutionalize the inclusive patriotism of the independence movement.[140] Crucially, the argument put forward here is not a counterfactual argument about what "could" have developed in Iraq "had" the independence movement not been suppressed. Rather, the point is to recognize the alternatives and possibilities that appeared to people in their time, in order to prevent a backward-gazing approach to history where all historical outcomes are viewed as inevitable.[141]

The analysis of the independence movement also has important analytical implications for our study of Iraqi state-society relations. The model of national statehood upon which the independence movement converged was centered upon an independent constitutional monarchy, headed by a Sharifian king. That a very specific model of national statehood emerged prior to the formal establishment of the Iraqi state and that it garnered support from variable social forces within Iraq indicates that the idea of a central Iraqi state was neither foreign nor broadly opposed in Iraqi society. The societal convergence

upon the national-state model in Iraq undermines the argument that it was the "Western" ontology of the "exported" political model of the national-state that limited its effective "importation" in Iraq.[142] Rather, to understand the historic trajectory of Iraqi state-society relations, we need to move away from discussions of the "applicability" or "origins" of the nation-state model and toward a discussion of the British imperial relations that shaped Iraqi state formation and the nature of the new state's relations with the independence movement.

NOTES

1. A. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Founding of the Modern State* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2012).
2. D. McAdam, S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7–8.
3. Briefly, the *ulema* refers to Islamic scholars.
4. Briefly, an Islamic scholar (*a'lim*) who is qualified to issue a legal ruling (*fatwa*) is referred to as a *mujtahid.*
5. The disjuncture between Baghdad and the mid-Euphrates movement is reflected in historiographical debates over which area provided the driving force for the movement. For the argument that the mid-Euphrates area was the driving force, see F. Firon, *Al-Haqa'iq al-Naṣi'ah fī Thawrat al-Iraqiyah 1920,* Vol.1 (Baghdad: Al Najah Press, 1952); for the opposite argument in favor of Baghdad, see A. Al-Bazirgan, *Al-Waqai al-Haqiqah Fi al-Thawrah al-Iraqiyah,* 2nd ed. (Baghdad: Maṭbaat al-Adīb al-Baghdādīyah, 1991).For a more balanced approach see M. M. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam: Sheikh Mohammad Mahdi Al-Khalesi: Documents for the Events of the Jihad and Revolution 1914–1925* (Markaz Wathaiq al-Imam Khalesi: Tehran, 2007).
6. E. Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 13.
7. A. T. Wilson, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920: A Clash of Loyalties* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 104–5.
8. Ibid., 315.
9. M. M. Al-Basser, *Tarikh al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya* (History of the Iraqi Question) (Laam Ltd: London, 1990), 49; Firon, *Haqa iq*, 73–75; M. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat Sayid Muhson Abu-Tabikh 1910–1960* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyah lil-Dirasat wa-al-Nashr, 2001), 67.
10. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 90–91.
11. Ibid., 92–93.
12. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 155; Firon, *Haqa iq*, 80–81, 100; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 98.
13. A. Hairi, "Why Did the *'Ulama* Participate in the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909," *Die Welt des Islams*17, no.1–4 (1976–1977): 133, 135, 144, 146.
14. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 80–81; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai, 98;*
15. Unless otherwise stated, all Arabic translations are the author's. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 80–81, 100; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 98.
16. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 155; Firon, *Haqa iq*, 84–85; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 85–86.
17. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai*, 85–86.
18. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq*, 51.
19. Y. Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 65.
20. Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 49.

21. Firon provides original copies of many of these declarations, see Firon, *Haqa iq*, 186–91. The British administration was able to obtain an alleged letter signed by the leading tribal chiefs of the mid-Euphrates region and also the Muntafiq, dated April 12, 1920, addressed to Abdullah al-Hashimi, who is referred to as the "King of Iraq." For a translated summary of this letter see Intelligence Report (IR), No.6, January 31, 1921, CO 730/1, paper 14659, TNA.
22. P. Sluglett, "The British, the Sunnis and the Shi'is: Social Hierarchies of Identity under the British Mandate," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 4, no. 3 (2010): 266.
23. Memorandum No. S-24, February 22, 1919, FO 608/94, file 362/3/1, TNA.
24. The Proclamation of Baghdad, 1917 http://www.gwpda.org/1917/procbaghdad.html; President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points 1918. Accessed at: http://www.gwpda.org/1918/14points.html.
25. P. Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country*, 2nd ed. (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2007), 20.
26. November 8, 1918, "Anglo-French Joint Statement of Aims in Syria and Mesopotamia" at: http://www.gwpda.org/1918/syria.html.
27. Memorandum No. S-24.
28. G. Bell, *Mesopotamia: Review of Civil Administration* (London: HMSO, 1920), 126; Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 39.
29. See, for example, Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 34–39; Firon, *Haqa iq*, 68.
30. Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 36, 39.
31. F. Haddad, "Political Awakenings in an Artificial State: Iraq, 1914–20," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 6, no. 1 (2012): 17.
32. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai*, 41; Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 34.
33. T. Dodge, *Inventing Iraq* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 7.
34. Haddad, "Political Awakenings," 8.
35. Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 51.
36. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat*, 113–16.
37. G. Bell, Letter, September 12, 1920, Gertrude Bell Archive (GBA), Newcastle University Library. Accessed at: http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/
38. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 116.
39. Bell, Letter, September 12, 1920, GBA; For similar claims see Firon, *Haqa iq*, 99.
40. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat*, 59.
41. K. A. Muhsin, "The Political Career of Muhammad Jafar Abu al-Timman (1908–1937): A Study in Modern Iraqi History," PhD Thesis, SOAS, 1983, 122; H. H. Alaywi, *al-Aḥzāb al-siyāsīyah fī al-'Irāq: al-sirrīyah wa-al-'alanīyah* [Political Parties in Iraq] (Beirut, Riad El-Rayyes Books,2001), 41, 47.
42. Muhsin, 'al-Timman', 120–22.
43. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 122, Muhsin, "al-Timman," 123; Firon, *Haqa iq*, 101–2.
44. Al-Bazirgan. *al-Waqai*, p.120, Muhsin, 'al-Timman', 124.
45. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 103.
46. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 123, Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai*, 120–21, 128.
47. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 120–21; Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 123.
48. League of Nations, *Draft Mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine, No.3.* (London: HMSO, 1921) 2–3.
49. Bell, *Review of Civil Administration*, 140.
50. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No.23, June 5, 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA.
51. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 119, 158*;* Abstract of Intelligence. Vol. 2, No. 22, May 29, 1920, FO 371/5076//8611, TNA.
52. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No.23, 5 June 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA.

53. FO 371/5076 Piece 8448: Secret. Mesopotamian Police. Abstract of Intelligence. Vol.2, No.21, Baghdad, May 22, 1920
54. Secret. Mesopotamian Police. Abstract of Intelligence. Vol. 2, No.21, May 22, 1920, FO 371/5076/8448, TNA.
55. Bell, *Review of Civil Administration*, 140; Secret. Mesopotamian Police. Abstract of Intelligence. Vol.2, No.21, May 22, 1920, FO 371/5076/8448, TNA.
56. McAdam, et al., *Dynamics of Contention,* 49; Mesopotamian Police. Abstract of Intelligence. Vol.2, No.21, Baghdad, May 22, 1920, FO 371/ 5075/8448.
57. Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 5; Wilson, *Clash of Loyalties*, 254.
58. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No.23, June 5, 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA.
59. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 27.
60. H. Lehmann and P. van der Veer, "Introduction," in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, ed. P. van der Veer and H. Lehmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3.
61. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 158.
62. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No.23, June 5, 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA.
63. Ibid..
64. Abstract of Intelligence. Vol. 2, No. 22, May 29, 1920, FO 371/5076//8611, TNA. However the report is not clear on who authored the letters.
65. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No.23, June 5, 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA.
66. Davis, *Memories of State*, 47.
67. Ibid., 37; McAdam, et al., *Dynamics of Contention,* 57; H. Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 23.
68. C. Tilly and S. Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 80.
69. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 125; Bell, *Review of Civil Administration*, 141.
70. Telegram no. 6585, CC to India Office (IO), June 2, 1920, FO 371/5227/6591, TNA.
71. Telegraph no. 6584, CC, June 3, 1920, FO 371/5227/6060, TNA; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai 137;* Bell, *Review of Civil Administration*, 141.
72. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No. 23, June 5, 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA; Firon, *Ḥaqa'iq*, 124–5; K. Jadirji,*Min Awraq Kamil al-Jadirji* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1971), 51.
73. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 125, 129–31, 151.
74. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 159; Firon, *Haqa iq,* 109–10.
75. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 159.
76. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 115, 169–71.
77. Minutes on Mr. Montagu's Memorandum by Major Young (IO), July 28, 1920, FO 371/5228/E. 9020, TNA; S. H. Longrigg, *Iraq, 1900 to 1950* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 120–21.
78. Bell, *Review of Civil Administration*, 142.
79. Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq,* 4.
80. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 158.
81. Firon, *Haqa iq,* 156; Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 164–67. Telegraph no. 7825 by CC, June 27, 1920, FO 371/5227/7725, TNA.
82. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 166.
83. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 167–68.
84. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 184, 177, 179; Kadhim also maintains that the tribal leaders were preparing for an all-out revolt, see Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq*, 70.
85. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 183–84.
86. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 9, 70.

87. Ibid., 69–70; Bell, *Review of Civil Administration,* 146.
88. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,*69–72.
89. British intelligence reports maintain he was a signatory to the alleged letter dated April 1920 congratulating Abdullah al-Hashimi on becoming the "King of the Iraq," Intelligence Report (IR), No.6, January 31, 1921, CO 730/1, paper 14659, TNA.
90. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat*, 131–32. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 72–73.
91. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 88–89, Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 128, 131–32.
92. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 76–79, 83–84.
93. Ibid., 79–80*;* Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 178.
94. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 80–82.
95. G. R. Atiyyah, *Iraq: 1908–1921: A Socio-Political Study* (Beirut: The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1973), 344–45.
96. Dodge, *Inventing Iraq,* 135; P. Ireland, *Iraq*: *A Study in Political Developments* (New York: Russell and Russell 1970), 273.
97. Al-Basser, *al-Qadhiyya al-Iraqiyya,* 34; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 146*;* M. M. Kubbah, *Mudhakkirat fi Samim al-Ahdath 1918–1958.* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1965), 21.
98. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 195.
99. Luizard maintains the fatwa was issued on June 21, 1920, see P. Luizard, "Shaykh Muhammad al-Khlalisi (1890–1963) and His Political Role in Iraq and Iran in the 1910/20s," in *The Twelver Shi'a in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History*, ed. R. Brunner and W. Ende (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2001), 230. In contrast Al-Bazirgan argues it was issued after June 30, see Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 178.
100. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 169.
101. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 195, 197.
102. Kubbah, *Mudharrait*, 21.
103. Davis, *Memories of State*, 47.
104. Atiyyah, *Iraq: 1908–1921,* 354.
105. T. Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," *Qui Parle*, 17, no. 2 (2009): 14.
106. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 174.
107. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 3–4.
108. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat*, 174. However, Bazirgan maintains that coordination on military took place between the Haras and the tribes of Diyala A. Bazirgan, *Min Ahdath Baghdad of Diyala Ethna Thawrat al-Ashreen fi al-Iraq*, ed. H. A. Barzingan, (Baghdad: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Arabīyah, 2000), 30–33.
109. Al-Khalesi, *Batal al-Islam*, 169–70; Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 183; Kubbah, *Mudharrait*, 21.
110. Telegram No. 9450, Baghdad to IO, August 5, 1920, FO 371/5228/E 9849, TNA; Telegram No. 10384, CC to IO, August 27, 1920, FO 371/5229/10625, TNA.
111. Firon, *Haqa iq*, 208–10, 247–48.
112. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 89; Firon claims three councils were established; however Tabikh disputes this. See Firon, *Haqa iq*, 248, and Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 174.
113. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat,* 174.
114. Telegram No. 8284, CC to IO, July 21. 1920, FO 371/5076/9139, TNA; S. Haj, "The Problems of Tribalism: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Iraqi History," *Social History,* 16, no. 1 (1991): 45.
115. Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 12.
116. Al-Bazirgan, *al-Waqai,* 196–97.
117. Abu-Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat*, 174.
118. Davis, *Memories of State*, 53.
119. Quoted in Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq,* 92.
120. Davis, *Memories of State*, 53.

121. Quoted in M. Al-Durrah, *Al-Harb al-Iraqiyah al-Baritaniyah 1941* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1969), 37–38. See also A. A. Allawi, *Faisal I of Iraq* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 537.
122. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, August 14, 1920, No. 33, encl. in FO 371/5081/14358, TNA.
123. Telegram No. 9703, CC to SSI, August 12, 1920, FO 371/5229/10274, TNA; Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, August 14, 1920, No. 33, encl. in FO 371/5081/14358, TNA; Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, No.23, June 5, 1920, FO 371/5076/8864, TNA.
124. Military Report on Iraq, Vol.1, 1936, AIR 10/1426, TNA.
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PART II

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

5

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND THE SYRIAN CRISIS: INTERNATIONALIZATION AND MILITARIZATION OF THE CONFLICT*

Jasmine Gani

The contentious politics framework poses two central questions: Why does the emergence of contentious politics sometimes fail to make the transition into a social movement? Why and how does it get repressed, and how does that transform the nature of contentious politics? This chapter applies these core questions to the case of the Syrian uprisings of 2011 and the subsequent conflict. The first part considers the domestic context and explains the trajectory of Syria's contentious politics through the strategies of the opposition and the regime. What are the factors and events that have been obstructive and counterproductive to the development of the early uprisings into an effective social movement?

The chapter considers the lack of a contentious repertoire to draw from and the difficulties in producing a unifying contentious narrative, as key explanations—this applies just as much to the regime and its inability to manage opposition as it does to the protesters. The second section moves on to an analysis of the internationalization of the crisis, and considers the interaction between internal and external actors on both sides of the conflict. To what extent did Syria's internal contentious politics force the internationalization and militarization of the conflict? Or to what extent did interference of international actors hinder and thwart the progress of domestic contentious politics? Understanding the role of external actors in the Syrian crisis is crucial considering its entanglement with Russia, Iran, the United States, the

EU, Israel, Saudia Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and foreign fighters. This chapter argues that the strong likelihood of such an outcome was largely overlooked and underestimated by policy makers, activists, and academics alike, in turn contributing to the deepening crisis in Syria.

SUBSTITUTING ANALOGIES WITH A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

When Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire on December 17, 2010, mass protests began to spread throughout Tunis and over the course of the next week had spread throughout the country. After three weeks of public outcry and intense pressure, President Ben Ali fled Tunisia on January 14, 2011, ending his 23 years of dictatorship. The sparse attention being paid by the West to public activism in the Middle East changed on the eve of January the 25th, the day when nationwide protests took over the streets of Egypt's main cities. Demonstrators began to emerge in large numbers; they were calling not merely for reform, but also for the removal of Mubarak from power. Notably from January 21 onward, as the unexpected and the unlikely seemed to be taking shape in Egypt, journalists from major news outlets, including the *New York Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera English* and *Le Monde*[1] started to analyze the Tunisian revolution retrospectively as the first spark in a wave of revolutions across the region.

Much of this predictive analysis, especially in Europe and the United States, stemmed from analogies with Europe's historical experiences with democratization. The Velvet Revolution in Eastern Europe in 1989, which triggered the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, became the most popular reference point for the Arab uprisings.[2] The media was quick to highlight the similarities: *The Guardian* posed the challenge that "if this is young Arabs' 1989, Europe must be ready with a bold response," taking it as a given that Tahrir Square in 2011 was the Arab version of Prague's Wenceslas Square in 1989.[3] As Coates-Ulrichsen, Held, and Brahimi put it in *Open Democracy*, the political transformations of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania were similarly "sweeping, dramatic and unexpected," and, they argued, shared commonality with the Arab uprisings in terms of causes and the timeline of events.[4] Noting some of the problems arising from the direct comparisons between 1989 and 2011, analysts rushed to find alternative analogies rather than dismiss the comparative framework altogether. The most common of these have been the revolutions of 1848

(which turned out to be just one phase in a much longer period of transition, and in some cases saw reversals into even tougher authoritarianism), while the *Jadaliyya* opted for 1968 as a more effective analogy.[5] As a result of such comparisons, future predictions based on Europe's experience also followed, such as *Foreign Policy*'s description of the uprisings as an "upheaval currently threatening to sweep away the Arab world's ruling regimes."[6]

These predictions came not only from Western commentators. They were also echoed by the Arab diaspora in the West, and most notably by those within the region. Many Arabs did feel they were a part of a broader phenomenon that united Arabs in a post-pan-Arab identity—one based on calls for justice and citizens' rights—rather than in a pan-Arab union or anticolonialism as had been the case in the past.[7] While Arab nationalism as a unifying ideology might have long been in retreat, it was clear that *Arabism*—a shared sense of culture and historical experience—was still very prevalent. This notion of shared identity and experience often meant that the strength of the state, the diverse evolution of internal structures and various specificities, were temporarily overlooked, contributing to predictions of sweeping revolutions by many, both within and outside of the Middle East.

These predictions and generalizations have in most cases been found to be inaccurate and presumptuous. Sweeping optimism has paved the way for greater disappointment. Expectations have not only been unfulfilled but also found to have been unsubstantiated and unlikely in the first place. Inaccuracies in analysis and hasty predictions are all the more problematic because they do have a bearing on the policy options of governments and the strategic decisions of activists. Assumptions regarding the sameness of authoritarian regimes and social behavior in the Middle East prevented a more probing analysis of the Arab uprisings in general; moreover, just as the toppling of one regime did not determine the toppling of others, the failure of one revolution did not mean others were also doomed to fail.

Democratization theories risk encouraging the above blanket assumptions, preferring a regional level of analysis over a state-by-state approach—this produces generalization, at times homogenization, of the region's states, and a tendency to view the process of democratization as an eventual inevitability that travels from its European epicenter in triumphant "waves."[8] This tendency was supported by the initially ubiquitous use of the term "Arab Spring," that is the notion of a seasonal political change in the region, one which necessarily comes with the passing of time. However, such an approach detracts from the question of agency, and in turn papers over the complexities

and contingency of individual motives and actions, of social interaction and mobilization, not to mention the variability in political structures from one community to another in any given region.

What was often missing, particularly in the earlier phases of the uprisings, was a deeper level of analysis of the particularities of the various social movements in each of the countries where protests have occurred: the varying political conditions, long- and short-term developments in their socioeconomic contexts, the roles of the respective militaries; history of opposition (or lack thereof), goals and ideologies of the contentious actors, and the obstacles that they face. Applying a framework of contentious politics can help to address the pitfalls highlighted above, for it is precisely the *variations* between social movements—their contexts, methods, and outcomes—that are the focal point of a contentious politics approach.

Such an approach is particularly useful for understanding the trajectory of contention in Syria, as it shifted from a grassroots social movement in March 2011, to the formation of armed rebel factions and an official international representation in September of that year, escalating into a civil war by 2012; it has since mutated into an unbaiting international conflagration with multiple warfronts and still new participants. At this stage, Syria is indeed still engulfed in a form of contentious politics—albeit an extreme one—but I argue the internal *social movement* that triggered it has been significantly undermined, if not quite eliminated altogether. Sidney Tarrow offers a framework for analyzing contentious politics, and considers why some social movements succeed while others fail.[9] It is an especially pertinent question given that, initially, the Syrian uprising was regularly compared with other uprisings in the region, not least by activists from the Syrian opposition, who at various phases looked to the Egyptian and Libyan revolutions as models for their own contentious movement.

In this chapter I adopt parts of Tarrow's framework to explain the path of contentious politics in Syria. The analysis focuses on: political opportunities as structuring cues, the cultivation of a common purpose and collective identity, the existence of contentious repertoire, and the effectiveness and sustainability of methods of action. I argue that militarization and internationalization of contention quashed the nascent internal social movement; but even prior to that, the interpretation of political opportunity, the lack of contentious repertoire, and weak contentious solidarity fundamentally undermined the potential of the Syrian social movement from the start. Furthermore, the opposition movement's drawing (and relying upon) analogies with Egypt and

Libya have been obstructive rather than conducive to clearer strategies of contentious action. The first section considers the domestic context and the role of both the regime and the opposition in shaping Syria's contentious politics. The second part examines the internationalization of the crisis, and considers the interaction between internal and external actors on both sides of the conflict.

WAS THERE EVER A CONTENTIOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN SYRIA?

With the death toll rising to over 190,000 by April 2014,[10] over 9.5 million Syrians displaced,[11] devastation to Syria's infrastructure, economy, and cultural heritage, and the rise of the ISIS,[12] it is easy to forget that the crisis escalated from the emergence of a genuine social movement with modest demands. The movement began as small-scale, uncoordinated protests in mostly isolated areas. The first protest was planned for February 5, 2011, via social media, coordinated by a Facebook group called "Syrian Revolution against Bashar al-Assad 2011"; however, it failed to attract sufficient numbers.[13] At the second attempt, on March 15, a couple of hundred protesters came out on to the streets of Damascus and Aleppo, Syria's two main cities, calling for democratic reforms and the release of political prisoners. Security Forces responded by arresting and beating up protesters; this pattern was repeated with smaller and seemingly inconsequential protests elsewhere in the country.[14] But the stakes were raised when in Deraa, 15 school children were arrested for antiregime graffiti.[15] At least five people were killed in subsequent protests in Deraa; in a show of anger and defiance, even greater numbers turned out to attend the funerals of those killed, prompting security forces to clamp down with tear gas and live ammunition. Even so, the regime was still keen to show it was capable of granting concessions, removing the governor of Deraa, Faisal Kalthoum, and the head of the province's political security. [16] Still attempting to distance itself from allegations of brutality, the regime blamed rogue elements in the security forces and foreign conspirators for the killing of civilians.

Deraa was to be the center of opposition to the regime; the location highlights the importance of economic vulnerabilities in rural areas as a causal factor behind the uprisings; moreover, it is notable that even after the crackdown, protesters stopped short of calling for the removal of the regime. Instead they called for an end to corruption and restrictive laws that forbade buying and selling of property and measures to alleviate poverty in the area.[17]

Protesters organized sit-ins and marches and warned that they would continue until their demands were met by the government.

There are several points to highlight here: the social action was on a relatively small scale, nonviolent, and with limited political and economic demands. Protesters also recognized that they did not yet have a critical mass of people to tip the scales and make a lasting difference, unlike in Egypt or Tunisia. Activists sought to mobilize greater numbers and develop political leaders who could carry the movement forward to a more organized and influential position; however, security forces were quick to imprison would-be leaders who might galvanize an opposition at a wider level, from journalists to bloggers to human rights campaigners.[18] Regular shooting into funeral crowds by the security forces and employment of thugs to intimidate and deter protesters was meant to contain the uprising, but failed. The "Syrian Revolution" Facebook group once again called for protesters to come out in solidarity with those who had been killed in Deraa and by now other agitating towns. By April 2011 the death toll from protests in Deraa, Homs, and Douma had reportedly risen to 200.[19] It was at this stage that protesters' demands began to change from political reform to removal of the regime. Rather than quell the protests, the regime's crackdown had motivated more people to take to the streets, and they had hardened their demands and unwillingness to be assuaged by government reforms.

Moreover, despite the setbacks, Syria's social movement seemed to be making a political impact when 230 Ba'th party members resigned at the end of April 2011, in the same week when the UN tried (but failed) to issue a statement of condemnation against the Syrian regime's repressive tactics.[20] Assad announced several reforms in April, the most significant of which was the repeal of the emergency law after 48 years, and a wish to "engage in dialogue."[21] Reports also emerged that Syrian soldiers refusing to fire at protesters had been imprisoned or killed—it seemed to indicate that there might be increased divisions within the army itself.[22] All this suggested that the government was on the back foot and pointed to a potential strengthening of the contentious movement that seemed to be gaining ground in national and international support.

Four years on and those cautious hopes have receded as the grassroots social movement has been overshadowed by a fragmented rebel army and, since 2013, the rapid rise of Jihadist extremists, the ISIS; protesters who survived the government crackdowns and did not take up arms are just as

disenfranchised as they were before, whether in refugee camps outside the country's borders or living under the shadow of war within. There is no doubt that a social movement was initiated in the spring of 2011—contentious collective action was implemented and it sufficiently challenged the regime to respond; but such action was not *sustainable*. Without dismissing the early gains and continued potential within the social movement, it is also necessary to acknowledge and explain where it has failed thus far.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS AS STRUCTURING CUES

Tarrow argues that new *political opportunities*, rather than the continuity of ongoing economic grievances, are crucial to understanding the rise (and success) of contentious politics. Such opportunities offer people a way out of long-standing compliance, while the fear of wasting those opportunities and costs of inaction spur more and more people to challenge the status quo. These opportunities emerge when "institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines."[23] Furthermore for collective action to diffuse and create further opportunities, it would need to sufficiently expose "the weakness of enemies," reveal the possibility of coalitions, and encourage elites to join the cause.[24]

According to Tarrow, a more rigorous understanding of the political contexts—opportunities as well as constraints—enables us to analyze why different forms of contention with differing outcomes emerge from overtly similar sociopolitical challenges (one example of this which Tarrow highlights is the variation in contentious methods deployed by British, German, and American workers during the depression of the 1930s). However, in the early stages of Syria's social movement, such particularistic analyses were sidelined, while the example of Tunisian, especially Egyptian protesters, acted as key inspiration for Syrian activists. Obvious parallels with the Egyptian and Syrian regimes were drawn: long-standing authoritarian regimes, repressive and corrupt, enacting decades of emergency law, withholding democratic freedoms, and upheld by unaccountable security forces. But the crucial differences in the political and social structures of these cases, and differences in the opportunities for change, were overlooked.

Tarrow outlines the way state reluctance to repress striking workers and greater political-economic innovation in the United States and France in fact encouraged *more* industrial action—greater agitation was not a reflection of

worse grievances but rather better opportunities for change.[25] This can similarly be applied to the successful uprisings in Egypt in 2011 compared to the repression in Syria.

First, there had indeed been greater opening in institutional access in Egypt over the past 15 years under Hosni Mubarak. There was an increased dereliction of state responsibility with regard to social welfare; the government was arguably too complacent and failed to see how rising poverty and its absence from the arena of social provision inadvertently produced a vacuum of authority and political opportunity for contention.[26] This was readily filled by civil society and political opposition groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which opened free or affordable health clinics and educational facilities for local people.[27] A relatively large civil society in Egypt played a significant role in creating an atmosphere of debate and alternative thought in Egypt long before the uprisings began. For example, while the Muslim Brotherhood was officially banned as a political party, its members were still actively involved in politics and held some sway in certain sectors of industry—its members stood as independent candidates for elections, ran professional syndicates, particularly among medics and engineers, and helped, along with many other groups, in sustaining a critical discourse against the regime.

As Katerina Dalacoura highlights, Mubarak's attempts to satisfy American demands to move toward greater political openness saw greater pluralist contention of the 2005 elections.[28] The rise in NGO groups (which at times did get subsumed by the regime—Suzanne Mubarak was made the patron of a number of women's rights NGOs) and the emergence of the movements such as Kefayah and the April 6 group have all contributed to political debate in Egypt, particularly over the last decade.[29] In the past five years it was normal to see a handful of protesters outside the interior ministry calling for democratic reforms—they would eventually be dispersed by the police but tolerated enough to reconvene the following week. And while its impact has at times been exaggerated, the relatively open access to the Internet and social network sites has certainly aided the dissemination of information and public mobilization (hence the government put a block on mobile phone and Internet access at the height of the demonstrations);[30] meanwhile, high urbanization in Egypt facilitated that mobilization from city to city, which made it harder for the security services to isolate the protesters and force them into retreat.

And indeed with this long-term opening of institutional access, division did begin to emerge within the regime. Mubarak's attempts to install his son Gamal Mubarak, a nonmilitary man, as his successor alienated the Egyptian

army; they in turn used the opportunity of the uprisings to publicly display their ambivalence to Mubarak, which had had time to privately develop over a number of years. The rift between the army and Mubarak was the single most important division within the elite that enabled the uprisings to succeed and expose the weaknesses of Mubarak and his police force. Other influential figures followed suit—from the former UN weapons inspector and Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohammed El-Baradei—already a long-time critic of the regime—to popular television and Internet personalities such as Bassem Yousef and Asmaa Mahfouz, from journalists to religious scholars; they slowly came forward to give their support to the uprisings and the goal of removing Mubarak from power, thereby raising contentious politics to a public and "viral" level. This political opportunity and weakening of constraints had been developing over a number of years; protestors reaped the fruits of this sustained contention in January 2011.

In Syria the political context was very different. The most recent episode of contentious politics in Syria was between 2000 and 2001, known as the "Damascus Spring," but it was an all too brief window in which only a small group of activists dared to challenge the regime. The last case of a political protest was in 2004, and it ended with a swift crackdown in which at least 36 Kurds were killed.[31] The succession of Bashar al-Assad to the presidency after the death of his father, Hafez, in 2000 had generated hopes of a more open and less repressive system; Bashar came in promising political reforms and economic liberalization (the latter implemented to a limited degree, to the benefit of a limited group of people), which had the potential to act as a cue for greater institutional access and a more productive repertoire of contention over the last decade.

However, Bashar's own insecurity within the political elite, institutional pressure and inertia from the military, and the Iraq War, which justified and reasserted the military's central role in the regime, all served to close off the space for contention and smother the potential for an effective social movement. Thus the years of slow, frustrating, but incremental steps toward greater openness in political discourse in Egypt was absent in Syria. Public spaces where civil society might normally flourish—educational institutions, mosques and churches, and sites of international conferences and NGO activity—were all heavily monitored and lacked any of the type of debate that was common in Egypt; mosques would be closed outside of prayer times to prevent public gatherings and forming of networks, something that was uncommon elsewhere in the region. All opposition groups remained banned—the Muslim

Brotherhood in Syria had all but been eliminated as a political force since 1982, and in any case had never commanded as much support as the founding branch in Egypt.[32] The 48-year emergency law, the oppressive and pervasive surveillance of the *Mukhabarat*, arbitrary arrests, routine torture of prisoners, strict censorship in politics, media, education, and culture: none of this had changed on the eve the uprisings in 2011.

Thus the political opportunity being seized by activists was an entirely external one, provided by the regional context of the "Arab Spring"; there were few, if any, internal cues to indicate that the country's long-standing political constraints had been relaxed. Moreover no extraordinary event of injustice had taken place to produce the opportunity for extraordinary anger and action. Thus it is fair to suggest that a major factor behind the emergence of Syria's social movement was a belief, or rather a hope, that conditions elsewhere in the region would be replicated in neighboring states; such a hope overlooked the fact that the constraints and opportunities of these states had evolved very differently over the past 60 or so years since independence.

The lack of internal change was confirmed by the regime's response to the protests. Just as the activists lacked a repertoire of contentious politics, the regime similarly lacked a repertoire of handling contentious politics. The only experience and means available to them, as they saw it, was repression. The worst crisis faced by the regime was the Hama uprising in 1982—the regime reacted to it by sending in tanks, cordoning off the city, and razing it to the ground in two days. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people were massacred in that last most significant challenge to the regime.[33] Led by the military in its response yet again, the regime deployed similar methods this time round. Moreover, rather than exposing divisions, Syria's social movement exposed the *unity* between the political elite and the army. Despite obvious disquiet at the military's tactics early on, political officials refused to hold the generals to account and chose to support their customary methods of repression. The army, rather than display ambivalence as they did in Egypt, rallied around Bashar al-Assad enthusiastically and in fact pressed him to take more robust action against the opposition.[34] Hardliners dominated the response, preferring to instigate and confront a violent opposition rather than negotiate with moderates, while fewer military personnel defected compared to the mass defections in the Libyan army during its civil war in 2011.[35]

However, it is not sufficient to only look at the lack of political opportunities to understand failure in contentious politics. As Tarrow argues,

spontaneous collective action can in fact produce unexpected political opportunities where previously there were none; but even so, contentious politics needs to be *sustained* in order to properly capitalize on those opportunities. As highlighted in the earlier section, although the opportunities in Syria were thin, a social movement *did* emerge and did have a political impact—both in encouraging people from other cities to protest and in forcing the government to act. Though the movement drew its inspiration from an externalized political cue, the growing cases of contentious action from March to May 2011 created new political opportunities for a *potentially* more successful and sustained social movement. Other factors need to be analyzed to understand why ultimately this did not occur.

COMMON PURPOSE, CULTURAL FRAMING, AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Both a common purpose and effective cultural framing lead to the development of a collective identity and solidarity within the social movement, both of which contribute to a coherence in contentious strategy and action.[36] At first, the sense of injustice was enough as a unifying force and prompted more people to go out onto the streets, especially after the first round of political oppression when protesters were gunned down, or detained and tortured.

But gradually with ensuing debates over future strategy, the consensus was weakened. The opposition in the major cities such as Aleppo and Damascus chiefly held political grievances, while those in the poorer suburbs and rural cities were significantly motivated by economic grievances.[37] All opponents were grieved by the selective access to jobs and services, which was mired in corruption and an intra-Ba'thist patronage system; but there was a proportion of the opposition who viewed this through a sectarian lens and sought to overturn what they felt was a heretical leadership and the disenfranchisement of the majority Sunni population. The Kurdish component of the opposition has seen the rupture of the uprisings as an opportunity to build a movement for autonomy in the north. And finally there were those opponents who sought political and economic reform versus those who believed that the only route to change was via the removal of the regime and the Ba'thist system.

This lack of a common purpose has adversely affected the movement's ability to cultivate a unifying cultural frame, all the more a problem given that the state has a strong record in cultural framing for its own brand of *international* contentious politics.[38]

As Snow and Benford argue, "Social movements are deeply involved in the work of 'naming' grievances, connecting them to other grievances and constructing larger frames of meaning that will resonate with a population's cultural predispositions and communicate a uniform message to power holders and others."[39] But movement entrepreneurs cannot simply adapt frames of meaning from *existing* cultural symbols—this would mark them out as no different from those they are challenging. They need to find an "intersection" between their own values and the culture of the target population.[40] The ensuing competition over attention and about the use of cultural symbols thus makes cultural framing a difficult task.

Two important sources of culture and emotion are religion and nationalism, providing ready-made symbols, rituals, and solidarities that can be tapped into by leaders to galvanize the people and to move them out of compliance and passivity into action. What happens, however, when these sources have been captured and exploited by those whom the movement seeks to challenge? Tarrow argues that sometimes existing cultural symbols can still be used by contentious movements but given different meanings:[41] In Egypt, religious scholars either remained silent or supportive of the uprisings, while Mubarak's alliance with Israel added some sort of religious legitimacy to his opponents; moreover, such was the level of consensus in the goal of removing Mubarak from power that the national flag was successfully appropriated by the contentious movement, allowing them to reclaim Egyptian patriotism and isolate the regime as "un-Egyptian." In Libya, Gaddafi was so inattentive to constructing patriotic sentiment, putting himself at the center of the country's cultural framing, that it was relatively easy for Libyans to reclaim nationalist symbolism—the reintroduction of the old Libyan flag used under the monarchy in 1951–69, before it was replaced by Gaddafi, was a highly successful example of cultural framing to mobilize the masses.

In Syria, however, such attempts have been more difficult. Religious cultural symbolism might have seemed easier to deploy given the secular nature of the regime. And yet there has not been as strong a religious consensus among Sunni Muslims as might be expected; as many prominent clerics in Syria, such as the late Shaykh Al Bouti and Shaykh Ahmad Al-Hassoun of Aleppo, openly criticized the opposition's tactics as those who have supported them, citing religious evidence against the destructive capacity of revolutions.[42] While many have only supported the government under duress, there is also an influential Sufi tradition in Syria that advocates political neutrality and has thus refrained from challenging the government.[43]

As for nationalism, the state held a strong grip on the nationalist narrative—it has been active in fostering ideological sentiment, rhetoric, symbolism, and regional policies for decades and has long claimed to unify ethnicities and religions under its Arab nationalist agenda. Any contentious movement trying to compete with the regime in this regard would face a herculean task. While opponents scoffed at the sincerity of the regime's nationalist fervor, there were significant sections of the population, namely minority groups who constitute 20–30 percent of the population, who felt they had much to lose in terms of security and religious freedoms should the regime fall (fears that have successfully been stoked by the regime over the years).[44] If local groups tried to create consensus in their specific communities by using language and mobilization tools based on ethnicity, tribe, or religion, it was used and exploited by the regime or suspected by other contentious groups as examples of sectarianism corroborating the regime's scaremongering. The Syrian National Council, like the Libyan opposition, adopted the historical Syrian flag of independence that had been used from 1932 to 1958 to reflect its opposition to the regime and to reclaim Syrian patriotism; but it was at times contested by those who argued it was too closely associated with the Free Syrian Army as well as extremist groups, both of which divided opinion within the contentious movement. Furthermore, members of the Kurdish opposition have preferred to eschew the flag in favor of the Kurdish flag—this was often a point of dispute during the organization of antiregime rallies, in which non-Kurdish activists saw it as an attempt to undermine the unity of the opposition. As Tarrow states, "Costumes of consensus cannot mobilize consent against the system that has produced it," and this appears to be particularly true in the case of Syria.[45]

Having a common purpose and effective cultural framing were all the more important for the Syrian contentious movement given the diversity of constituents it needed to appeal to, spanning sectarian, ethnic, religious versus secular, Islamist versus non-Islamist, political versus military, and reformist versus revolutionary differences. Walid Saffour, the British representative of the SNC in 2013, cited the lack of unity as the greatest challenge for the political opposition—in his assessment, 43 years of dictatorship and oppression had prevented the capacity for a cohesive opposition.[46] Mistrust and lack of constructive dialogue characterized the opposition (and still do), even among sides who supposedly shared political, ideological, and religious perspectives.[47] The difficulty in cultivating solidarity within the opposition has been exacerbated by an internal-external divide. What was seemingly an

organic domestic social movement in March and April 2011 became swiftly subsumed within the newly formed Syrian National Council in September of that year, an umbrella organization claiming to represent the various Syrian opposition groups but heavily dominated by political exiles who had not been able to return to Syria for years, even decades.

Such was the sense of disenfranchisement from the SNC, both from internal grassroots groups and non-Islamist opposition, that Britain and the United States pressurized the group to rebrand itself as a more inclusive organization called the Syrian National Coalition in November 2012. The Council became just one (though still the largest) of six identifiable groups or clusters in the Coalition. The other significant groups at the time were: the National Coordination Council, a leftist organization at times that was seen as being too accommodating of the regime; the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest political opposition group in Syria but its leadership long exiled from Syria (its current leader, Sadreddine Al Bayanouni resides in the UK); the PYD, a Kurdish political party established in 2003 with links to the PKK (it is critical of the regime but was accused by some to have collaborated with the regime); the Kurdish Supreme Committee, responsible for governing Kurdish dominated areas; the Kurdish National Council, with close ties to Iraq's Kurdish province; and a collective of smaller grassroots civil society organizations, including representatives from the Local Coordination Councils (LCCs) that formed on the ground early on during the uprisings.

Here we not only see the range of political and ethnic variation within the opposition (not necessarily a problem, it could also serve as a strength) but also the disproportionate weighting toward opposition actors who are based outside of Syria. Activists within Syria increasingly questioned the legitimacy and representation of the SNC;[48] this did not change with the formation of the Coalition under the auspices of Western powers, with envoys to the United Kingdom, France, Qatar, and a seat in the Arab League, even though it was designed to increase representation of the opposition on the ground.

The Coalition was also given the authority over the military opposition operating within Syria, through the Supreme Military Council (SMC). While the differences within the SNC were great, these were far outweighed by divisions between the political and military wings of the opposition. The military wing itself constituted over a thousand different battalions operating in different regions, under different command structures, and with growing detachment from the strategies of the political wing. This was reflected in a

joint statement issued on September 24, 2013, from a collection of 12 Islamist military groups denouncing the "unrepresentative Western-backed" SNC and SMC.[49]

SUSTAINABILITY OF CONTENTIOUS ACTION: FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENT TO MILITARY IMPASSE

As stated in the earlier sections, the Syrian social movement lacked the experience and history of contention that was found in Egypt. This lack of a contentious repertoire was confined not only to the activists within Syria but also applied to those outside. Outside of the country, the Syrian diaspora was firstly not as extensive as the Libyan, Egyptian, or even Yemeni communities that have settled and grown in Europe and the United States. In the United Kingdom, for example, of the many Arab communities the Syrian community is more dispersed and lacks the inertia and political organization generated by its Arab counterparts. Some of that has been due to the fact that many of those who had left Syria were political exiles—some criticized the regime openly, but many more opted to remain silent for fear of revenge being meted out to their families still in Syria. Furthermore, a sufficient section of the Syrian diaspora (only some of whom were from Syria's minority groups) supported the regime, or had profited from Bashar's system of economic patronage. Thus the external opposition was far less cohesive and organized than the Egyptian, and particularly the Libyan external, opposition. Lacking in experience, the Syrian contentious movement thus drew from the contentious repertoires of other states.

The most obvious and grassroots form of action was the public gathering of people, most commonly to march through the streets advocating their demands. This was initially effective though the turnout of numbers was small at first, as is usually the case when movements are still at their early inception stage. However, they were unable to draw the size of crowds that were seen in the space of a few days in either Tunisia or Egypt, particularly in the capital—this lack of a critical mass prevented the balance from being tipped in favor of the social movement. It allowed the security forces to isolate and target protests before they became too large to quash without the firepower of the military. For some the escalation of injustice acted as a motivating factor, but for many others this perpetuated the very strong barrier of fear rather than break it.

To encourage people to come out and protest, risking life and limb, the contentious movement often relies on the "injustice frame."[50] Hence emotive language and imagery is used in varying ways to mobilize the people. As Tarrow states, emotions such as love, loyalty, and reverence work better than shame, resignation, or despair. The latter can be said to be "devitalizing" and can contribute to demobilization.[51] If we consider the language and emotions evoked by the Syrian social movement in its early phase, the entrenchment of fear within society was noticeably reflected in the tactics employed, in a way that could be seen as devitalizing: it was notable that whereas the Egyptian activists had focused on disseminating positive imagery of defiant protesters, Syrian activists put heavy emphasis on publicizing harrowing videos and photo imagery of civilians who had been tortured and brutally killed by the security forces. In doing so they may have unintentionally been aiding the regime's strategy: it is likely that at least some of those videos were leaked by the torturers themselves, not as a form of whistle-blowing to expose the brutality, but to engender more fear and provide a deterrent to the opposition.

Both repression from the government and the fear it created prevented greater momentum behind the nascent social movement. Salwa Ismail explains how the regime relied on a singularly high level of fear compared to its neighbors to subdue any opposition, over the past 40 years, the consequence of which came to the fore when people were convinced that the regime had no upper threshold to the level of violence it was willing to inflict.[52] In order to mobilize in greater numbers, however, a contentious movement needs to convey greater hope of success, which was arguably and understandably lacking.

The regime was no doubt already willing to mete out brutality against its own citizens; but just as the contentious movement learned from the contentious repertoire of other social movements, so too did the regime learn from the tactics of its authoritarian counterparts. Timing greatly affected the Syrian movement's potential for success—its emergence coincided not with the dramatic popular revolution in Egypt but with the bloody repression of peaceful protestors in Libya. The Syrian regime took its cue from Libya but also expelled international journalists to prevent images from reaching the outside world as had occurred during the Libyan uprising.[53]

The contentious movement similarly drew from Libya's example. Seeing the success of Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC), which began to replace the Gaddafi regime in Libyan embassies throughout Europe and the Middle East by the summer of 2011, the Syrian opposition abroad sought to

strengthen their international representation and lobbying capacity by forming the SNC. Given its lack of success with the Egyptian model, in which the contentious movement was almost entirely based and operationalized within Egypt, Libya became the preferred model for the Syrian opposition. With the apparent failure of street protests and sanctions, the opposition unwittingly mirrored the regime by sidelining "soft-liners" who favored negotiations; they thus embraced the military option for Syria. Notably the Syrian opposition's move coincided with the start of NATO's military campaign in Libya.

Tarrow argues, "Their [authoritarian states] success in repression can produce a radicalization of collective action and a more effective organization of opponents, as moderate dissenters defect into private life and more militant ones take centre stage."[54] Having refuted the regime's claim in the first couple of months that protesters were armed and represented a threat to stability, the opposition changed strategy and welcomed offers from international actors to provide arms to those rebels who had defected from the Syrian army. It is not surprising that the formation of the Free Syrian Army roughly coincided with the formation of the political wing, the SNC; the opposition's political representation at the international level facilitated the procuring of arms from international actors. This is not to suggest that the opposition were necessarily responsible for the escalation of the crisis into the ongoing military impasse—the Syrian regime had already made it clear in April 2011 that protests would no longer be tolerated in the "interests of security," while the military had already replaced the security forces and had been deployed to several towns to crush the uprisings. Indeed, the opposition have argued that they had a right to self-defense.

But this does not negate the reality that militarization of the contentious movement had important consequences for the direction of the Syrian crisis. Many in the Coalition were convinced from early on that the only course of action remaining was a zero-sum military strategy, and increased their calls for a Libya-style intervention, thereby willingly granting the "international community" a stake in the conflict. Just as the opposition and the regime had learned lessons from Libya, so too had powers such as Russia and China. Intense mistrust of the West's intentions meant that the battle lines from the Syrian conflict were transferred to the United Nations. Determined Russian resistance to any UN veto to even condemn Assad's repression,[55] for fear that it would open the gateway to regime change as it had occurred in Libya, meant that the Syrian opposition increasingly turned away from the UN to more willing regional actors such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar.

Syria's neighbors have played a significant role in the conflict from the outset. Turkey and the Gulf States explicitly called for Assad's departure early on; this was to be expected of the Gulf States in view of their long-standing rivalry with Syria's ally, Iran, and their ideological opposition to Arab nationalism. Saudi Arabia and Qatar spearheaded extensive Gulf funding to opposition groups in the realm of billions of dollars, with little monitoring as to which rebel groups were in receipt of those funds. For Turkey, however, this policy represented a complete turnaround from its approach in recent years, which had seen close ties forged between the two governments and particularly between the leaders Erdogan and Assad. Nevertheless, Turkey's condemnation of the Assad regime was consistent with its supportive stance toward other uprisings in the region and reflected its fears for its own border integrity and of conflict overspill. Arguably it played the chief role in aiding the rebel groups. The porous Turkish-Syrian border to the north proved to be the key channel for foreign militants and arms to enter Syria, while Eastern Turkish cities such as Gaziantep hosted the Syrian rebel headquarters. Even Jordan, which ostensibly claimed noninterference in the conflict, facilitated training early on for opposition fighters at its military bases on the Syrian border.

On the other side, Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hizbollah provided consistent military and financial assistance to the Syrian regime. Furthermore, Iran's Revolutionary Guard has been sharing intelligence and technological expertise to monitor opposition activities and has secured access to Iraqi airspace to supply personnel and equipment.[56] This is in addition to the continued supply of hi-tech arms from Russia, which sold $1 billion worth of arms to the Syrian regime in the first year alone of the uprising.[57]

This produced three levels of conflict, complicating any attempts at a resolution—the domestic, the regional, and the international. At each of these levels, different interests and goals are pursued—once again, lack of a common purpose and lack of collective identity hinders the cohesion and clarity of the contentious movement, but now on an international scale.

For example, though Saudi Arabia was ostensibly supporting the internal Syrian opposition through its funding and supply of weapons, it had its eye on the regional political dynamic, seeking to undermine Iran through its Syrian ally. Poisonous sectarian divisions within Syria that have been so detrimental to any attempts at reconciliation have been inflamed and exploited by external powers for regional power political goals. Hizbollah sent fighters to Syria to win back the town of Qusayr for the regime; but far greater than

a sectarian affinity that the opposition has been keen to highlight is Hizbollah's fear that the downfall of the Assad regime would strangle their supply of weapons and strengthen Israel's hand in the region. Israel in turn trusts neither the regime, its old enemy, nor the opposition—hence Israel long advocated US intervention to weaken the regime, but never openly called for regime change or strong support for the opposition; it has calculated that a long war of attrition that weakens all sides, including Syria's ally Iran, would be the best outcome for Israel's regional security. Russia and the United States have been calculating their global and domestic interests while playing out their long-standing rivalry over the civil war in Syria. Almost all these varied interests and goals are at odds with each other; and meanwhile the humanitarian disaster continues to unfold, with Syrian civilians represented by none of the above parties.

Militarization of Syria's contentious politics has increased the stake that various external powers have in the country, complicating the crisis even further. Some analysts have argued that the conflict has worsened because Western powers failed to provide even *greater* military support, and sooner, to the moderate rebels, thus allowing both the regime and radical opposition groups to gain the upper hand. First, this argument overlooks the weakness and disorganization of the social movement from the start, as outlined before; second it assumes, without much foundation, that the aftermath of greater external intervention would have been smooth and stable—a decade of turmoil in neighboring Iraq indicates otherwise. In Syria, it is not just the late timing of limited support that has deepened the conflict, but rather the occurrence of external military interference itself. Indeed the start of "targeted" US airstrikes against ISIS in 2014 merely exposed the flaws in such a strategy—in this case it has produced a new terrain of problems and exacerbated confusion in Washington regarding its current and future policy.

Beyond complicating the crisis, external powers have inadvertently played to the Ba'thist regime's greatest fears and strengths. Failure to consider the Syrian regime's conviction that it is always under threat of attack and foreign conspiracy, and its deeply ingrained suspicion of the West, has contributed to counterproductive tactics by the opposition that have in fact provided ammunition for the regime's suspicions and propaganda. For example, the early tactics of the external opposition involved Syrians in Britain and the United States calling on their governments, whom Syria had poor relations with anyway, to apply even heavier sanctions on Syria than those already in

place for the past 30 years. This strategy is something that many scholars have acknowledged does little to materially hurt the regime, while the civilian population—particularly the most vulnerable—bears the brunt of the impact.[58] One underlying goal of economic sanctions is to force the wealthy elite to withdraw its support for the regime, weakening the state's economic capacity and pool of support—this failed to materialize in the Syrian case and neither did it hurt the regime nor boost the opposition.[59]

But arguably the most damaging for the external opposition's reputation were the vocal calls for direct military intervention against the regime—which began as early as the summer of 2011[60]—accompanied by American, French, and British assertions very early on that Assad's rule was all but "coming to an end." [61] Rather than produce any tangible results (indeed, neither scenario has yet materialized) this merely stoked the Syrian government's fears and rhetoric of a Western-backed conspiracy for regime change, took the already slim possibility of negotiations off the table, and hardened the crisis into a zero-sum conflict.

Opposition lobbying for direct military strikes came to a critical head in August 2013 in the wake of a chemical weapon atrocity against civilians in Ghouta near Damascus.[62] The FSA and SNC saw military strikes against the regime as the game changer they had been looking for since the start of the conflict; their calls were supported by a mixed group of actors, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, the American, British, and French leaders, prominent neoconservatives in Washington, and the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee.[63] Fears of a regional conflagration or repetition of the disaster in Iraq were dismissed by members of the opposition as excuses for inaction and even framed as support for the Assad regime. The deep suspicion aroused among Syrians within the country over the apparent coalition of interests between the opposition and Israeli lobbyists was overlooked and unaddressed by the SNC. It was all too easy to dismiss such suspicion as the result of regime propaganda (true, in part), but the perceived alignment between the opposition and Syria's old adversaries produced great unease among several rebel groups as well.[64] The debate over intervention demonstrated an inability to engage in dialogue with conflicting voices from within the contentious movement itself, a key symptom of its lack of solidarity; it also reflected an insistence on a parochial view of the Syrian conflict, one which struggled to grasp its entanglement in a complex regional dynamic.

Such an approach tarnished the SNC and external political opposition generally in the eyes of many ordinary Syrians who do not support the regime but are also wary of the opposition.[65] The impression that the opposition are lackeys of external powers and are a Trojan horse for Western control in Syria has, although inaccurate, been a barrier to the opposition's efforts. Calls for military intervention and a subsequent bloody conflict justified Syrians' fears of instability. It is a fear that has been inflamed not only by years of manipulative rhetoric by the regime to bolster their position, but also by the real fallout from the Iraq war, which impacted Syria far greater than it did most other countries. Over 1 million Iraqi refugees fled to Syria; the destruction wrought by the war and the intense sectarian conflict that broke out in Iraq raised fears of similar instability and sectarian strife in Syria, all of which have proved to be devastatingly accurate.

Although many Syrians within the country were originally unconvinced by the regime's narrative that lack of political freedoms was a small price to pay for stability, equally as many were, and more, have since come round to the same conclusion. And just as the opposition's closeness to the West might have undermined its credibility, Western condemnation of the regime did not undermine the latter's legitimacy but rather seemed to validate its ideological, anticolonial narrative. In an interview Bashar gave to the *Wall Street Journal* in January of 2011, he confidently asserted that his ideological position and popular foreign policy connected him and his government with the Syrian people.[66] This seemed far-fetched, and for sure Bashar was deluded in overestimating the level of public support he had; but it demonstrates the extent to which the regime had sought to build its legitimacy on foundations that were independent of the West, relying instead on Russia, China, and Iran, which in turn has strengthened its staying power.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has fleshed out the key elements needed for a contentious movement to be successful and applied it to the Syrian case. First, it needs an *opening of political opportunity* from which the movement takes its cue—accurately assessing and identifying the restructuring cue is crucial. It has been argued that the contentious movement in Syria miscalculated in taking its restructuring cue from uprisings in other Arab states. The visceral desire for justice that moved Syrians to act is entirely understandable; but nevertheless the stark differences in the political opportunities in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya on the

one hand, and Syria on the other, were overlooked and contributed to the movement's weakness.

Second, there is a need for a *common purpose* and a *collective identity* to drive the activists forward in a strategically astute way. This was notoriously lacking among the Syrian opposition, with ethnic, religious, political, and tactical differences preventing a coherent and effective game plan both in the military and diplomatic arenas. Third, a successful contentious movement relies on a comprehensive and accumulative *contentious repertoire*, gradually nurtured over a period of years. Again, the Syrian contentious movement sorely lacked experience, with only the painful memory of Hama in 1982 to fall back on—an episode that has in fact aided the Syrian regime, providing it with its own repertoire of successfully eliminating dissent.

Finally, in order to be successful, a contentious movement needs to devise, coordinate, and enact a form of collective action that is *sustainable*, taking into consideration the potential consequences and avoiding that which threatens to be counterproductive to the contentious goals in the long run. After the bloody crackdown of peaceful protesters by the regime, the Syrian opposition turned to military action as its preferred contentious method—this reflected an attempt to avoid a repeat of Hama, and the view that the Libyan case was analogous to Syria. However, the militarization of Syria's contentious politics—and in turn dependence on international support—complicated and intensified the crisis, to the extent that contentious agency shifted away from the grassroots social movement to external political actors and military leaders. Furthermore, rather than undermining the regime, the interference of foreign actors (of all guises) and the ensuing construction of a zero-sum framework have lent domestic credence to the Syrian government's Manichean, ideological narrative and fed into its tactics. The militarization of Syria's contentious politics has been neither a sustainable form of collective action, nor conducive to the contentious social movement's goals.

Contentious social movements by definition begin as a bottom-up process from the grassroots level.[67] As such they are often viewed as reflecting the democratic impulse of society, representing the weak and disenfranchised and confronting those in positions of power. In public discourse it can be difficult to disconnect contentious social movements from such normative colorings; hence to analyze a social movement—to critique its strategy and question its potential for success—can open one up to allegations of undermining the morale of the contentious actors, of fatalistic acceptance of the

status quo, or even of implicit support for it. This has particularly been the case with the debate over Syria since the uprisings began in 2011, a debate that has rapidly turned into a restrictive and emotive binary discourse, with very little reflective critique within each of the different camps, and even less dialogue between them. Such failures in scrutiny operating under the guise of loyalty are in fact counterproductive to the success of the contentious movement in question; particularly where there is lack of an existing contentious repertoire (as was the case in Syria), flexibility, self-evaluation, and learning through experience are crucial to possible successes in the future.

And therein lies some slight cause for hope and strategic investment—though the horrors of conflict and militarization have stifled the nascent grassroots civilian movement, it might also be argued that the seeds for a wisened social movement in the future have been sown. The growth at various stages of the conflict of LCCs, humanitarian networks, and various forms of religious, sociopolitical, and economic community organization, is testimony to the painstaking, gradual process of building a sustainable contentious social movement—one which is adapted to and cultivated within the local context, and thus comes to constitute its society and politics in a way that makes it harder for it to be crushed.

NOTES

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1. For example, in February 2011, *The Huffington Post* asked: "Is This the Beginning of a Trend?" Accessed at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/01/egypt-tunisia-arab-revolution_n_816695.html; *The Guardian* stated on March 23, 2011: "The Arab Revolution Is an Unstoppable Force," and "While the World's Attention Is Focussed on Libya, People across the Middle East Are Rising up against Dictators." Accessed at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/23/arab-revolution-unstoppable-force.
2. See "The Arab World's 1989 Revolution?," *Al Jazeera*, February 2, 2011. Accessed at: http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/2011/02/201121165427186924.html.
3. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Guardian*, February 2, 2011. Accessed at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/02/egypt-young-arabs-1989-europe-bold.
4. "The Arab 1989?" Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, David Held, and Alia Brahimi, February 11 2011. Accessed at: http://www.opendemocracy.net/kristian-coates-ulrichsen-david-held-alia-brahimi/arab-1989. In this article, the authors do identify important analytical differences between 1989 and 2011, noting their differing relationships with the West, but the apparent domino effect in both cases is still cited as a common feature.
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9. S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
10. In July 2013 the UN put the estimate for deaths at over 100,000 and announced in January 2014 that it would stop updating the death toll due to difficulties in verification—this decision was reversed by the UNHCR in August 2014, when the figure was updated to 191,369. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group opposed to the Assad regime, put the figure at 202, 354 in December 2014. On the politics of death tolls, see A. Taylor, "200,000 Dead? Why Syria's Rising Death Toll Is so Divisive," *Washington Post*, December 3, 2014. Accessed at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/12/03/200000-dead-why-syrias-rising-death-toll-is-so-divisive/.
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12. The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (Syria, or the Levant).
13. See Arabic website. Accessed at: https://www.facebook.com/Syrian.Revolution. October 31, 2013; E. Flock, "Syria Revolution: A Revolt Brews against Bashar al-Assad's Regime," *The Washington Post*, March 15, 2011. Accessed at: http://washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogspot/post/syria-revolution-revolt-against-al--assads-regime/2011/03/15/ABrwNEX_blog.html.
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38. The Syrian regime has long promoted an ideological, Arab nationalist narrative, promoting the notion of resistance against Israel and its allies in the West. Syria's Ba'thist brand of Arab nationalism has survived, albeit in a weakened form, by promulgating the continued salience of resistance via its alliances with other "pariah" actors in the region, such as Iran, Hizbullah, and Hamas. Hence the language of justice, antihegemony, and defiance (both contentious and political), have effectively been appropriated by the regime for decades at the international level. See J. K. Gani, *The Role*

of Ideology in Syrian-US Relations: Conflict and Cooperation (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

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43. Lesch, *Arab Spring*, 83.
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45. S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 114.
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6

FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT IN CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: EUROPE AND THE 2011 UPRISINGS IN LIBYA

Inez von Weitershausen

EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2011 REVOLUTION

The 2011 uprisings in Libya can be seen as a particularly powerful episode of contentious politics in the region, with protests and high levels of violence persisting over months and eventually leading to the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime after more than four decades. Yet acts of resistance against the ruling political class and the way in which the latter ran and de facto "owned" the Libyan state for decades are not limited to the year 2011. Rather, the events during the so-called Arab Spring merely represent the heydays of a much longer history of contentious politics. Acts of oppression, such as the Abu Salim Prison Massacre in 1996, and countless instances of reported torture and assassinations carried out worldwide by the Libyan secret service in an effort to preempt opposition to the Gaddafi regime bear witness to the fact that not all Libyans supported the "brother leader" to the extent he desired.[1]

As the current security situation further reveals, particularly in the South of the country, contention did not end with the replacement of the *Jamahiriya* system or the death of the dictator. Rather, Libya is characterized by an ongoing "collective political struggle" [2]between many diverse societal groups and tribes as discontent prevails over how politics and daily life have developed since the end of the regime. The most recent and infamous examples of acts of contention that have been carried out as a sign of protest of the status quo include the kidnapping of high-ranking officials, armed protests to force

through legislation,[3] and the besieging of state institutions, such as the foreign ministry or police stations. The tragic murder of the American ambassador and four of his colleagues in September 2012 further demonstrated that ideological and religious cleavages not only drive Libyan society apart but also affect foreign actors.[4]

The latter's role in contentious politics in Libya, however, has differed considerably over time. Along with regional Arab powers and the United States, European countries too have sought to influence domestic politics in Libya before, during, and since the Gaddafi era. While Europe's economic and security interests contributed for a long time to a policy of "silent agreements"[5] with Libya and a number of other autocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), European governments nonetheless continued to support opposition groups. Pressed by human rights considerations and a public opinion that was highly critical of inconsistencies between rhetoric and actual policies, European politicians were torn between cooperation with and condemnation of the Gaddafi regime.[6] As a consequence, Europe's policy toward Libya before the 2011 uprisings was dominated by contradictions and antagonisms—and therefore accompanied by a significant amount of criticism.[7]

This chapter, however, focuses on the role played by European states during the 2011 uprisings—probably the most powerful period of contentious politics since Gaddafi himself overthrew the Sanussi monarchy in 1969. The first part provide an overview of how these countries supported and thus fueled the events in Libya through moral, political, and, ultimately, military support. Based on these insights, it will then be demonstrated that despite a rhetoric that stresses the exceptionality of the Arab revolutions, European states were driven by the same geopolitical and economic motivations that had fueled their respective engagement with Libya in the past. Third, it will be shown that as member states are still very much in charge of the formulation and conduct of foreign policy, the EU as an international organization has still a rather long way to go if it is to obtain a degree of agency or actorness that matches its coherence in the economic realm.[8] The EU thus continues to lack the political presence that would allow it to pursue a distinctive set of preferences than that of its member states and policies with a more "normative orientation." Overall, the findings of this case study confirm the hypothesis that the role of foreign actors in contentious politics is determined first and foremost by the self-interest of the respective nation-states.

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN LIBYA IN 2011

In early 2011 the wave of protests commonly referred to as the "Arab Spring" also hit Libya. Enraged by delays in the building of housing units, corruption scandals, and poor employment prospects, large numbers of citizens took to the streets and challenged the system as a whole. To many international observers this was a rather unexpected outcome as Gaddafi had kept a tied grip on the country for more than 40 years, and any form of opposition had been fought by the regime using the most severe methods. Yet, in 2011 many Libyans openly expressed their discontent despite the negative consequences they were likely to endure should the old elites stay in power.[9]

Following a "virtual revolt" on social media sites such as Facebook, it came to first actual confrontations with the regime on February 15 when an estimated 500 protesters gathered in front of Benghazi's police headquarters, inspired by the arrest of human rights lawyer Fathi Terbil.[10] The protests became increasingly violent and culminated in a "Day of Rage" on February 17. From that moment on, and fueled further by regional events such as the fall of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia and of Mubarak in Egypt,[11] protests took place in various cities throughout the country, where television and public radio stations as well as security and government buildings became popular targets for the rebels.

As Gaddafi's role as the sole representative of the Libyan state and his position as "Brother Leader" of the Jamahiriya system had tied his rule closely to the conditions inside Libya, initial demands for greater accountability, representation, and justice quickly turned into calls for regime change. The major fault line thus occurred between opponents and supporters of the regime. In an attempt to respond to the acts of contention, the latter pursued different strategies. Gaddafi himself tried to preempt and channel the oppositions' demands by establishing himself as the spearhead of the protests and telling Libyans that it was right of them to "demand what was theirs." Also, the television appearance of his son and designated successor, Saif Al-Islam, on February 21 had a somewhat conciliatory character as he admitted that mistakes were made in a brutal crackdown of citizens and urged the population to build a "new Libya."[12]

Yet, as this strategy did not pay off and opposition grew, the regime mobilized its supporters in order to preempt further protests and began to play off different societal groups against each other, thus taking on a more confrontational approach. When the situation finally escalated with the open use of violence against civilians, Ahmed Jibril, a high-ranking Libyan

diplomat-turned-dissident made clear that the opposition stayed firm in its will to challenge the regime by declaring emphatically: "When they killed two people, we had more than 5000 at their funeral, and when they killed 15 people the next day, we had more than 50,000 the following day. This means that the more Gaddafi kills, the more people go into the streets."[13]

Yet "the opposition" was in fact not a homogenous group, and "claimants"[14] came from a broad range of backgrounds. Many of the protesters were rather young and belonged to various tribes and ethnicities. They were often based in Cyrenaica, the Eastern part of the country, where people felt that they had suffered a "perpetual state of underdevelopment as punishment for its rebelliousness"[15] under Gaddafi. Thus civilians from the lower and middle classes, such as teachers, students, businessmen, and oil workers, as well as state personnel like police officers and defected professional soldiers from the Libyan Army, took to the streets, hoping to improve their respective living conditions in a Libya without Gaddafi. But there was also a considerable amount of "elite opposition" that was based in and supported from abroad. The National Conference on the Libyan Opposition (NFSL), the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (LCU), the Libyan Constitutional Union, and the Libyan League for Human Rights (LLHR) are examples of such groups. Finally, religious opposition also played a role, for example, in the form of the Libyan Islamic Groups and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.[16] This factor also partly explains the continuation of contentious politics today.

The same kind of heterogeneity that was present among protesters was also reflected in the composition of the National Transitional Council (NTC or TNC), which established itself in early February 2011 in an effort to pursue two goals: First, it sought to gather different opposition currents (such as former regime representatives who had broken with Gaddafi shortly after the uprisings broke out and various tribal heads as well as elites from the pre-Gaddafi era) around one table in order to synchronize efforts and discuss plans for a Libya post Gaddafi. Second, the NTC was to serve as a "legitimate and credible interlocutor of the Libyan people" for foreign powers.[17] Even though the latter did not take a unified position on granting full diplomatic recognition to the NTC, its very creation thus mirrored Western preferences too for a political structure that broadly reflected its own and that was independent of and in certain ways distinct from traditional Libyan societal and tribal structures.[18] At the same time, Western powers were quick to identify the potential benefits they could derive from an overthrow of the regime and thus offered their support in numerous ways.

EUROPEAN ENGAGEMENT: MORAL, POLITICAL, AND MILITARY SUPPORT

The initial approach and general tenor in the West seemed to be one of "wait and see." Yet the move of the Libyan opposition toward a more organized form of protest generated positive responses among the international community.[19] In particular, France welcomed this development and led a number of states in the support for the interim government, even though the composition of the NTC was by no means undisputed.[20] Several high-level meetings between French politicians and negotiators and Libyan opposition members preceded the formal recognition of the NTC as the official representative of the Libyan opposition on March 10, 2011, by President Nicholas Sarkozy. Even though France acted unilaterally in this instance, not awaiting similar steps by or a coordinated move with its European partners,[21] it was quite successful in generating widespread international support for the opposition's cause in form of a group that came to be known as "Friends of Libya" or "Libya Contact Group."[22] The latter included representatives from European member states, the United States, the United Nations, NATO, and the Arab League and has been described as as a "show of diplomatic creativity" with regard to French efforts to minimize US leadership via NATO.[23] The states and institutions presented in the Libya Contact Group hence aligned themselves with the claims made by the Libyan opposition and provided moral, political, and, eventually, military support. A particularly important step in this context was the members' agreement to deal with the NTC as the "legitimate governing authority in Libya" following its meeting in Istanbul in July 2011.

However, other channels were also used in order to provide assistance to the Libyan opposition, in particular the UN system, which proved to be highly relevant in this regard. On February 26, 2011, the Security Council adopted a United Nations Resolution that had been proposed in a common effort by France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Resolution 1970 condemned the use of lethal force by the regime against protesters and imposed a series of international sanctions such as travel bans and the freezing of assets.[24] A further significant sign of moral support was the referral of Gaddafi to the International Criminal Court,[25] while the extensive funds and humanitarian assistance that were provided on a bilateral basis, through the UN system, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) teams further demonstrated

to Libyan protesters—particularly in the rebel strongholds in the East—that international actors were supportive of their cause.

Following diplomatic, political, and humanitarian support, European powers also contributed to contentious politics by influencing the military capabilities of the incumbent regime and the rebels. In European Council meetings, representatives of the EU member states hence agreed not only on asset freezes and travel restrictions for high-ranking regime members, but also voted for an arms embargo in order to limit Gaddafi's access to weaponry, which had previously been delivered to him by many European states.

However, a few EU members, France and Britain in particular, however further contemplated ways in which a more direct military support could be given to the opposition. While France favored a joint Franco-British approach, preferably under the EU flag, Britain pushed—much in line with its general interests and foreign policy preferences—for a transatlantic alternative.[26] As it became obvious relatively quickly that US military capability was in fact crucial for an effective and timely response, American support for intervention was sought through the NATO framework. However, the extent to which France and Britain had pressed for military engagement became apparent only when they—together with Lebanon—introduced a draft resolution for a "no-fly-zone" at the UNSC. Here they profited from a change of preferences within the Obama administration following a call by the Arab League to establish a no-fly zone as a "preventive measure…to protect civilians." Other factors that were suggested to have been crucial in this context were the imminent siege of Benghazi and the availability of a military option that promised some amount of success.[27] After intense discussions in New York, Resolution 1973 was adopted on March 17, 2011, with 10 of the Council's 15 votes. As it allowed for a much greater and more direct involvement of foreign actors in contentious politics in Libya, it was met by the Libyan opposition with great enthusiasm.[28] Other European (and NATO) powers, however, remained skeptical toward military intervention and sought to limit their engagement in Libya's contentious politics to diplomatic and political support as well as humanitarian relief. Germany and Poland, for instance, chose not to partake in what later became the NATO's operation, Unified Protector, as did a large number of smaller member states, while participating countries argued about questions of leadership and extent of the mission.[29]

Russia and China too remained highly skeptical and considered that the unilateral and ill-timed action by European powers[30] suggested that behind the noble claims for military engagement as a last resort for civilian protection

lay much more pragmatic or material objectives. Later, these two permanent members of the UN Security Council suggested that the scope of the intervention had extended its initial purpose[31] and used this argument in order to prevent military action against the Assad regime in Syria. Further criticism erupted when it became apparent that the intervention-coalition was not only supplying nonlethal assistance such as uniforms and technical equipment to the opposition but also weapons such as assault rifles, machine guns, and rocket launchers.[32] Equally controversial was furthermore the decision to "advise" rebels on "self-defense tactics" by sending experts into Libya as doing so challenged the credibility of the strategy to not have boots on the grounds.[33] Following the intervention, it has also been reported that there were further ways in which "special forces have helped rebels to "improve their tactics."[34]

It is of little surprise then that based on these findings critical voices interpreted Western efforts in light of imperialist ambitions[35] or suggested that the Libyan people were mere "spectators" or "part actors" in the fight against Gaddafi. Such criticism, however, discards the fact that even though foreign actors did encourage and support contentious politics, the first and foremost to fight on the streets and give their lives for the cause were Libyan citizens.

MOTIVES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Independent of how one assesses the different kinds of engagement of the European actors described earlier, they clearly reveal the extent to and number of ways in which foreign actors have contributed to contentious politics in Libya during the 2011 revolution. While much could also be said about the influence of regional powers like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, or of that of the United States, Europe is a particularly interesting case in point as has often been claimed, especially in the academic discourse, that its international engagement is driven by a more normative agenda.[36] A closer look at European involvement in contentious politics in Libya in 2011, however, reveals that the action was in fact largely driven by the national preferences of the member states and their political elites.

In particular Spain, Italy, France, and Malta were potentially affected by negative developments in Libya and the MENA region due to their geographic proximity. Their concerns thus determined in many ways the European agenda and put questions of migration and international terrorism to the forefront. As under Gaddafi they had cherished Libya's activity as a gatekeeper for the EU,[37] it was not surprising that Italy's foreign minister Franco Frattini

repeatedly expressed his concerns about "the repercussions on the migratory situation in the southern Mediterranean"[38] once the revolution unfolded. As a consequence, the EU mandated the border control agency Frontex early on to observe and—if required—to prevent and stop increased flows of migrants into EU territory. Hungary, which held the six-month rotating presidency at that time, later confirmed that Tripoli had indeed threatened to end its cooperation on blocking irregular immigration into the EU if Brussels did not side with the incumbent regime.[39]

Yet, concerns regarding an increased influx of migrants from the MENA region were only part of the explanation for European engagement in Libya's contentious politics during 2011. Business interests too played an important role as EU countries valued Libya's supply of oil,[40] its growing need for foreign expertise and investments in the construction sector and cooperation agreements in areas such as natural resources or military equipment.[41] ENI, the Italian partly state-owned oil and gas company had profited, for instance, from valuable and extensive drilling agreements with Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC), and Spain and the United Kingdom were driven by their desire to secure a favourable business environment for companies such as Repsol and BP. At the same time France, the United Kingdom, and Germany had profited from selling and licensing arms and military equipment to the country. This extensive and, for both sides, lucrative cooperation had become possible only when Libya had rejoined the international community in 2004,[42] and a continuation—and if possible intensification—of this partnership was perceived as vital for Europe by its elites.

A further factor that helps in explaining Europe's response to the events in Libya was that at the time the revolution took place, several European leaders were suffering from decreasing domestic approval ratings. Support for events that were framed as a humanitarian crisis in Europe's immediate neighborhood was thus a welcome opportunity to generate new support and legitimacy. In particular, for French president Sarkozy and UK prime minister, David Cameron, participating in the revolution promised to shift the focus from internal national challenges to the international sphere. The potentially positive outcome of the "rally around the flag" effect has been identified in times of crisis across a multitude of countries and regions, and has promised to be an opportunity to increase approval ratings and regain ground vis-à-vis other parties and political personnel.[43] President Sarkozy furthermore faced antagonism from parts of his own bureaucracy as was demonstrated by the

substantial criticism by a number of French diplomats. Following the initially hesitant response to the uprisings in Tunisia, the latter had published a letter in *Le Monde* suggesting that France's voice had disappeared internationally and that the president was incapable of conducting foreign policy effectively.[44] While written in the context of the Libya crisis, the statement should however be understood as an expression of the general discontent among parts of the French elite, with the country's geopolitical role and its history as a former major colonial power. It should further be read against the specific character and the long-standing traditions of the French diplomatic service.[45]

The "domestic factor" also played a role for David Cameron, who had previously been criticized for a policy of defense cuts and for appearing too soft on issues of national security.[46] Taking a strong stance against the Libyan dictator and pushing for military action were thus helpful ways in which he could reshape his profile.[47] He furthermore catered to the interests of British business firms that sought to broaden their influence in Libya.[48] In case of a change in leadership in Libya, early and effective support for the opposition thus seemed a highly promising strategy to deepen business ties. Decisive action in Libya hence gave the French and the British leaders the opportunity to reestablish or increase their credibility—among their respective domestic publics, bureaucracies, as well as their European partners and the international community, while pushing forward the bilateral security agenda and their economic interests.

Similar things can, of course, be said with regard to Italy or Spain as well, and importantly Germany too, as one of the "big three" of European foreign policy. Even though the latter is not traditionally considered one of the major powers when it comes to formulating Europe's policies toward the Southern neighborhood, it does play a vital role in shaping the EU's external image overall, not least due to its economic power and strong ties with most of the countries in Eastern Europe. At the same time, however, Germany's foreign policy is quite distinct from that of France and the United Kingdom in that it does not possess the same instruments, such as nuclear capabilities or a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, nor does it look back at a comparable colonial history in Africa. Furthermore, since the World War II it has increasingly developed an antimilitarist attitude, which is deeply anchored in its national identity[49] and which was not significantly altered by the participation of Germany in the war in Afghanistan. In line with this tradition, Germany chose not to take part in the NATO intervention and even abstained

in the relevant vote at the Security Council. Yet it focused on political support for the Libyan opposition and Foreign Minister Westerwelle repeatedly underlined German support for the cause of the rebels, well aware that the latter might in fact form part or at least the influence of a new Libyan government after Gaddafi and might become crucial interlocutors for German companies. Germany's comparatively more hesitant approach can thus be explained against the background of domestic politics in the face of leading politicians' desire to cater to the anti-intervention attitude among the German population—particularly in view of the regional elections coming up[50] A second strain of argumentation has further suggested that, arguably, the most observed episode of German foreign policy during the Libyan crisis, the abstention in the vote on UN Resolution 1973, can be traced back to a misinterpretation or unawareness of the change in the American position and faulty judgments among the German foreign policy elite.[51] Whatever the reasons that ultimately let to Germany's action in this instance, its overall response fits well with its general way of conducting foreign policy and the fact that Germany's ties to the MENA region overall and to Libya in particular are—compared to other European states—rather weak.

The individual levels of and motives for supporting contentious politics in Libya in 2011 thus differed among European states. Yet in all cases they can be understood as derived from an interplay of the individual countries' colonial history with the Middle East and North Africa, the specific domestic contexts, the competition for favorable trade terms, and the degree to which the country was likely to be affected by changes in the fields of security and migration. In addition it can be argued that European countries also "factor" in—albeit to different degrees—their aspirations to exercise political power and influence in Europe and in the international community overall. However there is also ground to believe that behind these rather pragmatic reasons for intervention, there were at least parts of the political elites in all European states who genuinely believed that once the acts of contention had reached a certain degree of violence, support had to be given in order to protect civilians on both sides.[52]

As a consequence of these diverging national interests, little unity was achieved with regard to the "European response" to the 2011 protests[53] and the role of the EU and its foreign policy institutions thus remained rather limited[54] and did not match the ambitious expectations some had set out for Europe.[55] Whether a different kind of political leadership would have made

much of a difference in this context remains a matter of debate, but it has been confirmed from the EU side that its influence over the events in the Libya and North Africa was indeed limited.[56]

To conclude, there is no one European approach to contentious politics in Libya in 2011 but rather a conglomeration of individual responses, which were reflective of well-established preferences and followed old patterns. It has thus been suggested that despite a rhetoric that claims to put values such as democracy and human rights first, the EU's response was at best "old wine in new bottles."[57] Neither with regard to the procedure nor the substance of European foreign policy can one hence attest significant changes since the Treaty of Lisbon and the institutional and legal changes the latter has brought about. Rather, the case of Libya in 2011 confirms previous findings that national interests remain the driving factors behind European foreign policy and that they, more generally, provide the key motives behind the foreign actor's engagement in contentious politics.

NOTES

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25. Other Security Council members, in particular Russia, China, and India, who had initially expressed concern that international action and a reference to the International Criminal Court could inflame the situation changed their attitude following the appeal for assistance by the Libyan ambassador to the United Nations, Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi.*
26. Interviews conducted by the author in 2012 with EU officials in Brussels.
27. Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi,* explains in greater detail how once the United States had shifted its general attitude toward military action, it felt that the proposed resolution was in fact not far-reaching enough and called for a broader mandate including the use of "all necessary measures…to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under attack" while ruling out an "occupying force" (Resolution 1973).
28. Interview with the official in Brussels, September 2012.
29. I. Traynor and N. Watt, "Libya No Fly Zone Plan Rejected by EU Leaders," *The Guardian*, 2011. Online. Accessed at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/11/libya-no-fly-zone-plan-rejected, in February 2014.
30. In particular, President Sarkozy's announcement that French Rafale fighter jets had struck Gaddafi forces in Benghazi, only a short time after military engagement had

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7

FOREIGN ACTORS: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD HANGING OVER CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Eugenio Lilli

INTRODUCTION

The stated goal underlying this edited volume is to study the complex role of popular agency and internal variables in the uprisings that broke out across the Arab world in 2011. This chapter takes a completely opposite perspective and, without neglecting the importance of domestic actors, it seeks to highlight the significant role foreign actors played in the protests. In order to do that, it is first necessary to distinguish between the two main phases of each uprising: its outbreak and its outcome. With regard to the outbreak phase, internal actors and dynamics were typically central. In fact, popular movements arose in a number of Arab countries that shared common calls for socioeconomic and political change eventually aimed at achieving better living standards and a greater participation by the people in their nations' political systems. There has been general agreement among researchers that these protest movements were the result of the spontaneous mobilization of independent internal actors predominantly interested in addressing domestic grievances. As for the outcome phase, instead, this chapter will show that external actors and dynamics were often decisive. Indeed, once the protests began, the response of foreign actors had a crucial influence on the development and outcome of the uprisings. In some cases foreign action supported popular movements and facilitated change, whereas in others foreign action backed existing regimes and helped to maintain the status quo.

That said, foreign dynamics also played an important role during the outbreak phase of the 2011 uprisings. The Arab world, perhaps more than

any other region of the globe, is characterized by a widespread sense of common identity and shared destiny. The recent diffusion of new information technologies, like satellite television and the Internet, has only strengthened the formation of a unified Arab public sphere and has increased the linkages between issues across the region. As a result, during the uprisings we witnessed a clear phenomenon of a demonstration effect that spread from the west end of North Africa to southernmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Arab popular movements learned from one another. For example, Bahraini and Yemeni protesters learned the tactic of occupying public spaces, usually central squares, from their counterparts in Egypt. Similarly, Arab regimes learned their own lessons. The kings of Morocco and Jordan, for example, responded to early street demonstrations with preemptive moves toward reform that so far have stopped the protests in these two countries to reach the critical mass they did in Tunisia and Egypt. The examples of courageous Tunisians and Egyptians also helped to break the so-called wall of fear and spurred opposition movements elsewhere in the region to take to the streets and challenge autocratic regimes and their dreaded security forces. All that considered, any analysis aspiring to provide a comprehensive explanation of the Arab uprisings cannot dismiss the role of external variables or the complex connection existing between internal and external dynamics.

To make its case this chapter adopts a comparative approach and analyzes events in three specific countries: Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen. These three countries have been selected for analysis because they represent the clearest and most telling examples of foreign actors' enduring influence on contentious politics in the Arab world. In Bahrain, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) took direct military action to prop up the Al Khalifa government, thus facilitating the violent suppression of the opposition. As a result, the Bahraini uprising has so far failed to achieve any significant change. Conversely, in Libya, the international community supported the anti-Gaddafi opposition and also engaged in a UN-backed NATO-led military campaign to enable change. As a result, Muammar Gaddafi's rule is over and a new Libyan government is currently trying to rebuild the country. Yemen presents a somewhat different example insofar as foreign influence was not exerted by military means but mostly using diplomatic pressure. A foreign-brokered transition plan provided a peaceful breakthrough to a political and military impasse that was leading Yemen to the brink of an all-out civil war. As a result, President Ali Abdullah Saleh resigned and transferred his powers to the vice president, Abd Rabbo Mansur Hadi. The study of Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen

will show that external variables were decisive in shaping the developments and outcomes of such uprisings. However, the example of these three countries should not be generalized and used to account for the totality of the uprisings that have recently upset the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In fact, there are other uprisings, like that in Tunisia, where the role of foreign actors was at best marginal. Furthermore, even in Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen internal variables played a critical role in creating the necessary conditions for foreign action. The fact that the Bahraini military stood squarely by the regime, that Col. Gaddafi was a pariah in the international community, and that the Yemeni opposition was deeply fragmented strongly influenced the considerations of external actors. To sum up, this chapter does not suggest substituting the study of internal variables with that of external ones but, instead, argues for the necessity of adding a further layer in the analysis of contentious politics in the Middle East— the central role played by foreign actors and the dynamics involved in that.

Events in Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen provide evidence to support the argument that MENA countries are particularly "porous," that is, especially open, to foreign influence. This chapter will analyze how state porosity has relevant policy implications for the various actors involved in the contentious politics of the region. Finally, a number of questions for future research on state permeability in the MENA will also be briefly discussed.

BAHRAIN

For more than 200 years the kingdom of Bahrain has been ruled by the Al Khalifas. The royal family is Sunni Muslim whereas the majority of the population is Shiite.[1]

Despite the establishment of a bicameral parliament in 2001, the real decision-making power remains firmly in the hands of the Al Khalifas, whose members have generally occupied at least half of the cabinet posts and always the most strategically important ones. Politically, the Bahraini royal family could be roughly divided into two different camps competing for influence, with King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa falling somewhere in between. On the one side, there is a moderate and proreform camp led by Crown Prince Sheikh Salman. On the other, there is a reactionary and antireform camp led by Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman.[2]

Bahrain's 2011 uprising emerged from the context of long-running contentious politics in the country. The rule of the Al Khalifas has been contested

many times: by two coup attempts in 1981 and in 1996, by violent protests throughout the 1990s, and by popular mobilization in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Most of the discontent has come from the Shiite majority of the population, which feels it has been treated as "second-class citizenry" by the mostly Sunni ruling class. Bahraini Shiites have been long demanding what they perceive as their proportionate share of the country's economic wealth and political opportunities.[3]

The demonstration effect of the seemingly successful Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings reinvigorated the Bahraini opposition, which on February 14, 2011, staged its own Day of Rage. The choice of February 14 was not accidental. In fact, the date coincided with both the tenth anniversary of the referendum on the National Action Charter and the ninth anniversary of the proclamation of the constitution, two documents that were approved in the early 2000s and intended to transform the Bahraini political system into a constitutional monarchy. King Hamad, in a preemptive move to dissuade people against joining the planned demonstrations, offered a handout of 1,000 Bahraini dinars to each Bahraini family. Despite the king's move, more than 6,000 demonstrators took part in Bahrain's Day of Rage in the capital Manama and in other villages, mostly Shiite, across the country. At this stage, protesters were calling for political and economic reforms: more power for the elected parliament, an end to the practice of gerrymandering voting districts in order to favor Sunni candidates, respect for human rights, and better jobs and economic opportunities. A minority was also demanding the resignation of hardline prime minister Sheikh Khalifa.[4]

The new groups at the forefront of the 2011 uprising, like the February 14 Revolution Coalition, represented a popular effort to find a more effective alternative to the existing political opposition. Such groups were usually leaderless networks whose members, mainly Internet-savvy youth, were not affiliated with any political organization and did not identify themselves along any particular religious, sectarian, or ideological lines. The traditional opposition, instead, included political societies such as Shiite Al-Wefaq and Al Haq, Sunni Minbar and Al Asalah, and the religiously mixed Waad. Notably, at this early stage of the uprising both Bahraini Sunnis and Shiites participated in the demonstrations calling for political and economic reforms.[5]

Bahrain's state security forces responded to the February 14 street demonstrations with rubber-coated bullets and tear gas. The ensuing confrontations resulted in one protester dead and tens more injured. On February 15, during

the funeral procession of the victim of the previous day's demonstrations, there were new clashes in Manama between the police and the mourners, which led to another protester shot dead. As a consequence, angry demonstrators flooded into the streets and gathered in large numbers at the Pearl Roundabout where they set up a tent camp. In a bid to defuse the rising tensions, King Hamad publicly expressed regret for the deaths and promised to establish a special committee to investigate the incidents.

The king's promise rang hollow when in the early morning of February 17 Bahraini security forces stormed Pearl Roundabout and, after a violent confrontation that lasted about 20–30 minutes, completely cleared the area of its occupiers. Bloody Thursday, as it was later dubbed, resulted in four people dead and many others injured. After defining the storming of the roundabout as a "heinous massacre" all 18 MPs affiliated with the opposition group Al Wefaq resigned from the Parliament. The government's harsh response caused the radicalization of the opposition's demands. Initial calls for reforms turned into more vocal demands for regime change, with some minority groups even demanding the establishment of a republic. Unlike Egypt where the military eventually refused to use deadly force against the protesters, the Bahraini armed forces stood squarely on the side of the Al Khalifas. This can be partly explained by the fact that Bahraini military officers are generally Sunni and that Bahraini armed forces' rank and file are mostly manned by foreigners whose allegiance lay with the regime that pays them and not with the people.[6]

Faced with mounting unrest, the Al Khalifas decided to offer some concessions: the king entrusted the crown prince with the task of starting a dialogue with the opposition; the withdrawal of security forces allowed demonstrators to retake Pearl Roundabout; hundreds of prisoners were released or pardoned; and some members of the royal family were removed from their cabinet posts. However, such conciliatory moves failed to stop the protests. On February 22, in Manama more than 150,000 people joined the March of Loyalty to Martyrs to honor the victims who had lost their lives during the uprising. Despite the large number of people joining the demonstrations, significant divides along sectarian lines began to emerge within the opposition. On March 3, news outlets for the first time reported serious violent clashes among Shiites and Sunnis in Hamad Town, a city south of Manama. This was partly the result of a relentless effort by the Al Khalifas to depict the protest movement as an Iranian-inspired Shiite fifth column. The regime's sectarian

narrative had the double effect of rallying Bahrain Sunni population's support and scaring off Bahrain moderate Shiites who did hope for reforms but had no love lost for Iran.[7]

Antigovernment demonstrations continued unabated in March. On March 7, there were rallies in front of the US embassy, the Ministry of the Interior, and Manama's financial harbor. Meanwhile, Crown Prince Sheikh Salman was engaged in frenzied negotiations with the opposition, especially with Al-Wefaq, to find a political solution to the crisis. On March 13, the crown prince proposed seven principles that would guide a comprehensive national dialogue. They included: a parliament with full authority, combating corruption, and an end to the gerrymandering of voting districts. The crown prince's proposal promised to address most of the demands that had sparked the outbreak of the uprising in the first place; however, by then, the requests of the opposition had become much more radical. Opposition's leaders would not settle for less than the election of a constituent assembly with the task of drafting a new constitution. Since the Al Khalifas were not ready to grant that, the negotiations failed.[8]

On the same day of the crown prince's offer, violent confrontations took place at the University of Bahrain and protesters tried to cut off access to Manama, the financial harbor or the beating heart of the country's economy. The security situation was rapidly deteriorating and Bahrain's security forces seemed unable to restore law and order. Given that the attempts to find a political solution to the crisis had failed, an embattled Bahraini government requested the help of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional organization of which Bahrain is a member. On March 14, around 2000 troops, mostly from Saudi Arabia and also from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, promptly entered Bahrain, while Kuwait sent naval forces to patrol and secure its maritime borders.[9]

It was not the first time that GCC troops were deployed in Bahrain. The Saudi National Guard had already intervened in support of the Al Khalifas during the unrest in the 1990s. The Saudi Kingdom in particular has a special interest in a stable and friendly Bahrain. In fact, Saudi leaders are genuinely concerned that a Shiite takeover of their small neighbor would be equal to handing over Bahrain to Saudi Arabia's regional nemesis, Iran. In addition, Riyadh fears that reforms in Manama would have negative repercussions on Saudi domestic politics insofar as such reforms would encourage Shiites and Sunni liberals in Saudi Arabia to raise similar demands. For these

reasons during the 2011 uprising Saudi leaders backed the Al Khalifas regime economically, diplomatically, and militarily. The GCC troops that entered Bahrain in March sent a strong message both to the Bahraini opposition—that the government in Manama had the total support of Riyadh—and to the international community—that Saudi Arabia would not tolerate any significant change to the status quo in its backyard.[10]

Emboldened by the presence of foreign troops, on March 15, King Hamad declared the establishment of a three-month long state of national safety. The royal order was followed by an unprecedented period of repression. There were mass arrests of over 3,000 people, including some prominent opposition leaders and human rights activists. More than 4,500 workers accused of participating in antigovernment rallies or supporting demonstrations were fired. Students at the University of Bahrain were forced to sign a loyalty oath and those who refused—over 500—were either suspended or expelled. Media outlets considered close or sympathetic to the opposition were also targeted and subjected to temporary suspension. Security forces occupied medical facilities and hospitals and they were accused of harassing doctors, nurses, and patients. There were also numerous reports of beatings and torture against protesters, medical personnel, and people in detention. Finally, credible accounts estimate that 35 people died during the February-March unrest, five of them in custody.

The Bahraini government's crackdown did not spare the symbols of the uprising. Bahraini authorities ordered the demolition of the white pearl monument overlooking Pearl Roundabout, which was then officially renamed Al Farooq Junction. The months from March through May 2011 also witnessed a government campaign targeting Shiite places of worship. At least 30 new and old mosques were reportedly destroyed because the government said they had been illegally built.[11]

On June 1, 11 weeks after the GCC troops' intervention, King Hamad announced the end of the state of national safety. The king's announcement paved the way for a gradual withdrawal of foreign troops, the release of most of the people arrested during the crackdown, the reinstatement of most of the expelled university students, and the rehiring of most of the fired workers, though not always to the same jobs. The following two years were characterized by continued low-intensity confrontations between demonstrators and security forces, an extremely slow process of reform that has not yet led to any substantial change in the Bahraini political system, and a renewed judicial crackdown on leading opposition figures.[12]

In sum, foreign military intervention in Bahrain undoubtedly gave to the regime the political and military support the Al Khalifas needed to use state security forces to suppress the opposition. The Bahraini protest movement has not disappeared but has received a fatal blow that, as of the time of this writing, has significantly weakened its ability to mobilize large numbers of people and promote change.

LIBYA

Muammar Gaddafi seized power soon after the 1969 military coup that overthrew King Idris, Libya's first and only monarch. In Libya Gaddafi established a personalistic regime, the Jamahiriya, or the "state of the masses," which revolved completely around his figure. The mercurial leader ruled the country through a divide et impera strategy aimed at exacerbating and exploiting Libya's tribal and regional divides and, therefore, at avoiding the formation of any competing center of power. For the very same reason, the state institutions were kept weak or were nonexistent. Instead, Gaddafi relied on special revolutionary committees to administer the Libyan Jamahiriya and to eradicate any form of opposition. In addition, like other Arab regimes, Gaddafi's Libya was marred by corruption; despite possessing the world's tenth largest proven oil reserves, decades of fraudulent government policies had left many Libyans poor.[13]

As a consequence of the addafi regime's iron-fist rule and systematic suppression of dissent, there was no organized opposition within Libya at the time of the outbreak of the 2011 uprising. Libyan authorities had been successful in rooting out the major Islamist groups, including the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Libyan tribes withheld some level of independence but were too divided to seriously challenge the regime. Groups of exiled Libyans, such as the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, had long been advocating for an end to Gaddafi's autocratic rule and the establishment of a democratic state but without achieving any meaningful result.[14]

Internationally, Col. Gaddafi's Libya had been a pariah state for decades, especially due to its support for international radical and revolutionary causes, and its program for developing weapons of mass destruction. A progressive rehabilitation of the country started after 2003 when the Gaddafi regime decided to stop sponsoring international terrorism, to accept responsibility and compensate the victims of past terrorist attacks, and to renounce the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.[15]

With hindsight, given Libya's position exactly between Tunisia and Egypt, it was perhaps only a matter of time before popular protests would reach the country. In fact, on February 16, only a few days after the ousting of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, thousands of Libyans took to the streets in the cities of Benghazi, Zentan, and Beyida to demonstrate against the arrest the day before in Benghazi of a prominent opposition lawyer and human rights activist, Fathi Terbil. Demonstrators confronted riot police with rocks and gasoline bombs; state security forces' buildings were set on fire; and people chanted slogans for an end to the regime. Although originally triggered by the arrest of Terbil, these demonstrations were mostly protests against state brutality and the widespread popular perception that the economic opportunities that had opened up since Libya's 2003 international rehabilitation had remained in the hands of a deeply corrupt and self-serving elite.[16]

In an attempt to stop the protests from spreading, Gaddafi promised to double state employees' salaries and to release 110 Islamists from the Abu Salim prison. Nevertheless, antiregime demonstrations continued unabated. On February 17, Libyans held their own Day of Rage with rallies and demonstrations taking place in several cities across the country. This time Gaddafi's security forces reportedly used live ammunition to disperse the crowds killing at least 24 people. Instead of cowing the demonstrators out of the streets, the regime's bloody response only exacerbated popular anger and increased the number of people joining the protests.[17]

The popular uprising gained further momentum. On February 20, the protests eventually reached the Libyan capital and Gaddafi's stronghold of Tripoli, and the troops sent to Benghazi to quell the opposition instead defected and helped the rebels to seize the local military barracks. Following the events in Benghazi, Terbil declared the city freed and under the control of the opposition.[18]

Saif al-Islam, one of the colonel's sons, warned Libyans about the prospect of a bloody civil war and said the regime would "fight until the last man, until the last woman, until the last bullet." Harsh rhetoric was followed by action. In Tripoli, in particular, the regime reportedly unleashed security forces, civilian loyalists, and even foreign mercenaries, supported by aircraft and helicopters, to clamp down on the opposition. Meanwhile, first significant cracks began to arise within the regime: a number of diplomats, members of the government, and military officers resigned or sided altogether with the protesters.[19]

On the ground a de facto division of the country was taking shape. While loyalist forces were tightening their grip in the western region of Tripolitania,

antiregime forces, backed by defected troops, seemed to have established control over a number of cities in the eastern region of Cyrenaica. By the end of February, credible accounts put the death toll at about 1,000.[20]

In early March, rebel forces started a military thrust toward west and took control of a number of coastal cities, including Ajdabiya, Brega, and Ras Lanuf—the last two being important oil-export terminals. The rebels also established the Transitional National Council (TNC) in Benghazi as an alternative government to the loyalist one based in Tripoli. Two former Gaddafi's officials, Mahmoud Jibril and Mustapha Abdul Jalil, were appointed as prime minister and head of state, respectively. The establishment of the TNC was particularly important because it united a previously disorganized opposition under a common banner and provided a single address to the opposition's foreign supporters.[21]

However, by March 6, Gaddafi's troops regrouped and began a violent counteroffensive toward rebel-held territory in the east. A besieged TNC called on the international community "to protect the Libyan people from any further genocide and crimes against humanity." The Arab League quickly endorsed the TNC plea for help and asked the United Nations Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya. By March 16, loyalist forces were in a position to threaten the opposition's stronghold and de facto capital, Benghazi.[22]

On March 17, Col. Gaddafi announced that his troops would attack Benghazi that night and told the rebels: "We will come house by house, room by room. It's over. The issue has been decided [...] We will find you in your closets. We will have no mercy and no pity." The specter of a new Srebrenica or a new Rwanda increased the urgency for the international community to act. Later in the day the UN Security Council met and issued Resolution 1973, which demanded "the immediate establishment of a cease-fire" and authorized member states "to take all necessary measures [...] to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi." Along with concerns for an impending humanitarian crisis, a number of other explanations have been provided to justify foreign intervention in Libya. Two in particular deserve to be mentioned. First, some people argue that, given its timing, the Libyan intervention was used by Gulf countries and, to some extent also by the United States, to divert public attention from the contemporaneous crackdown on the popular protest movement in Bahrain. Second, others suggest that another reason why the

United States backed military intervention in Libya was to foster transatlantic relations and to justify the continuing utility of NATO in the twenty-first century. Whatever the case, UNSC Resolution 1973, which was approved with ten votes in favor and five abstentions, effectively paved the way for foreign intervention and for the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya.[23]

The major advocates of military intervention within the UNSC were France and Great Britain. That should not come as a surprise as European countries have important stakes in Libya with regard to both energy and immigration policies. However, there is no doubt that the diplomatic role of the United States was critical in bringing international pressure to bear on the Gaddafi regime and to convince other countries to support international action. Similarly, the fact that the Arab League was on board legitimized a possible military intervention insofar as it limited the perception that such an intervention would be yet another example of Western neocolonial meddling in the domestic affairs of an Arab country. In particular, Saudi Arabia sponsored within the Arab League a formal request for international action, while Qatar, the UAE, and Jordan directly committed troops and assets in the military operations that followed.[24]

After the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1973, US president Barack Obama said, "The United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Arab states agree that a cease-fire must be implemented immediately. That means all attacks against civilians must stop." President Obama also made clear that "these terms are not subject to negotiation. If Qaddafi does not comply with the resolution, the international community will impose consequences, and the resolution will be enforced through military action." He emphatically concluded: "Our goal is focused, our cause is just, and our coalition is strong."[25]

When it appeared clear that the Gaddafi regime was not fulfilling the requirements set by UNSC Resolution 1973, a coalition of countries decided to take military action against Libya: on March 19, 2011, US and British warships and submarines launched more than 100 Tomahawk cruise missiles on Libyan soil, while French and British fighter jets fired against Gaddafi's air defense systems, airfields, and ground forces. Gaddafi troops' apparently unstoppable counteroffensive was halted, Benghazi was saved, and a likely massacre of civilians was avoided.[26]

By the end of March, the command of the military operations officially passed to NATO, under the banner of Operation Unified Protector. The crisis then settled into a prolonged military stalemate characterized by intense

fighting between loyalist forces and NATO-supported rebels. During the summer the Atlantic Alliance was repeatedly accused of overstepping the UN mandate of protecting civilians. Countries like Russia and China, which initially had not opposed the adoption of Resolution 1973 at the UN Security Council, later charged NATO of pursuing a secret agenda for regime change. NATO countries firmly rejected such claims. Eventually, the rebels reached the capital, Tripoli, on August 20, and after three days of continued confrontations breached the walls of Bab al-Azizia, Gaddafi's fortified compound. However, they could not find the Libyan colonel. The fight then moved to Bani Walid and Sirte, Gaddafi's last remaining strongholds. The seizure of these two cities proved particularly difficult insofar as they were mostly inhabited by regime loyalists. Without the presence of a sufficient number of local residents facilitating their entry, the rebels resorted to long sieges and large amounts of heavy weapons to fight their way in. Bani Walid eventually fell on October 17. Sirte followed on October 20. On the day of the fall of Sirte, the rebels also found, chased, and killed Muammar Gaddafi. On October 23, the chair of the TNC, Mustapha Abdul Jalil, declared the country officially liberated and the end of the Gaddafi regime.[27]

As the time of this writing, the situation in Libya is highly volatile and the future of the country's transition to democracy very uncertain. After the death of Col. Gaddafi an ostensibly united opposition began to show significant cracks, mainly among competing armed militias, secular rebels versus Islamist rebels, and newly empowered rebels versus those who had previously held positions under Gaddafi. Moreover, old intercommunal rivalries that had been nurtured but also kept under control by the Gaddafi regime vehemently reemerged in Libyan politics. In addition, the absence of fully functioning centralized state institutions has so far seriously hampered the efforts of the new Libyan authorities to restore law and order in the country.[28]

Despite the evident challenges and the uncertain future that lie ahead for Libya, foreign military intervention was undeniably critical to prevent the likely annihilation of the anti-Gaddafi opposition in Benghazi and also to provide the rebels with the military backing indispensable to resist and eventually overrun Qaddafi's better-trained and better-equipped forces.

YEMEN

Since the merger in 1990 between the two distinct entities of North and South Yemen, the unified Republic of Yemen has been under the rule of Ali Abdullah

Saleh, the country's first and only president. In contrast to its richer neighbors, Yemen is one of the most destitute states in the entire world. Among the many problems plaguing the country there is a shrinking economy highly dependent on declining oil resources, a weak central government, poverty, water scarcity, armed population, and high unemployment. To compound an already bleak situation the short history of unified Yemen has been punctuated by conflict. As early as 1994, a violent civil war pitted the central government against southern secessionists. Between 2004 and 2010, the Houthis, a Shiite insurgent group, engaged the Yemeni government in six rounds of fighting in the northern part of the country. In 2009, this confrontation expanded to include Saudi Arabia when Saudi troops began to undertake cross-border military operations within Yemeni territory in response to alleged infiltrations by Houthi insurgents into the Saudi kingdom. Distinct new calls for secession reemerged in 2007 in a number of southern governorates, championed by the Hirak or the South Yemen Movement. Finally, Islamist terrorist groups, like the local franchise of Al-Qaeda, have recently exploited the weakness of Yemen's state institutions to establish safe havens across the country. Even before the outbreak of the 2011 uprising, some sources put as much as two-thirds of Yemen's territory outside the central government's control.[29]

Given this tradition of mobilization against central authorities, it is not surprising that the Yemenis were among the first peoples to join the wave of regional protests. As early as on January 16, 2011, hundreds of Yemenis gathered in the streets of the capital Sanaa to express their solidarity with the upheaval in Tunisia that had ended the autocratic rule of Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Peaceful demonstrators marched from Sanaa University to the Tunisian embassy. It did not take long before slogans in support of the Tunisian revolution turned to domestic grievances and calls for reforms in Yemen. People complained about President Ali Abdullah Saleh's corrupt regime, the Yemeni president-sponsored constitutional amendments to extend his stay in power, and the dire social and economic conditions of the country.[30]

Sporadic protests and gatherings continued throughout the following weeks. Two main political oppositions contested President Saleh's rule in Yemen. The first was the traditional opposition, which primarily consisted of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), a coalition of five political parties that was established in 2005 to challenge the supremacy of Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC). The JMP included Islamists, secularists, Arab nationalists, Sunnis, and Shiites. Given its eclectic composition, the traditional opposition

struggled to pursue a shared agenda and to represent an effective alternative to the GPC. Second, there was the extra-parliamentary opposition, which emerged primarily as a popular response to the widespread perception that the traditional opposition had not been able to obtain any significant concession from the government. The extra-parliamentary opposition mainly included the youth, especially university students, and human rights groups.[31]

Although they all aspired to a less corrupt government and a more democratic political system, the traditional and the extra-parliamentary oppositions held different opinions on how to achieve such shared goals. The leaders of the former preferred to work within the existing system and extract concessions from the government whereas the members of the latter aimed at a complete overhaul of the system and at the ouster of President Saleh. The JMP's more moderate strategy to pursue change can be partly explained by the fact that some leaders of the traditional opposition had stakes in the survival of the existing political system from which they benefited in terms of both political prestige and wealth. An attentive observer noted that members of the al-Ahmar family, incidentally the leaders of Islah, the strongest opposition group within the JMP, had successively served the Saleh's regime as head of the ruling party, speaker of the parliament, vice speaker of the parliament, and even presidential bodyguard.[32]

On February 2, in an effort to stop the continuing protests, the Yemeni president announced he would raise the armed forces' salaries, enact price controls, and cut income taxes. In addition, Saleh promised to renounce his program of constitutional reform, not to run for reelection, and not to hand over power to his son. Saleh's offers addressed most of the people's demands; however, the opposition was very skeptical about the president's true intentions as he had made and broken similar promises before.[33]

The next day, a disenchanted opposition staged Yemen's Day of Rage. About 20,000 antigovernment protesters took to the street in Sanaa alone. On that day, progovernment demonstrators also organized rallies in other areas of the city. Notably, demonstrations unfolded peacefully without any account of major arrests or violent confrontations between opposite factions.[34]

This situation began to change on February 11 when Saleh supporters, and, according to some witnesses, plainclothes police attacked peaceful demonstrators injuring a number of them. February 18 recorded the first uprising-related casualties when clashes between protesters and state security forces led to five deaths. That the Yemeni government increasingly relied on

violent repression to quell the protests became obvious on February 23 when Saleh loyalists attacked a tent camp that Yemeni students had set up outside Sanaa University. They deliberately opened fire on largely unarmed people killing 2 and wounding 23.[35]

By early March, the Yemeni uprising was gaining momentum. The violent response of state security forces to generally peaceful demonstrations, and the ensuing deaths, had the effect of narrowing the differences existing within the anti-Saleh opposition. The Joint Meeting Parties, indeed, abandoned their official policy of pursuing gradual reform and joined the extra-parliamentary opposition in its call on President Saleh to step down. Moreover, increasing numbers of opposition lawmakers, Islamists, tribesmen, and city residents joined the anti-Saleh demonstrations organized by young protesters and human rights activists. On March 11, a mass gathering held in the capital Sanaa demanding Saleh's immediate resignation attracted nearly 100,000 participants. Notably, the Saleh regime was also able to mobilize significant number of supporters for its progovernment demonstrations.[36]

Violence escalated to unprecedented levels on March 18 when in Sanaa unidentified gunmen hidden on rooftops started to indiscriminately shoot demonstrators gathering on the street after their Friday prayers. The ensuing confrontation resulted in 35 dead and hundreds wounded. The opposition immediately accused the government of being behind what they called "a horrendous massacre." On its part the government dismissed such accusations as lies and responded by imposing a month-long nationwide state of emergency.[37]

The March 18 killings represented a turning point for the Yemeni uprising as it created significant fissures within the regime. Several Yemeni ambassadors including those to the United Nations, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and China resigned, with some of them also leaving President Saleh's ruling party. More importantly, however, a number of top Yemeni military officers defected and pledged to deploy their troops to protect the demonstrators. Among them, there was Maj. Gen. Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar who was the commander of the First Armored Division and was widely considered the second most powerful man in Yemen after President Saleh. Faced with mounting popular pressure and successive defections, President Saleh addressed the nation and warned about the risks deriving from the quickly deteriorating security situation. In particular, Saleh raised the specter of civil war: "Yemen is a time bomb […] We are a tribal rather than a civilian society

and everyone sides with his village and tribe. It will thus be a grinding civil war."[38]

The following months seemed to confirm Saleh's gloomy predictions with opposite armed factions engaging in more and more frequent confrontations in Sanaa and elsewhere. Human rights activists and young demonstrators continued to camp in the squares of several Yemeni towns and to profess their adherence to peaceful forms of protest but their role and demands seemed to have been marginalized by the increased militarization of the uprising. In fact, by mid-March what had begun as a peaceful popular mobilization for reforms had mostly become an armed struggle for power among competing elites. The major players taking part in this armed struggle for power were President Saleh, defected General Ali Mohsen, and the al-Ahmar family.[39]

Perhaps, the Yemeni crisis reached its climax on June 3 when a planted bomb exploded inside Saleh's presidential compound in Sanaa. The attack killed 11 people and wounded President Saleh along with other top officials of the regime. The next day, Saleh was transferred to Saudi Arabia to receive specific medical treatments. Antiregime demonstrators across the country welcomed the news with jubilation and fireworks. However, those who thought that Saleh's departure would put an end to the Yemeni crisis were soon to be disappointed. On the contrary, during summer 2011 the Yemeni uprising grounded to a virtual standstill. Political negotiations faltered while the economic and security situations of the country were worsening.[40]

The prospect of an all-out civil war in Yemen seemed very real when, on November 23, President Saleh, who had returned from Saudi Arabia, unexpectedly decided to sign a plan to hand over power. The transition plan, designed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and strongly supported by the government of the United States, had been on the table since the previous April 8. Saleh had repeatedly agreed to sign it, but, for one reason or another, had always backed out at the moment of signing. The GCC plan envisioned a transfer of power from Saleh to Vice President Abd Rabbo Mansur Hadi, the formation of an opposition-led government of national unity, and the drafting and approval of a new constitution. In exchange for his peaceful resignation, President Saleh, and those who had served under him, would be granted immunity from prosecution.[41]

Not surprisingly, Saudi Arabia, whose leaders have important stakes in Yemen's stability, was the primary advocate of the November 23 agreement. The Saudis were especially worried about the Houthi rebellion spilling over

into Saudi Arabia's southwestern provinces, a worry that had resulted in direct Saudi military intervention against the Houthis in 2009. Riyadh also feared that chaos in Yemen would provide Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula a safe haven from where the terrorist organization would be able to stage attacks against the kingdom. Finally, Saudi leaders were deeply concerned that instability could allow their main regional enemy, Iran, to establish a foothold via Shiite Houthis in the Arabian Peninsula. The fact that Saudi Arabia was at the forefront of the diplomatic effort to find a political solution to the Yemeni crisis is also explained by the noticeable leverage that Riyadh has on politics in Sanaa. Saudi Arabia, in fact, is Yemen's biggest foreign donor and maintains a long-standing network of patronage with several influential Yemeni tribes, included the al-Ahmars.[42]

The other major broker of the November 23 agreement was the government of the United States. The Obama administration, through its ambassador to Yemen, Gerald M. Feierstein, had been actively involved in private negotiations to break Yemen political impasse at least since mid-March. Like Saudi Arabia, the United States had a strong interest in a stable Yemen. US officials repeatedly highlighted the strategic importance of the country in the US fight against international terrorism. During the previous decade, indeed, Yemen had been the operative base for terrorists planning a number of attacks against US territory, assets, and personnel. Given their long-standing cooperation with Saleh, both Saudi Arabia and the United States proved initially reluctant to see the Yemeni president go. However, the rapidly deteriorating security situation and Saleh's increasingly erratic behavior eventually changed the calculations of the decision makers in Riyadh and Washington.[43]

The Yemeni president's decision to resign after months of failed negotiations and political jostling was the result of mounting constant pressure rather than a sudden one. A combination of greater international and domestic pressures led President Saleh to conclude that the signing of the GCC plan was probably the least disastrous option among the many he was confronted with. After all, the GCC plan offered Saleh an honorable exit, granted him immunity, and did not require him to go to exile. When considering the GCC offer, the Yemeni president perhaps had in mind the different fates that had recently befallen his counterparts in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.[44]

The Yemeni opposition responded to the November 23 agreement with mixed feelings. Some people took to the street to celebrate the overthrow of yet another Arab autocrat. Others, instead, expressed many concerns about

the questions left unanswered by the GCC plan. Protesters especially resented the immunity clause that allowed Saleh and his inner circle not to be held accountable for their crimes. Other critics, still, noted that the plan was basically an agreement among the established political elites that mostly dismissed the demands of other groups such as the youth, the Houthis, and the Hirak. Finally, some observers pointed out that while removing Saleh from the presidency, the GCC plan left Saleh's regime and patronage system largely intact.[45]

Once in power President Hadi invited the different political factions in Yemen to have a comprehensive National Dialogue Conference primarily aimed a drafting a new constitution and pave the way for parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled in 2014. Given the highly fragmented and adversarial nature of Yemeni contentious politics, it is hard to predict if the National Dialogue will eventually succeed in building a more democratic Yemen. However, despite its inherent flaws and its future impact on a challenging transition process, it is a fact that the diplomatic effort led by the GCC and backed by the United States broke a political and military impasse that was dangerously drawing Yemen toward a bloody civil war.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has examined the uprisings in Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen, where the eventual failure or success of popular movements to bring about change was significantly affected by the actions of foreign actors. The three cases share a number of similarities: there is a proximate cause that catalyzes a popular mobilization against the government; the government's harsh response radicalizes the opposition while government's concessions fail to appease it; protests escalate until they reach their climax; and at this point, foreign action decisively tilts the balance in favor of either the opposition or the government. In the case of Bahrain, where the neighboring GCC countries decided to send troops to prop up the Al-Khalifa regime, the uprising has so far failed to achieve meaningful reforms. In the case of Libya, where the international community took diplomatic and military action in support of the opposition, the uprising brought to an end to the Gaddafi regime. Finally, in the case of Yemen, foreign actors designed a transition plan that led to President Saleh's resignation and temporarily halted the country's seemingly inevitable descent into an all-out civil war. Given that, it seems reasonable to argue that as long as Arab states continue to be "permeable" to foreign influence, domestic actors

involved in the contentious politics of the Middle East and North Africa will inevitably have to come to terms with decisions taken outside their borders.

However, the chapter essay has also shown that there is a two-way relationship between external variables and internal variables in the contentious politics of the MENA region. In other words, while foreign intervention can decisively influence the outcome of an uprising, domestic factors have the capacity to create the conditions enabling such an intervention. Although it is difficult to draw generalizations from a complex phenomenon like the Arab uprisings—a phenomenon that affected a large number of countries and involved many actors—four factors deserve particular attention. The first factor is with regard to the perception of the "solidity' of the regime. The ability of the regime to maintain the loyalty of strategic domestic constituencies, especially the military, increases the regime's potential to obtain foreign support while reducing the likelihood of foreign intervention in favor of the opposition. In Bahrain, where the armed forces stood squarely by the side of the regime, the international community did not intervene to support the protesters but, on the contrary, the GCC countries sent troops to shore up the Al-Khalifa royal family. Conversely, in Libya, where meaningful fissures arose within the regime, and between the regime and the military, the international community took action in support of the opposition. The second factor is the "international standing" of the regime. A regime that has powerful friends in the international community is less likely to become the target of foreign intervention than a regime that does not. Despite the last decades' efforts to rehabilitate itself, in 2011 the Libyan regime had no real friends in the international community. The poor international standing of Gaddafi's Libya facilitated the decision of the UN Security Council to authorize Operation Unified Protector. In Bahrain, instead, the regime's good relations with Saudi Arabia and the United States shielded the Al-Khalifas from facing a similar challenge.

The third factor concerns the perception of the "solidity" of the opposition. The capability of an opposition movement to present itself as a single unified front makes the opposition more likely to attract international support. This is what happened in Libya where the anti-Gaddafi opposition was able to temporarily defuse its internal divisions and depict itself as an ostensible united front. In Bahrain, instead, an initially unified opposition movement was weakened by the steady emergence of sectarian divisions between Shiites and Sunnis. The fourth and final factor relates to the "international standing"

of the opposition. The oppositions' demands and goals could alternatively appeal to or worry the international community and consequently inform the calculations of important foreign actors on whether or not to support it. Sunni GCC countries were genuinely concerned that sectarian tensions and calls for the overthrow of the royal family in Bahrain could result in Shiite Iran extending its influence to the doorstep of the Arabian Peninsula. Hence, the decision was taken for military intervention to help the Al-Khalifas quell the protests. Conversely, the opposition in Libya was very careful to present itself as a predominantly pro-West non-Islamist opposition in order to attract potential foreign supporters.

The case of Yemen is less straightforward than that of Bahrain and Libya. Nevertheless, it is still possible to identify internal-external dynamics in Yemen similar to that observed in the other two countries. First, the façade of a solid regime crumbled when, after the March 18 killings, the Yemeni armed forces splintered into opposing warring factions. Second, President Saleh's relations with his major patrons, Saudi Arabia and the United States, had been mixed, alternatively characterized by periods of cooperation and by moments of deep tensions, as for example when in 1990 Saleh supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Third, the Yemeni opposition was divided among the traditional opposition and the extra-parliamentary one, secularists and Islamists, and peaceful protesters and armed factions. Fourth, the opposition lacked unity of purpose with groups seeking reforms, others power, and others secession. These domestic factors created the enabling conditions for external intervention. In fact, after a long stalemate, foreign actors eventually reached the conclusion that they would not be devastated at the idea of replacing an increasingly whimsical President Saleh as long as the core of the Yemeni regime would remain in place. In addition, Saudi Arabia and the United States saw the opportunity to handpick and include in the new government those elements of a divided opposition whose interests seemed most likely to conform to theirs. Hence, the GCC-brokered US-sponsored transition plan and the nomination of Abd Rabbo Mansur Hadi as the new president of Yemen.

These conclusions have important policy implications for the various actors engaged in the contentious politics of the MENA region. Both popular protest movements and incumbent governments, in fact, need to be aware that whether they are pursuing reform or maintenance of the status quo, they are playing on a two-level field. At one level, popular protest

movements and incumbent governments compete for the support of strategic domestic constituencies. At the other level, the same actors should work hard to gain the backing of major external powers and the international community as a whole. Actors involved in contentious politics in the permeable MENA states should remember this important lesson from the Arab uprisings if they want to come out on the winning side of any future political struggle.

On a final note, the fact that MENA countries are particularly permeable to foreign influence opens the way to stimulating possibilities for future research. Researchers should study if permeability is specific to Arab countries alone or if, instead, it could be detected in other regions of the world. In the first case, researchers may want to investigate what makes them especially permeable: Is it because of MENA countries' mostly undemocratic political systems? Is it because of their geostrategic importance? Is it because of the presence of the world's largest oil reserves? Or because of Western concerns about the security of Israel? On the other hand, if permeability is not specific to the MENA region, it would be interesting to analyze where similar levels of permeability can be observed and if these other regions of the world share any common characteristics with Arab countries.

NOTES

1. There are no exact figures about the balance between Sunnis and Shiites in Bahrain. Estimates of the Shiite population vary from 60 percent to 75 percent. An exact estimate is made difficult by the absence of official data and by the decade-long policy of naturalization of Arab and non-Arab Sunnis as promoted by the Bahraini government. See: Marina Ottaway, *Bahrain: Between the United States and Saudi Arabia* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 4, 2011). Accessed at: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2011/04/04/bahrain-between-united-states-and-saudi-arabia/t8; J. Gengler, "Facts on the Ground: A Reliable Estimate of Bahrain's Sunni-Shi'i Balance, and Evidence of Demographic Engineering," *Religion and Politics in Bahrain*, April 5, 2011. Accessed at: http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/facts-on-ground-reliable-estimate-of.html.
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3. K. Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy 06/11/2012* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, November 6, 2012). Accessed at: http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/95-1013_20121106.pdf; M. S. Doran and S. Shaikh, "Bahrain: Island of Troubles," in *The Arab Awakening* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2011).
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8

TRANSNATIONALIZED DOMESTIC CONTENTION: EXPLAINING THE VARYING LEVELS OF WESTERN SOLIDARITY GIVEN TO KURDS AND PALESTINIANS

David Zarnett

INTRODUCTION

Why do Western-based solidarity networks mobilize in support of some groups engaged in contentious political action abroad but not others? Since the late 1950s, a number of these solidarity networks have formed to support specific groups in conflict with their governments. Prominent recipients of such solidarity include black South Africans struggling against apartheid, Tibetans resisting Chinese occupation, Zapatistas opposing NAFTA and the denial of indigenous rights in Mexico, and Darfuris in Sudan subjected to what some have suggested was the first genocide of the twenty-first century. For some, this type of Western solidarity can have a positive effect by strengthening a group's resolve to continue its struggle against a more powerful foe, thereby increasing its chances of success.[1] For others, it may complicate matters by providing incentives for local groups to eschew compromise, by weakening a domestic group's standing among its local constituents, and by enabling targeted states to delegitimize local actors as agents of Western imperialism.[2] Whatever their impact happens to be in a particular case, these solidarity networks can have profound effects on how domestic contention plays out on the ground.

Importantly, however, not all groups abroad in need of Western solidarity are the recipients of it. Numerous domestic groups struggling for rights fail to attract much attention or sympathy from Western activists. While the

struggles of some groups resonate widely and attract considerable attention and sympathy, countless others do not.[3] What makes some distant struggles more attractive than others?

This chapter argues that the patterns of Western solidarity activism can partially be explained by looking at the public advocacy efforts of diasporas in the West.[4] Diasporas are socially constructed ethnic communities who live outside of their ancestral homelands but who retain some type of connection to it.[5] When an ethnic group has a Western diaspora that is large and politically mobilized, it is less likely to be the recipient of high levels of Western activist solidarity. In contrast, when an ethnic group has a Western diaspora that is small or relatively unmobilized, it has a greater chance of attracting the support of Western solidarity activists. This chapter advances two causal mechanisms that shed light on this relationship between diaspora activism and nondiaspora solidarity.

The first mechanism is based on the view that the nature of diaspora activism can often be unappealing to those outside of the ethnic community. The advocacy frames generated by large mobilized diasporas often fail to resonate with nondiaspora activists because they are not seen as credible or universal. This lack of credibility stems from a widely held perception of diasporas as international troublemakers.[6] Furthermore, diasporas fail to match their cause with the values of nondiaspora activists because the material interests of diaspora advocacy organizations are best served by advancing ethnic advocacy frames that keep their constituents mobilized. The second mechanism suggests that the presence of a large mobilized diaspora in the West affects the strategies that their ethnic kin in the homeland adopt in their efforts to gain international allies. Local movements with large mobilized diasporas will gear their international advocacy efforts toward securing the support of their ethnic kin abroad while local movements with a small or relatively un-mobilized Western diaspora will adopt strategies geared toward nondiaspora networks. This chapter does not suggest that diaspora activism is the only factor that matters in explaining the patterns of Western solidarity activism, but rather that it is, as demonstratedlater, a particularly important one that merits closer attention.

In the study of diasporas, a primary focus has been in determining the effects they have on their homeland.[7] Less attention, however, has been given to the ways in which diasporas affect the politics of their "hostlands." Only in passing have diasporas been referred to as actors that can influence which issues and struggles Western human rights activists are more likely to take up

and which they are more likely to ignore.[8] For instance, Clifford Bob asserts that "an active diaspora in a global city can make a major difference, alerting NGOs and the media to events in the homeland and providing a base of operations for visiting lobbyists."[9] He suggests that the lack of a Chechen diaspora in the West "retarded external concern" for their struggle through the 1990s.[10] Similarly, Samantha Power argues that part of the reason for the "society-wide silence" in the US during the Rwandan genocide was due to the lack of a Rwandan diaspora. In this case there was no domestic constituency that could lobby on behalf of Rwandans abroad.[11] However, neither Bob nor Power examine these claims in any detail.

This omission in the study of the patterns of Western activism is inconsistent with what we know about the domestic politics of diaspora mobilization and the drivers of transnational activism. As scholars of US foreign policy have shown, numerous diasporas have formed ethnic lobbies in order to shape their government's policy toward their homeland.[12] In some cases, diasporas can become significant domestic political actors.[13] While the scholarship on ethnic lobbying focuses on the extent to which they are able to influence foreign policy, it is also worth considering how such diaspora mobilization may affect the willingness of nondiasporans in Western civil society to take up their struggle. As Sidney Tarrow and Sarah Stroup argue, domestic factors play an important role in shaping the actions taken by transnational activists.[14] For Tarrow, transnational activists are "rooted cosmopolitans" who are "guided by domestic interests and values" as they work across borders on international issues.[15] As a result, diaspora activism may impact the domestic interests and values of Western activists thereby shaping which causes they adopt and which they push aside.

To illustrate the relationship between diaspora activism and nondiaspora solidarity, this chapter compares two struggles that have been widely publicized in the Western human rights community by prominent human rights NGOs but have thus far generated very different levels of support. The Palestinian struggle has garnered considerable solidarity from certain segments of Western civil society. In the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, numerous organizations have been created to send material and moral support to Palestinians, to raise public awareness of their struggle, to lobby Western governments to pressure Israel to abide by international law, and to pressure the Israeli government directly to change its policies. Leading Palestine solidarity organizations in the West include the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the United Kingdom and Ireland, the US Campaign to

End the Israeli Occupation, Students for Justice in Palestine, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, the Coalition against Israeli Apartheid, among numerous others.[16] Many trade unions in the United Kingdom and Europe have also declared their solidarity with the Palestinians.[17] In contrast, the Kurdish struggle in Turkey has not received such high levels of support from Western activists. Although the Kurdish struggle is not ignored and has gained some traction within European regional institutions, namely the European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights, few, if any, Western solidarity organizations exist dedicated specifically to supporting the Kurds.[18] What accounts for these varying levels of support? Why has the Palestinian struggle generated higher levels of Western activist solidarity than the Kurdish struggle?

This chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section situates this paper in the international relations literature on transnational civil society and, in particular, the literature that looks at the patterns of Western activism. The second section then places the transnational networks working on the Kurdish and Palestinians causes in a larger comparative framework in order to illustrate why diaspora activism matters. The third section outlines the two causal mechanisms noted earlier that link diaspora activism with the levels of Western nondiaspora solidarity given to a group abroad. The fourth section then illustrates how these mechanisms can help to explain the varying levels of Western solidarity given to Kurds and Palestinians.

"DISCRIMINATION" IN TRANSNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY

In the 1990s, scholars of international politics began to pay closer attention to the proliferation of principled, nonviolent, nonstate actors working on a wide variety of issues, including human rights, environmental protection, economic development, arms control, and human security. These actors were said to be a part of a transnational civil society (TCS).[19] According to Richard Price, TCS consists of "self-organized advocacy groups that undertake voluntary collective action across state borders in pursuit of what they deem the wider public interest."[20] Since the 1950s, TCS has expanded considerably. Jackie Smith and Kathryn Sikkink estimate that the number of international NGOs have increased from 110 in 1953 to 685 in 1993.[21] Others suggest that thousands of international NGOs have been formed over the last half century.[22]

The expansion of TCS was met with considerable optimism. Throughout the 1990s, scholars focused closely on demonstrating the powerful effects

that TCS was having on the practice of domestic and international politics. For instance, TCS actors were identified as playing key roles in the peaceful end of the Cold War,[23] ending state repression in El Salvador and Guatemala,[24] overthrowing Pinochet's authoritarian regime in Chile,[25] ending apartheid in South Africa,[26] and cancelling World Bank support for dam-building projects in India.[27] Given these effects, among others, one group of scholars suggested that TCS was actively involved in the "restructuring of world politics" away from realist understandings of the national interest and international anarchy and toward a more humane international system.[28] As TCS expanded and became more robust, it was believed, no local struggle or human rights issue would go unnoticed.[29]

Over the last decade, however, scholars have found that a closer look at TCS provides a different picture. While these scholars did not dispute the effects that TCS could have on world politics, they suggested that claims about its ability to restructure it were overblown. In fact, TCS was found to be far less open, friendly, and responsive to countless aggrieved peoples around the world than was commonly assumed. The vast majority of human rights issues around the world failed to receive considerable attention from prominent TCS actors.[30] In contrast to the early wave of research, this body of work depicted TCS as highly selective and discriminating. For instance, research in this area has examined such questions as to why Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch devote more of their advocacy resources on the abuses occurring in some countries but not others,[31] why activists and advocacy organizations working in the field of human security and arms control have initiated transnational ban campaigns against some weapons but have ignored other equally deadly tools of war,[32] and why the struggles of some ethnic groups become international *cause celebre* while others go largely ignored.[33] It is to this body of scholarship that this paper aims to contribute.

Understanding why not all issues get attention and support from TCS is fairly straightforward. Despite the significant increase in the number of international NGOs and international organizations, the demand for foreign support and assistance exceeds supply.[34] As Bob put it, "Global civil society is not an open forum marked by altruism, but a Darwinian marketplace where legions of groups view for scarce attention, sympathy, and money."[35]

Explaining why some issues are selected for attention and support but not others, however, is more complicated. In explaining the patterns of Western human rights activism, the existing literature has emphasized two key actors. The first are local movements, or claimants, in conflict with their

governments who frame their struggles in an attempt to attract international allies. Local movements who are able to situate their local struggle within widely held international norms and present their cause in a way that resonates with a foreign audience are said to be more likely to attract international support.[36] The second set of actors is referred to as gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are individuals or organizations that hold considerable agenda-setting power. They determine which issues or events make it onto an agenda and which do not.[37] In the field of human rights, gatekeepers include prominent NGOs, like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, UN bodies and officials, politicians, intellectuals, and the media. These gatekeepers play a central role in publicizing the struggle of local claimants to a wider international audience. Due to their perceived credibility and authority, when a gatekeeper decides to disseminate reports of abuses suffered by a local group, the group's struggle is made legitimate and "safe" to support. As Charlie Carpenter explains, "By articulating a new problem as an 'issue,' a gatekeeping organization legitimizes that problem and defines it in a particular way, thus triggering donor attention, mobilizing material resources, and affecting the visibility of that issue within the informational content of global civil society."[38] And as Bob puts it, "Central to network formation are gatekeepers, whose decisions to back a movement activate other organizations and individuals across the world."[39] Thus, in their search for external support, local movements will often lobby gatekeeper NGOs to publicize the abuses they face.

This literature has improved and nuanced our understanding of the dynamics of TCS activism but limitations still remain. First, while the importance of local movements is clear, the existing literature does not adequately address what factors condition the ways in which local movements reach out for external support. There is considerable variation in the strategies these movements adopt as they market their struggle to the international community. Why, for instance, do some local movements seek to tap into Western left-wing and religious networks while others do not? What factors explain the advocacy choices made by local movements as they seek out international allies? Second, as demonstrated in more detail later, gatekeeper advocacy of a particular struggle is important but it does not always lead to transnational network formation. Thus, it is important to identify the conditions under which gatekeeper campaigning is most likely to help spark solidarity network formation and when it is most likely to fall on deaf ears. Third, there is a dearth of comparative analysis on the origins of the various transnational solidarity

networks that have emerged over the course of the second half of the twentieth century. The literature on Western solidarity networks comprises a number of single case studies. The only transnational networks that have received systematic comparative analysis have been those that have formed around the Zapatistas in Mexico and Ogonis in Nigeria. Placing these networks in a broader comparative framework can help to shed some light on the decisions local movements make about their international advocacy strategies and the conditions under which gatekeeper advocacy is more likely to be successful in sparking solidarity network formation.

WESTERN SOLIDARITY NETWORKS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The central claim of this chapter is that part of the variation we see in the levels of Western civil society support for groups engaged in contentious politics abroad can be explained by whether or not the group has a large and politically mobilized diaspora in the West. A large mobilized diaspora is one with more than 100,000 people concentrated in at least one Western state, who are actively involved in homeland politics, both in terms of public protest and in the lobbying of government officials. Although multiple causal factors operating at different levels of analysis interact to determine the formation of social movements, this section employs a method called qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to demonstrate the particular importance of diaspora activism.[40] This method can help to identify the conditions that are necessary for a Western-based solidarity network to emerge.

The main analytical tool used in QCA is referred to as a truth table. A truth table visually represents how each case examined scores on the dependent variable being studied and a set of theoretically relevant independent variables. The truth table (see table 8.1) includes seven groups that have been the recipients of high levels of Western nondiaspora solidarity and three that have received only low levels of such solidarity. The groups included in the table are Darfuris, Palestinians, Tibetans, Zapatistas, black South Africans, southern Sudanese, Burmese, Tamils, Kosovar Albanians, and Kurds. The dependent variable is the level of Western civil society solidarity given to a specific group abroad. It is measured in terms of whether or not there is evidence of the presence of a number of nondiaspora solidarity organizations dedicated to supporting a specific distant struggle. Solidarity activism is distinct from the activism of some of the prominent human rights NGOs, such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. As Ann-Marie Clark

Table 8.1 Truth table

Ethnic group	*Total media*	*Spiked media*	*AI & HRW approval*	*Local movement International advocacy*	*Local movement Violence*	*Large mobilized diaspora in West*	*High nondiaspora solidarity (DV)*
Darfuris	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Palestinians	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Tibetans	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Zapatistas	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
Burmese	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Black South Africans	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Southern Sudanese	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Tamils (Sri Lanka)	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
Kosovar Albanians	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Kurds (Turkey)	0	1	1	1	1	1	0

explains, Amnesty International makes a "conscious effort to remain politically impartial by, first, taking no stance on political questions and, second, working for the rights of individuals living under any type of government."[41] In contrast, solidarity activists engage in a highly politicized form of human rights work in which they actively take sides in a conflict.[42] Examples of nondiaspora solidarity organizations include Save Darfur, the International Campaign for Tibet, the US Campaign for Burma, the Canadian Solidarity Alliance for the Zapatistas, and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in the United Kingdom.

Table 8.1 also includes six independent variables drawn from the literature on transnational activism. These include: (1) whether the ethnic group has received high levels of Western media coverage over a sustained period of time (1948 to 2012);[43] (2) whether within the media attention given to the group there are significant spikes in the level of coverage that may help to generate civil society mobilization; (3) whether Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have devoted considerable resources to publicizing the struggle of the group; (4) whether the group has actively reached out to foreign actors to attract international support; (5) whether the group has used violence in its struggle; and (6) whether the ethnic group has a large

mobilized diaspora in the West. Appendix I (table 8.3) summarizes the secondary sources used to code each case according to these seven variables. Using these sources, we can produce the following truth table 8.1 (1 refers to yes; 0 refers to no):

This truth table provides three important insights. First, a number of different causal configurations are linked to cases in which ethnic groups abroad receive high levels of nondiaspora Western activist solidarity. Second, the truth table qualifies a prevailing view in the literature on TCS that suggests that the patterns of Western activism should follow the advocacy choices made by gatekeeper human rights NGOs.[44] As the cases suggest, advocacy attention given to an issue by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch may be a necessary condition for nondiaspora solidarity mobilization to occur but it is not sufficient. In the Tamil, Kosovar Albanian, and Kurdish cases, gatekeeper NGO advocacy efforts did not spark wider civil society mobilizations. Third, the truth table illustrates that among the six causal factors included, a necessary condition for high levels of nondiaspora activist solidarity is a small or relatively unmobilized diaspora. Drawing on evidence taken from the Kurdish and Palestinian cases, the following sections seek to explain the negative relationship that exists between the size and level of diaspora mobilization and the level of Western nondiaspora solidarity given to struggling groups abroad.

EXPLAINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIASPORA ADVOCACY AND NONDIASPORA SOLIDARITY

This section outlines two mechanisms that link large mobilized diasporas with low levels of nondiaspora Western solidarity given to distant struggles. The first mechanism focuses on the perceptions and nature of the advocacy frames generated by large mobilized diasporas. The second mechanism emphasizes the affect that large mobilized diasporas have on the international advocacy efforts of local movements in the homeland. The subsequent section then applies these two mechanisms to explain the varying levels of Western nondiaspora solidarity given to Kurds and Palestinians.

Diaspora Mobilization and Unsuccessful Advocacy Frames

The first causal mechanism draws on the concept of an advocacy frame and its relationship to social movement mobilization. In the study of the origins of social movements, an advocacy frame approach argues that the way in

which an issue is presented to a target audience largely determines whether the issue will attract greater support and spark mobilization attempts. Unlike more structural approaches to the study of social movements, an emphasis on framing puts the strategies of activists closer to the center of the analysis.[45]

Advocacy frames attempt to give meaning to a set of events in order to make collective action possible.[46] David Snow and Robert Benford argue that "frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action."[47] An advocacy frame identifies a problem, specifies the "they" responsible for the problem and the "we" suffering the abuse, and seeks to convince the target audience that by participating in the social movement they make change more likely.[48]

Not all advocacy frames, however, are successful in framing problems in ways that generate concern and action. While some frames resonate and lead to social movement participation, others fall flat.[49] Advocacy frames are most likely to spark mobilization when they achieve a high degree of resonance with their target audience. Benford and Snow note that frames are more likely to resonate when they are seen by the target audience as empirically credible, commensurate with everyday experiences, and consistent with preexisting value systems.[50] For advocacy frames on behalf of distant others, the importance of frame commensurability is less significant, especially when the issue at hand involves matters such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, house demolitions, among numerous other abuses that activists in the West are not likely to encounter. In the context of transnational activism, successful frames can be said to be those that are deemed credible and culturally resonant. The advocacy frames developed by large mobilized diasporas fail to achieve these two elements.

First, diasporic advocacy frames suffer from a credibility problem due to the widely held perception that diaspora activists are transnational "troublemakers" that are active in fomenting violent conflict abroad. According to Fearghal Cochrane, "when diasporas are mentioned within the context of violent conflicts, the focus frequently tends to be on their tendency to fund the continuation of warfare and their propensity to destabilize negotiations and peace building efforts."[51] For instance, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler find that large Western diasporas play a key role in sustaining and renewing civil wars.[52] Similarly, Daniel Byman et al. characterize diasporas as one of the most important contributors to violent insurgencies. They observe that diasporas have played active roles in supporting violent movements in

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, India (Punjab and Kashmir), Indonesia (Aceh), Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, Russia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Northern Ireland, and Kosovo.[53] In addition, diasporas have also been described as advocating extreme political positions. According to Benedict Anderson, diasporas are "long distance nationalists," who by virtue of their geographic distance from the homeland and their relative safety in the West are able to advance and remain committed to radical positions because they do not suffer the consequences of promoting them.[54] These radical positions stem from feelings of nostalgia that can produce views of the homeland rooted in a mythical past rather than current realities. As Yossi Shain has put it, "diaspora hard-liners are said to care less about the homeland's present and future than about the past's dead."[55]

Although some have pointed to the peace-making effects that diaspora involvement in homeland politics can have, the perception that diasporas are "peace-wreckers" can serve to undermine the credibility of diaspora activists speaking out for the human rights of their coethnics.[56] These perceptions may "push" nondiaspora activists away from struggles championed by strong diaspora movements and toward those that do not carry the same baggage.

Second, large mobilized diasporas also encounter difficulties in developing universal advocacy frames that would resonate with a wider audience. In the literature on transnational activism, causes that resonate and spark transnational civil society action tend to be those that are framed as universal norms and struggles. Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink suggest that when norm entrepreneurs situate their cause within the context of accepted norms they increase the chances of their norm cascading and becoming internalized by a large number of actors.[57] Bob has shown that the use of advocacy frames that resonate with a foreign audience were crucial to the Zapatistas in Mexico and the Ogonis in Nigeria attracting international support for their struggles.[58] In particular, when the Ogoni shifted from an ethnic frame that focused on cultural genocide to an environmental frame that stressed the destruction of their living conditions by government- and foreign-owned oil companies their cause was found to be more appealing.[59]

If local ethno-national movements like the Zapatistas and Ogonis have been able to increase their appeal by framing their struggles in internationally resonant terms, why can't diasporas do the same? Although it is possible that diaspora groups *could* do this, given the framing approach's emphasis on agency and strategy, material interest and the need to remain relevant within

the diaspora create powerful incentives for diaspora organizations to advance ethnic rather than universal advocacy frames.

Current research argues that advocacy organizations ought to be seen not only as principled actors working in pursuit of their stated normative objectives but also as collective actors with instrumental and material concerns.[60] In this view, advocacy organizations operate in competitive environments that encourage them to select strategies and tactics that ensure survival and growth but may undermine their stated goals.[61] In liberal societies, diaspora organizations compete with numerous countervailing pressures that can undermine the community's ethnic consciousness and cohesiveness. This pressure may over time weaken diaspora members' connections to and concerns with their homeland. Under these conditions, a diaspora organization's existence can become imperiled. Diaspora organizations have a vested interest in maintaining the ethnic identity of their community and keeping it mobilized toward homeland politics. When the community disengages from the homeland, diaspora organizations may become increasingly irrelevant, lose community support and funding, and eventually cease to exist.[62]

These organizational interests condition the diaspora's advocacy work. In many cases, the public advocacy initiatives of diaspora organizations are geared not toward host societies, but primarily towards the diaspora itself as a way to reinforce the community's ethnic consciousness and collective identity. Public demonstrations and marches, as well as hunger strikes, can serve to bind community members together. These public actions help to cultivate pride, group identification, and feelings of empowerment in those who participate.[63] At these public showings of support for their coethnics abroad, particularistic cultural symbols are often deployed, which may include placards in their local languages, pictures of important political leaders, or flags of movements and political organizations back in the homeland. These symbols are often important for diaspora members as they serve as an expression of their identity, but they also have an effect on how those outside of the community see their struggle. Although the lack of nondiaspora support may not be in the interest of the ethnic group abroad, the interests of diaspora organizations tend militate against the use of more universalistic advocacy frames in order to ensure organizational survival and relevance.

This causal mechanism suggests reasons why large mobilized diasporas tend to "push" nondiaspora solidarity activists away from their cause. Negative perceptions of diasporas as international troublemakers can serve to undermine

the credibility of diaspora norm entrepreneurs and their advocacy frames. Further, the material interests of diaspora organizations create incentives for the use of ethnic advocacy frames that may be unappealing to nondiaspora activists.

DIASPORA MOBILIZATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY STRATEGIES OF LOCAL MOVEMENTS

A second reason why large mobilized diasporas cause low levels of nondiaspora solidarity has to do with the effect they have on the international advocacy strategies of local movements in their homeland. With the proliferation of international NGOs and international institutions in the second half of the twentieth century, many local movements in conflict with their state have looked to the international community to support their struggle.[64] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink refer to this type of advocacy work as boomeranging. They suggest that local movements boomerang when domestic channels for reform are either blocked or nonexistent. In these cases, legislative, judicial, or bureaucratic channels are unreceptive or openly hostile to the rights claims made by a local movement and the people they are said to represent.[65] Local movements will seek to circumvent these blockages and compensate for domestic weaknesses by attempting to build partnerships and alliances with international actors, including international NGOs and other global civil society actors, politicians and political parties, and the various agencies and bodies that make up regional and international institutions.[66] By building a transnational support network, local movements seek alternative ways to access and pressure their local authorities.[67]

The international advocacy efforts of local movements have been identified as playing an important role in shaping the patterns of transnational activism.[68] Hakan Thorn illustrates the important role that African National Congress activists played in organizing and strengthening the transnational anti-Apartheid movement.[69] Tsering Shakya and Robert Barnett highlight the active roles played by the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, India, in raising Tibet's international profile.[70] Alison Brysk and Ronald Niezen demonstrate how local indigenous groups have been central to the internationalization of the struggle for indigenous rights.[71]

While many local movements seek to boomerang and internationalize their struggle, not all select the same targets for their advocacy. The diversity of transnational civil society provides local movements with a number of options to choose from in their attempts to attract international support.

Not all venues, however, are equally attractive or open to all local movements. Some venues, such as the UN Human Rights Council, require NGOs to go through a vetting process before they can actively participate in the body's proceedings and actions.[72] Other venues, such as Amnesty International and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, impose conditions on local movements, such as the cessation of all violent forms of resistance and a commitment to democratic pluralism, before they agree to publicize their struggle.[73] For some movements, the cost of agreeing to these types of processes and conditions can be prohibitive. Thus, local movement strategizing involves determining which venues in transnational civil society are most likely to support their struggle and meet their organizational needs, both normative and material, at the lowest possible cost. The process that advocacy groups go through in determining how best to allocate their advocacy resources is referred to as venue shopping.[74]

Large mobilized diasporas in the West provide one of the most receptive and least costly venues of support for local movements. When they exist we can expect to see a local movement gear its international advocacy efforts toward gaining and securing their material and political support. There are five reasons for this expectation. First, homeland politics are often a more salient feature of the identity of diaspora members than for those who are outside of the ethnic community. Given that feelings of group identification are necessary conditions for collective action,[75] diaspora members can be more easily mobilized for local movements than nondiaspora activists who share no direct ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or historical tie to the struggle.

Second, diaspora members may feel guilty for living in relative safety abroad while their ethnic kin are repressed and suffering back home. To secure support, local movements can leverage these feelings of guilt.[76] As Daniel Byman et al. put it, "insurgent groups play on [the diaspora's] sympathy and guilt to gain financial and political support."[77]

Third, local movement entrepreneurs in the homeland are likely to have ties to members in the diaspora by virtue of family, friendship, or political bonds. These ties can help facilitate the transnational connections between the local movement and the diaspora. In contrast, local movement ties to nondiaspora networks are often less dense and less robust, making mobilization campaigns more difficult to initiate and less likely to be successful.

Fourth, due to their size, large diasporas are potentially powerful political actors in democratic host states.[78] During election time, they can become significant players.

And fifth, mobilized diasporas provide ready-made networks that local movements can more easily draw on to fundraise, attract recruits, and mobilize for public advocacy. Networks are key recruiting grounds for social movement participants.[79] By tapping into preexisting informal and formal diaspora networks and associations, local movements can gain access to considerable human and physical capital.

By contrast, a local movement that cannot draw on a large Western diaspora is more likely to seek support from other constituencies. These can include church groups, trade unions, academic circles, and political organizations, depending on where the local movement activists feel like they can attract low-cost meaningful support. Without a significant natural constituency to draw on, these activists seeking external support are forced to tailor their advocacy strategies in ways that would resonate with a nondiaspora audience. By tapping into nondiaspora networks, local movements attempt to mobilize individuals to establish support organizations and networks on their behalf through which they can work to raise public awareness, lobby elected officials, and send material and moral support.

In sum, this section has suggested that two causal mechanisms are at work that link high levels of diaspora mobilization with low levels of nondiaspora solidarity. The first mechanism suggests that the advocacy frames that are generated by large mobilized diasporas fail to resonate with a nondiaspora audience. This is the result of a widely held perception of diasporas as international troublemakers fomenting violent conflict and the material interests of diaspora organizations that incentivize the use of ethnic advocacy frames rather than universal ones. The second mechanism suggests that the presence of a large mobilized diaspora conditions the international advocacy strategies adopted by local movements in the homeland as they seek external support for their struggle. When a large mobilized diaspora in the West exists, local movements are more likely to devote their advocacy resources to securing the support of the diaspora and less likely to seek out nondiasporic supporters. The following section seeks to demonstrate the plausibility of these two mechanisms by drawing on evidence taken from the Kurdish and Palestinian cases.

WHY VARYING NONDIASPORA SOLIDARITY FOR KURDS AND PALESTINIANS?

Although no two conflicts are identical, the Kurdish and Palestinian struggles share a number of similarities that make a comparative analysis particularly useful for demonstrating the plausibility of the two causal mechanisms

outlined above. First, the goals of the Kurdish and Palestinian movements are similar as both are engaged in a struggle for self-determination. In both cases, some call for increased autonomy or political representation in a one-state framework, while others call for secession and a two-state solution. Significantly, both groups see their respective governments as foreign occupiers of their ancestral homelands.[80] Second, both groups have adopted violent forms of resistance. According to data taken from the Global Terrorism Database, presented in table 8.2, from the early 1970s to 2011 the two groups achieved comparable levels of violence.[81] In both cases, a number of the groups involved have been labeled terrorist organizations by the European Union and the US State Department.[82]

Third, both conflicts have exacted a significant toll on civilian populations. In Turkey, the conflict has resulted in an estimated 40,000 dead and approximately 3 million refugees and displaced persons.[83] In Israel-Palestine, while there does not appear to be clear historical data on civilian death tolls from 1947/48, B'Tselem estimates that from the first *intifada* in 1987 to 2013 there have been at least 10,000 civilians killed.[84] According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, there are nearly 5 million registered Palestinian refugees.[85]

Fourth, both the Kurdish and Palestinian struggles have received considerable attention from prominent human rights NGOs. From 1986 to 2000, both Turkey and Israel were among the top-ten most frequent targets of Amnesty International's reports and press releases.[86] In fact, from 1975 to 2004, Amnesty devoted more advocacy attention to Turkey than it did to any other state.[87] Both countries have also been among the most frequent targets of Human Rights Watch.[88]

Fifth, both the Turkish and Israeli regime types can be described as ethnic democracies. Unlike liberal states, which in theory are supposed to be

Table 8.2 Comparable levels of violence (1970s to 2011)

Perpetrator	*Number of attacks*[1]	*Total killed*	*Total wounded*	*Total casualties (killed + wounded)*
Kurds[2]	1062	3604	2098	5702
Palestinians[3]	716 (1,259)	1110 (1660)	5376 (6256)	6486 (7916)

[1]Only successful attacks are included.
[2]Excludes the militant groups Dev Sol and DHKP.
[3]Number in brackets includes Palestinian attacks against civilian targets in the West Bank and Gaza.

ethnically neutral, ethnic democracies privilege those deemed to be members of the ethno-national majority at the expense of those considered to be outside of the national community.[89] In both countries, the denial of political and cultural recognition to ethno-national minorities has not only led to discriminatory policies, but also to relatively unreceptive or blocked domestic channels for reform.[90] Sixth, both countries are among the highest recipients of US military aid. Since the end of WWII, Israel has been the top recipient of such aid, receiving approximately $118 billion.[91] Over the same time period, Turkey has been the fourth largest recipient, receiving close to $14 billion.[92]

Despite these similarities, Western civil society has responded very differently to both struggles. Western activists have shown a greater propensity to mobilize in support of the Palestinians rather than the Kurds. Today, a few hundred Western nondiaspora solidarity organizations exist to support the Palestinian struggle. The organizational roots of this network began in the 1980s. In 1980, the Trade Union Friends of Palestine was created.[93] In 1982, a group of Jewish and non-Jewish activists met at the University of London union to form the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), which would later become one of the most active and influential solidarity groups in the United Kingdom. That same year, the British Trade Unions Congress for the first time in its history voted overwhelmingly in opposition to Israeli policy, and the British Transports and General Works Union called for an air and sea boycott of Israel.[94] The 1990s continued to see an expansion of the Palestine solidarity network, including mobilization among the Western Christian left.[95] In the early 2000s, nondiaspora solidarity groups, such as Stop Taxpayer Aid to Israel Now and the US Campaign to End Israeli Occupation were created.[96] Today, the US Campaign consists of approximately 400 member groups.[97]

By contrast, nondiasporans in the West have not taken up the Kurdish struggle as they have the Palestinian struggle. On the contrary, the bulk of the political activism in the West that does exist in support of the Kurds comes from the Kurdish diaspora. Few nondiaspora solidarity organizations exist dedicated to supporting the Kurdish struggle for equal rights and self-determination. What explains these varying levels of solidarity?

KURDISH AND PALESTINIAN DIASPORAS IN THE WEST

An important difference between the Kurdish and Palestinian struggles has to do with the role that their Western-based diasporas play in the homeland conflicts. The Kurdish diaspora in the West is much larger than the Palestinian

diaspora. There is no authoritative data on the size of the Kurdish diaspora but estimates suggest a population ranging from 850,000 to 1.5 million, most of whom live in Germany, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, among other Western states.[98] The Palestinian diaspora is much smaller. The largest Palestinian diaspora community resides in the United States. Some suggest that Palestinian Americans number close to 200,000;[99] however US census data suggests a community of approximately 70,000.[100] In Europe, some suggest that there are 80,000 Palestinians in Germany, 50,000 in the Scandinavian countries, and 20,000 in the United Kingdom.[101]

More important, however, is the difference in the levels of political mobilization between these two diaspora communities. Olivier Grojean suggests that "the Kurds [are] probably the most 'demonstrative' group in Europe."[102] He contrasts Kurdish diaspora activism with that of other diasporas in Europe, including the Palestinian, Armenian, and Iranian diasporas, who have been unable to mobilize such numbers and levels of sustained commitment.[103] Although political awareness and interest appears to be high among Palestinian diasporans in the West, this has not translated into active political involvement. In the late 1980s, Kathleen Christison found that "most Palestinian Americans, like most Americans in general, are not politically active; the vast majority do not attend local ADC (Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee) functions or participate in demonstrations or even write letters to their congressmen."[104] The same appears to be true today. In Europe and the United Kingdom, Abbas Shiblak finds Palestinians not to be particularly politically active.[105] In the United Kingdom, arguably the geographic center of the Palestine solidarity network, Palestinians are largely underrepresented in the various solidarity organizations.[106] In the last few years, however, Palestinian Americans have begun to take the initiative to mobilize themselves under the auspices of the organization Al-Awda[107] and the US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN), the latter of which was founded in 2006.[108] As can be noted from the following section, these types of initiatives have been tried before but with little success. The extent to which these more recent mobilization attempts have been successful remains unclear.

DIASPORA ADVOCACY FRAMES

The first reason why large mobilized diasporas tend to "push" nondiaspora activists away from their struggle has to do with the difficulties they face in advancing advocacy frames that are considered to be credible and culturally

resonant. The nature of Kurdish diaspora activism has tended to reinforce the view that diasporas are troublemakers and thus not credible human rights activists. The prominence of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) imagery in Kurdish diaspora activism has contributed to these views. From the late 1980s the PKK's presence in Europe has raised considerable concern for Western governments. In 1993, the German government banned the PKK in response not only to pressure from Turkey but also due to the actions of Kurdish diaspora activists, which had become increasingly radical and, in some cases, violent.[109] Vera Eccarius-Kelly suggests that "just after the arrival of PKK cadres [in the 1980s], German society was fully aware of the Kurdish minority in Turkey and its radicalized politics in Europe."[110] Despite this ban, and the labeling of the PKK as a terrorist organization by the US State Department in 1997 and by the European Union in 2002, Kurdish diaspora activism has continued to publicly express their close connections to the PKK.[111] Kurdish public advocacy actions frequently call for the release of the PKK's jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan.[112] In 1999, a 14-year-old girl set herself on fire to protest against the arrest of Ocalan. In 2009, members of the Kurdish diaspora went on a hunger strike to raise public awareness of Ocalan's poor living conditions in prison.[113] And in October 2012, at a public demonstration at St. Martin's Fields in London, a number of Kurdish activists wore shirts and held placards calling for Ocalan's freedom.[114] As the International Crisis Group report recently put it, "the diaspora does not hide its links to the PKK and insurgency."[115]

Viewing diaspora organizations as instrumental actors can help to explain the prominence of PKK imagery in Kurdish diaspora activism. By the mid-1980s, the PKK had established itself as the leader of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey.[116] Their success in mobilizing Kurds in Turkey, and in waging an armed insurgency against the Turkish army, bolstered their standing among diaspora Kurds, many of whom had also suffered torture and repression before migrating to Europe. PKK cadres who were sent abroad to gain the support of the diaspora encountered a more receptive environment due to their successes inside Turkey. Ideological affinities, personal experiences, and the strategies of PKK activists all contributed to the organization's significant presence in the diaspora.[117] However, the strategies employed by the PKK, namely their use of ethnic outbidding in which they sought to depict their critics as insufficiently Kurdish or outright traitors, may not have succeeded had they been unable to first establish their leadership credentials in the homeland.[118] Thus, diaspora cultural centers and advocacy organizations

had an interest in hitching their ride to the PKK because it made their own mobilization attempts far easier. In contrast to pro-PKK diaspora organizations, rival organizations such as the Association for Kurdish Workers for Kurdistan (KOMKAR), which were tied to Kurdish social democratic parties in Turkey that opposed violence and the PKK, were far less successful in mobilizing supporters.[119] Over time, many diaspora organizations came to be more closely associated with the PKK because, given their stature in the community, it was in their best interest to do so. While this strategy of promoting the PKK's narrative, and emphasizing the importance of Ocalan, may have undermined the diaspora's ability to reach out to nondiaspora activists, it did serve the material interests of diaspora organizations by enabling them to mobilize the community more effectively.

Overall, the Kurdish diaspora's close ties to the PKK reinforced a widely held view of diasporas as troublemakers. Their calls for human rights protections of their ethnic kin abroad rang hollow in light of the public and material support they were giving to an organization that was widely seen as terrorist. While diaspora leaders could have sought to address this credibility problem by distancing themselves from Ocalan and the PKK, at least in their public campaigning, such an approach might have undermined their own ability to retain the support of the community. In other words, adopting a universal advocacy frame may have been able to attract greater nondiaspora support, but it would not have served the interests of the diaspora organizations whose existence is predicated on keeping their constituents mobilized for homeland politics.

The Palestinian struggle does not carry the same baggage that can come from active diaspora activism. Like the Kurds, Palestinian groups have also been perpetrators of significant levels of violence and have also been labeled as terrorists by the US State Department and European Union. Yet, unlike the Kurds, this violence has had a much less powerful effect on how their struggle is understood. The reason for this is the relative absence of a large mobilized Palestinian diaspora in the West advocating on behalf of their ethnic kin. Ethnic ties can produce loyalties that can constrain the advocacy frames one can generate. They can also associate a struggle with elements that make it far less popular to those outside of the ethnic group. Fawaz Turki captures the challenges of being a diaspora activist in the following way: "I am a Palestinian activist now. So regardless of all the manifestations of neobackwardness, corruption, and opportunism I am to see from here on [in PLO actions], I'll turn

a blind eye and a deaf ear. It's good for me to do that and to go on believing in the "people.'"[120] By contrast, nondiasporans face no such restrictions. These types of activists can more easily and credibly frame a struggle in universalistic terms.

Early Western mobilization in support of the Palestinian struggle was in large part disconnected from the actions of Palestinians themselves. Many of the first Palestine solidarity activists included a mixture of Jews and non-Jews who began to mobilize in the early 1980s after Israel's invasion of Lebanon.[121] For the most part, these nondiaspora activists came from left-wing networks who saw in Palestine an opportunity to oppose colonialism, racism, and US imperialism all at once. These nondiasporans felt no impulse to align themselves with the PLO. In fact, some were deeply critical of it. In their view, the PLO was a bourgeois movement that was more interested in developing close ties to the conservative Arab ruling class in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf states, than they were with Palestinian workers and peasants.[122] Therefore, instead of feeling compelled to advocate on behalf of the Palestinians by supporting the PLO, these nondiasporans instead framed the Palestinian struggle in left-wing universalistic terms. This framing was due in large part to the role of Israelis associated with Matzpen, an anti-Zionist socialist organization. *Matzpeniks* began arriving in London in the 1960s and contributed to shifting left-wing views on Zionism and the nature of the Israeli state. Colin Shindler argues that these *Matzpeniks* "began to act as guides and mentors for the New Left who often understood little about the complexities of the Israel-Palestine imbroglio. As Israelis, they bore the imprimatur of authenticity. As anti-Zionists, they endorsed the New Left's interpretation of Zionism as a settler state."[123] This shift in attitudes that began in the 1960s and 1970s turned into the solidarity mobilizations in the 1980s and 1990s described before. These mobilizations laid the groundwork for the growth and expansion of the Palestine solidarity network that remains active today and which frames its cause in the language of human rights, antiracism, and international law.

DIASPORAS AND LOCAL MOVEMENT ADVOCACY STRATEGY

The second reason why large mobilized diasporas tend to "push" nondiaspora solidarity activists away from their struggle has to do with the effect they have on the advocacy strategies adopted by their ethnic kin in the homeland as they seek international allies. An important strategy employed by the PKK

in its conflict with the Turkish state has been to actively mobilize the Kurdish diaspora in Europe. This population provided the PKK with a large repository of resources that they could draw on to support their struggle.[124] Fiona Adamson emphasizes the role that PKK transnational brokers played in capturing diasporic support. A number of these brokers were intellectuals who were radicalized in the 1960s and 1970s and exiled from Turkey following the coup in 1980. In March 1985 they established the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan to help organize the PKK's integration into the Kurdish diaspora. By the early 1990s, the PKK had established a predominant position not only inside Turkey but in Europe as well.[125]

In Europe, conditions were favorable for a PKK strategy of diaspora mobilization. Not only was the community large and growing, it already had some degree of organizational infrastructure as well. Unlike in Turkey, Kurds migrating to Europe were able to organize themselves for the first time as Kurds. For many, it was only in Europe that they began to realize and exercise their Kurdish identity.[126] From the 1950s to the 1970s, a number of Kurdish organizations were founded, which laid the groundwork for the PKK's eventual arrival and capture of the community. According to Grojean, the PKK activists who arrived in Europe in the late 1970s and early 1980s "did not find virgin territory, lands and people, that is, without associations or political activism."[127] PKK cadres drew on these preexisting networks to mobilize the diaspora.

In contrast to the PKK's strategy of internationalizing the struggle through its diaspora in the West, Palestinian groups adopted strategies that focused more on nondiasporic sources of support. The PLO's international advocacy was geared primarily toward the United Nations and gaining recognition from national governments. In 1974, the UN General Assembly granted the PLO observer status and by the early 1980s it had been recognized by over 80 states worldwide.[128]

The PLO's focus on the UN and friendly national governments made good strategic sense. Changes in the makeup of UN membership in the 1960s and 1970s, caused by the creation of a number of newly independent or decolonized Asian and African states, who for a variety of ideological and material reasons were supportive of the Palestinian struggle, turned the UN into a venue that was highly receptive to PLO initiatives.[129] There was greater potential for change by securing UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions against Israel than there was by mobilizing a small Palestinian community dispersed throughout the West to protest and lobby their own

governments. Put simply, the PLO did not need its Western diaspora like the PKK needed theirs.

The presence of the PLO, and the Palestine question in general, in UN discussions and resolutions served to not only increase the visibility of the struggle to the broader Western human rights community, but also situated the Palestine issue more firmly within international law.[130] Over time, this made opposition to Israeli policy easier and less controversial. If one was committed to international law, then it logically followed that Israeli policies identified as illegal ought to be a subject of concern. In addition, the language the UN used to describe Israeli policy influenced the language and strategies of contention adopted by Western activists. For instance, the 1975 UN General Assembly Resolution equating Zionism with racism not only gave credibility to this charge against Jewish nationalism, but also provided an opportunity for activists concerned with Israel-Palestine to situate their cause within an antiracist advocacy frame. In the United Kingdom, David Cesarani notes, the struggle against Zionism began to be linked to domestic campaigns against racism.[131] As Suzanne Morrison illustrates in her chapter in this volume, Palestinian and Palestine solidarity activists have drawn explicitly on international law to build support for a transnational boycott movement of Israel.

To emphasize the PLO's focus on the UN and national governments is not to suggest that it had no interest in its diaspora, only that the mobilization of its diaspora in the West was much lower on its list of priorities. Attempts were made by the PLO to turn its Western diaspora into an active political force, but none of these initiatives appeared to be of much significance. In the late 1970s, the PLO helped sponsor the creation of an umbrella organization of all Palestinian organizations in the US called the Palestine Congress of North America (PCNA). The PCNA's objective was to represent Palestinian Americans, make them aware of their constitutional rights, and to promote the Palestinian cause. The PCNA, however, was not successful. Despite some initial optimism,[132] in the end "the work done by the staff at the PCNA was worthless."[133] In his role as the PCNA's director of Writing and Research, Turki observed a dysfunctional organization populated by PLO operatives more interested in personal gain than the cause. The PCNA's director, Yasser Askari, was a man who "didn't speak English and knew little about either American or Palestinian history."[134] In fact, those hired to run the PCNA "knew very little about how to organize a community, less about disseminating information, and virtually nothing about the US Constitution."[135]

Table 8.3 Appendix I: Sources used for coding of dependent and independent variables

Ethnic group	*Source(s) consulted*
Darfuris	*New York Times* online archive;[1] websites of Amnesty International,[2] International Crisis Group,[3] Human Rights Watch,[4] and International Commission of Jurists;[5] Prunier (2005);[6] Hamilton and Hazlett (2007);[7] Murphy (2007);[8] Mamdani (2009);[9] Brooks (2009);[10] Gryzb (2009);[11] Hamilton (2011).[12]
Palestinians	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005);[13] Shiblak (2005);[14] Bakan and Abu-Laban (2009);[15] Barghouti (2011);[16] Shindler (2012);[17] Erakat (2012).[18]
Tibetans	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; McLagan (1996);[19] Barnett (2001);[20] Sangay (2003),[21] Noakes (2012)[22]
Zapatistas	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; Bob (2005);[23] Olesen (2005)[24]
Black South Africans	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; Klotz (1995);[25] Ran, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005); Thorn (2006);[26] Skinner (2010).[27]
Burmese	*New York Times* online archive; Ran, Ramos and Rodgers (2005); Danitz and Stobel (1999);[28] Dale (2011);[29]Williams (2012).[30]
Southern Sudanese	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; Livingston (1996);[31] Abusharaf (2002);[32] Hertzke (2004);[33] Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005); Hamberg (2013).[34]
Tamils (Sri Lanka)	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; Byman et al. (2001);[35] Wayland (2004);[36] Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005); Amarasingham (2013).[37]
Kosovar Albanians	*New York Times* online archive; Ran, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005); Hockenos (2003);[38] Koinova (2012).[39]
Kurds (Turkey)	*New York Times* online archive; websites of Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists; Wahlbeck (1999);[40] Ecarius-Kelly (2002);[41] Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005); Grojean (2011);[42] Adamson (2013);[43] Hendrix and Wong (2013).[44]

Sources:
[1]http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html.
[2]https://www.amnesty.org.
[3]http://www.crisisgroup.org
[4]http://www.hrw.org/.
[5]http://www.icj.org/.
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[8]D. Murphy, "Narrating Darfur: Darfur in the US Press, March–September 2004," in *A War in Darfur and the Search for Peace*, ed. de Waal (Cambridge: Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University, 2007), 314–36.
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[25]A. Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).
[26]H. Thorn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
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In contrast to the PLO's focus of high international politics, over the last decade or so Palestinian civil society groups have focused their efforts on mobilizing Western civil society. As discussed earlier, the mobilization of segments of the Western left in support of the Palestinians through the 1980s and 1990s, and the relative lack of political activism among Palestinians in the West, encouraged this strategy. For instance, the International Solidarity Movement[136] and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) National Committee[137] have explicitly sought to attract a broad base of Western support by using connections and advocacy frames that resonate widely. Not only is international law used in this context, but also used is the term "apartheid" to link Israeli policies to that of South Africa. As Morrison argues in this volume, the use of the term apartheid is not only meant to describe the nature of the conflict but also to provide a source of inspiration for activists today to follow in the footsteps of the antiapartheid activists before them.[138]

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that diaspora activism can help us to explain why some distant struggles receive high levels of Western activist solidarity while others do not. It suggests that ethnic groups with large mobilized diasporas in the West are less likely to be the recipients of a Western solidarity network than ethnic groups with a small or relatively unmobilized Western diaspora. Two mechanisms may help explain this relationship between diaspora activism and nondiaspora solidarity. The first mechanism suggests that large mobilized diasporas produce advocacy frames that are seen as neither credible nor universal. As a result, these frames fail to resonate with a nondiaspora audience. The second mechanism suggests that when large mobilized diasporas exist, local movements in the homeland are more likely to focus their international advocacy resources on gaining and maintaining the support of their ethnic kin abroad rather than on gaining the support of nondiaspora networks.

In the study of transnational activism and contentious politics, the role played by diasporas in shaping the patterns of Western activism is largely absent. This lack of attention given to diasporas is inconsistent with a growing body of scholarship that examines the efforts diasporas have taken to mobilize and influence the foreign policies of their hostlands as well as the view that transnational activists are "rooted cosmopolitans" deeply influenced by their domestic environments. As such, the study of the transnationalization

of contentious politics, and in particular the study of the patterns of Western human rights activism, ought to pay closer attention to the role played by diasporas. The chapter has sought to shed light on this role by comparing the Western activist responses to the Kurdish and Palestinian struggles. Further research, however, is required on these two cases as well as on a larger set of cases in order to tease out the complex relationship that exists between diaspora and nondiaspora activists.

NOTES

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9

THE EMERGENCE OF THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS MOVEMENT

Suzanne Morrison

INTRODUCTION

Boycott is not a new tactic used in the Palestinian struggle—it was widely used in the uprising against British colonial rule in the 1930s and popularly deployed throughout Palestinian society during the first *intifada*. However, the emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement in its current form can be found in a range of processes from the year 2000 onward. By using a contentious politics framework, and specifically utilizing analytical concepts of social movement theory, such as political opportunities and constraints, mobilizing dynamics, and collective action frames, this chapter aims to unpack the emergence of the BDS movement from 2000 to 2005.[1] During this time boycott developed as a tactical repertoire for organization and a global movement centered on boycott, divestment, and sanctions started to emerge. In this chapter, I argue that a range of factors led to the rise of the BDS movement and thus created a foundation from which the movement could be built.

First, I analyze the political context in which the movement emerged, paying particular attention to what is known in the social movement literature as political opportunities and constraints. These structures and processes can create a political space for mobilization if these moments are interpreted and acted on by challengers. Specifically in the case of the BDS movement, the Oslo process, changes within Palestinian civil society, and the ruling by the International Court of Justice in 2004 on Israel's wall were used by activists as opportunities for boycott and divestment initiatives. Actors that mobilized in response to these conditions created dynamics that would lay the groundwork for organizing a border-crossing BDS movement.

Next, I examine mobilizing dynamics in the early BDS activities. In this section, I build on the work of Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, and Doug McAdam that call for more nuanced analyses in the study of mobilization of social movements. In the BDS movement these mobilizing dynamics can be seen in the NGO Forum at the World Conference against Racism in 2001, early Palestinian calls for boycott and the creation of the Palestinian campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel, early divestment initiatives, initial calls for a moratorium on research funding and an academic boycott of Israel, and a 2004 conference in London on resisting Israeli apartheid. The establishment of divestment and boycott campaigns in Palestine and elsewhere all helped set in motion dynamics of mobilization for the development of a global movement.

As actors mobilized, they utilized various themes to convey information and raise awareness of Israel's policies and practices, and the burgeoning BDS movement. Bearing in mind the analytical concept of collective action frames, as developed by Robert Benford and David Snow, this portion of the chapter considers the recurring themes the movement uses to assign responsibility for the target and provide justifications for action. These frames include international law, human rights, and the South African example. Through constant reference to these points, activists established an ideological basis for the movement, which would be used in nearly every BDS campaign in the following years.

This chapter posits that, taken together, a range of causal factors led to the emergence of the BDS movement. Various opportunities and constraints created a political context for the movement, actors pursuing BDS activities established mobilizing dynamics, and collective action frames utilized by activists have helped construct meaning and ideas for advancing the BDS movement. These early efforts by participants were the impetus for cultivating a movement around a collective action repertoire of boycott that culminated in the official Palestinian global call for BDS in 2005 and facilitated the development of the movement in the years to come.

POLITICAL CONTEXT: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

During the 1970s, social scientists such as Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam, developed the political process approach to social movement theory, which identified a link between institutionalized politics on the one hand and that of collective action, social movements, and revolution on the other.[2] In general,

the theory suggests that structural changes in institutionalized politics and changing ideological views of elites could be seen through a framework of opportunities and/or constraints and could explain why a particular movement emerged at a certain time. In general, the approach considers the political structures and processes—the political context—in which a social movement arises and develops. In the case of the BDS movement, this context includes various political constraints and opportunities such as the Oslo process and factional fragmentation, the transformation of Palestinian civil society, Israel's construction of a wall, and the subsequent International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the issue, all of which contributed to an environment for the emergence of the BDS movement.

THE OSLO PROCESS AND PALESTINIAN FACTIONAL FRAGMENTATION

The Oslo process that was ushered in during the 1990s followed the first Palestinian *intifada* (1987–1993), which was a period in Palestinian history that witnessed remarkable political unity and mass mobilization against Israeli military occupation. The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 created a new set of circumstances, with differing ideas and opinions about the agreements and conditions of the process.

In general, there were those who supported the signing of the Accords, the new emphasis on state building by the Palestinian leadership, and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA or PA). This included Yasser Arafat, the Fatah party to which he belonged, and a number of other supporting factions in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).[3] Other factions in the PLO, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), along with Islamist factions not part of the PLO, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, opposed the Accords.[4] These factions saw the Accords as a betrayal of the Palestinian struggle to liberate the historic homeland. The Accords were also seen by PFLP and the DFLP as a way for Arafat and the Fatah party to consolidate power over Palestinian politics.[5]

During the Oslo process, dramatic transformations took place in the political, economic, and social spheres of Palestine. One of the most important political changes, as suggested above, was the creation of the PA, which was set up as a Palestinian governing body with limited control over some areas of the Palestinian territories. The establishment of the PA was problematic

for a number of reasons, of which one was the Palestinian leadership's shift in emphasis of the historic Palestinian struggle from a movement to liberate Palestine to a minimal state-building project in the occupied Palestinian territories. The newly established PA had only marginal "self-rule" over a small amount of territory, which amounted to little more than restricted administrative functions.

In addition, the PA, in effect, represented only one group of Palestinians—those living in the occupied Palestinian territories. The PA, unlike the PLO, was not the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."[6] The PLO had the legitimacy of an indigenous political organization to represent Palestinians, whereas the PA was an internationally established structure and as such depended on international assistance for its formation and maintenance. The early years of the PA also proved to be very corrupt and repressive as Arafat sought to entrench his rule and that of Fatah party, over and within the structure of the PA. The authoritarian-like rule over institutions and the daily lives of Palestinians facilitated brewing political contention within Palestinian politics and society.

As Palestinian politics fragmented, Israel's control over Palestinians became more institutionalized through various structures and processes during the Oslo period. Movement and access restrictions along with the social separation of Israelis and Palestinians intensified through the issuing of different ID cards, license plates, and dividing the occupied territories for security and political control into Areas A, B, and C.[7] Israel's illegal settlement population throughout the occupied Palestinian territories doubled during the Oslo process, thereby obstructing further the possibility of a territorially contiguous Palestinian state in the future.[8] In addition, the Oslo process also effected a lack of movement on any final status issues (borders, Jerusalem, settlements, and refugees), which were the most important ones throughout the Palestinian struggle.

Although not limited to these factors alone, in many ways, the Oslo process further fragmented Palestinians politically, economically, and socially, especially by establishing the PA and institutionalizing a system of disconnected enclaves in the Territories. Palestinians saw Israel expand its illegal settlements, establish the Israeli-only road system, checkpoints, closures, etc., and many came to have a pessimistic view about the Oslo process and the strategy of negotiations.

In late 2000, the second intifada erupted after continued clashes between the Israeli military and Palestinians. The al-Aqsa intifada embodied Palestinian

frustrations about the ongoing Israeli occupation and the counterproductive Oslo process. The process failed to deliver a foreseeable state in the future or even a decline in Israel's dominance, as it continued with its colonial expansion of settlements in Palestinian territories and control over Palestinians, particularly in Areas B and C. The uprising exposed Palestinian political fragmentation, especially among Palestinian factions, that had been intensifying during the 1990s and revealed the structural flaws embedded in the Oslo process. The intifada was both a rejection of Israel's colonial control over Palestinians and their land and the corrupt Fatah-led PA apparatus that had failed to gain legitimacy among many Palestinians. The intifada illuminated the harsh realities of continued Israeli occupation, the increasingly illegitimate PA, the and international indifference to Palestinian self-determination.

The immense changes that occurred during the Oslo process and political fragmentation of Palestinians created what is referred to in the social movement literature as a "political constraint" within internal Palestinian politics. The limited political environment led some actors to pursue political participation and seek change through other avenues. While the second intifada has largely been known for its armed elements, the cleavage in the political system was utilized by some to develop a robust civil society sector. When calls for boycott started circulating in the early years of the second intifada, it was Palestinian civil society that mobilized and participated in such efforts.

TRANSFORMATION OF PALESTINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

The character and development of Palestinian civil society has transformed over time.[9] From the 1970s through the first intifada of the 1980s and early 1990s, Palestinian political factions in the PLO established many Palestinian civil society organizations. The factions organized associations in local communities for workers, women, students, journalists, etc. and were critical in mobilizing the Palestinian population for resistance against Israel. The groups established by the factions were part of the Palestinian national liberation movement and "formed the popular base of the first intifada."[10] During the intifada the grassroots organizations provided social welfare to the struggling population and played a key role in establishing the popular committees (community and neighborhood-based groups), which were vital for coordinating and organizing the uprising.

During the 1990s, some grassroots organizations developed into professional NGOs, and many new NGOs were established, often with international

donor funding. Since the Oslo period, external donors have played a large role in funding NGOs in the occupied territories. For a portion of civil society, particularly the large, Western-funded professional NGOs, priorities during and after the Oslo process have focused on development and humanitarian assistance programs. Prior to the Oslo process a majority of Palestinian civil society organizations (in the Palestinian territories and diaspora) worked on the grassroots level for political mobilizing and organizing for resistance against Israel. However, during and after the Oslo process, many NGOs in the Palestinian territories embraced a neoliberal model focused on development and reform, which often was utilized to serve the formation of the PA through policy prescriptions, capacity-building, and good-governance initiatives.

While a portion of civil society organizations have facilitated institution-building and neoliberal development projects, other groups have been playing active roles in their communities and participating in "politics from below." Activist Hazem Jamjoum notes: "With the erosion of the Palestinian national movement after the Oslo agreements and the ambivalence of the new Palestinian Authority toward the liberation struggle, Palestinian civil society stepped in to continue the march to freedom."[11] This was collectively manifested on a number of occasions, and will be discussed later, such as the NGO Forum of the World Conference against Racism in 2001, various civil society calls for the boycott of Israel in the early 2000s, and finally in the coherent global call for BDS in 2005, which was signed by over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations from the diaspora, Israel, and the occupied territories.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL AND THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE ADVISORY OPINION

In 2002, Israel began construction of a partitioning structure along the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line), with portions extending into the occupied West Bank. The structure consists of fences, concrete wall, ditches, patrol roads, and barbed wire surrounding the perimeter.[12] At the request of the chairman (Syria) of the Arab Group, which was supported by the Non-Aligned Movement through the chairman of the Coordinating Bureau (Permanent Representative of Malaysia) and the chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group (OIC) at the United Nations (Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran), the UN General Assembly resumed its Tenth Emergency Special Session in October 2003 to discuss Israel's construction of the wall.[13]

Immediately following the resumption of the Emergency Session a resolution was passed that demanded Israel discontinue building and deconstruct the wall built in occupied Palestinian territory. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was called on to report on Israel's compliance with the resolution. In November 2003, Secretary-General Kofi Annan submitted his report stating that Israel had not complied with the resolution. His report detailed how in some locations the wall greatly deviated from the Green Line and how Palestinian movement and access to vital services had been constricted as a result of the wall. He also noted that in October 2003, Israel created "closed areas" between the Green Line and the barrier, and new regulations of residency in those areas.[14] Palestinians living or working in the newly deemed closed areas could only continue to do so if the IDF issued them a special permit or ID card, while Israeli citizens were allowed to move freely without a permit. [15]

Following the Secretary-General's report on Israel's noncompliance with the Assembly's resolution in October, the General Assembly then passed another resolution in December. In this resolution, the Assembly noted that Israel refused to comply with international law and that the situation on the ground was worsening.[16] Due to these factors, the Assembly then requested an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the wall. While Advisory Opinions by the ICJ are nonbinding, this does not mean they are without legal effect. The party requesting the Opinion determines the weight of such opinions; however, the Court notes,

> It remains nevertheless that the authority and prestige of the Court attach to its advisory opinions and that where the organ or agency concerned endorses that opinion, that decision is as it were sanctioned by international law.[17]

Established in 1946, the ICJ is the "principal judicial organ of the United Nations."[18] In this particular case, the Court's main task, as requested by the UNGA, was to determine the legal consequences of Israel (the occupying power) building a wall in occupied territory. [19] To do this, the Court first had to determine the legality of the wall to assess any legal consequences therein. The Court noted that the route of the wall often traced that of Israeli settlements, which the Court reiterated were illegal under international law and inhibited the Palestinians' right to self-determination.[20] The ICJ also stated that the wall created a "fait accompli" on the ground and was "tantamount to de facto annexation."[21] With respect to violations of international law, the

Court concluded that Israel's construction of the wall contravened Articles 46 and 52 of the Hague Regulations of 1907, Article 49 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 12, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and various provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.[22] Based on these findings, the Court therefore concluded that the wall's existence in occupied territory contravened international law and that the legal consequences therein included Israel and involved parties violating their international obligations.[23]

Although the UN Security Council holds chief responsibility for the organization and the power of the UNGA is largely limited to discussing issues, conducting studies, and making recommendations through resolutions, the actions by the Assembly were noteworthy with respect to Israel's construction of the wall.[24] To this effect, the Assembly resumed an Emergency Session to take up the issue and then passed several resolutions that not only called for the cessation and dismantling of the wall, but also made the request for the ICJ Advisory Opinion. Member states called for and supported the resumption of the session, voted for the resolutions, called on the Secretary-General, and requested an ICJ Advisory Opinion. This indicated strong support among many states throughout the world, especially those in the Arab and Muslim world, and in the Non-Aligned movement, in proving Israel was in violation of international law in constructing a wall in internationally recognized occupied territory.[25]

The ICJ Advisory Opinion was significant for Palestinian civil society organizations that saw it as a major political opportunity to use as a tool to further the cause of the Palestinian struggle. Following the ICJ Advisory Opinion, the editors of *al-Majdal*, the quarterly magazine of Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a prominent Palestinian civil society organization, wrote:

> The long-range impact of the ICJ opinion will similarly depend on the ability of civil society actors, Palestinian, Israeli, and others, to effectively use it as a tool for mobilization, advocacy, and action. Academic, consumer, cultural, and sports boycotts, divestment and a campaign for sanctions by states must all be considered.[26]

For many Palestinian civil society organizations and Palestine solidarity groups around the world the Advisory Opinion was a landmark. The Opinion

served as a significant piece of legal documentation that legitimized Palestinian claims about the wall and indicated significant support from many states in the UN General Assembly. Because activists viewed the Opinion as a political opportunity to showcase Israel's violations of international law, it would be cited and strategically deployed as a collective action frame used to mobilize participants and garner support for the movement.

Many of the initiatives discussed in the following section invoke international law as a reason to support boycott of Israel, and the Advisory Opinion only reinforced these already existing frames of reference to those involved in boycott initiatives. The Opinion and international law more generally would prove to be important for the discourse and framing of the BDS movement given the increased utilization of such references in future calls for boycott, divestment, and sanctions. Bolstered by the Advisory Opinion, the official Palestinian call for BDS in 2005 (discussed later), cited the ICJ Opinion in its call, and emphasized Israel's violations of international law as a justification for mobilization.

MOBILIZING DYNAMICS: EARLY BDS ACTIVITIES

By analyzing when a movement emerges through the lenses of opportunities and constraints, we can determine the specific political context in which a movement originates. Yet, identifying the political space from which a movement materializes does not provide a clear indication of how initial mobilizations can lead to the development of a movement. Tarrow's concept of mobilizing structures, which he says, "bring people together in the field, shape coalitions, confront opponents, and assure their own future after the exhilaration of the peak of mobilization has passed" was originally useful for this purpose.[27]

However, in 2001, Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam published *Dynamics of Contention*, which sought to rework many of the concepts and theories of collective action and social movements that had prevailed previously. Their "relational perspective" argued that analyzing dynamic mechanisms and processes of collective action were crucial to understanding mobilizations across time and space.[28] With respect to mobilizing participants, they said that we should "determine what dynamic, interactive mechanisms typically shape the mobilization process."[29] While the authors presented a more nuanced theoretical tool kit for analyzing contentious politics, the concepts, particularly surrounding mobilization, for investigating social movements were ambiguous.

In this chapter, I use the term "mobilizing dynamics," which encapsulates the concepts that Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam were pursuing in the *Dynamics of Contention* research agenda with respect to mobilization processes and mechanisms, but were not clearly expressed in their framework. In the case of the BDS movement, a number of mobilizing dynamics are important for examining the emergence of the movement. This includes the NGO Forum at the World Conference against Racism in 2001, early Palestinian calls for boycott and the creation of the Palestinian campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel, early divestment initiatives, initial calls for a moratorium on research funding and an academic boycott of Israel, and a 2004 conference in London on resisting Israeli apartheid. Taken together, these introductory efforts by activists illuminate the dynamics of mobilization in which the BDS movement developed.

THE NGO FORUM AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM IN 2001

A year after the second intifada began in 2000, the UN held the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa. In addition to the official diplomatic forum, a Youth Summit and an NGO Forum were also held, although they were held in separate locations and were not part of the formal WCAR proceedings. While the NGO Forum had no official bearing on the events of the WCAR and its subsequent Declaration and Programme of Action, the text of the NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action were to be submitted to Mary Robinson, then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the conference. The comprehensive 65-page document was the result of the Forum's meetings, workshops, and preparatory sessions. While the document covered a plethora of ethnicities and issues around the world, the Palestinian problem was mentioned several times throughout.

One of 62 paragraphs in the Introduction affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. In the Declaration, Israel was proclaimed a racist, apartheid state that engages in systematic human rights violations, specifically through Israel's denial of Palestinian refugees' right of return, its colonial-military occupation of Palestinian territories, and its discriminatory practices against Palestinian citizens of Israel.[30] Among a host of recommendations outlined in the Programme of Action was the enforcement of international law, the implementation of relevant UN resolutions, withdrawal from

occupied Palestinian territories, the commencement of an anti-Israeli apartheid movement, and the enactment of comprehensive sanctions and embargos by all states against Israel.[31]

That the conference took place in South Africa was not lost on the participants of the Forum or the Palestinian civil society contingent that sought to make connections between the South Africa and the Israel/Palestine experiences. Not coincidentally, Palestinians and their supporters made direct links between the two cases, referring to "Israel's brand of apartheid" and the ways to bring down an unjust and unequal system of oppression, that is, an anti-apartheid movement, particularly using tactics that worked in South Africa such as boycotts, divestment initiatives, and state sanctions. Significantly, the reference to South Africa would continue to play a key role in the framing of the BDS movement for Palestinian justice (discussed in the section on collective action frames toward the end of this chapter), as it would serve as a positive and normative influence for mobilization and participation in the developing movement.

The text of the NGO Forum's Declaration and Programme of Action relating to Palestinians reflects a strong delegation of Palestinian civil society participants and NGO support around the world for Palestinian rights. Palestinian participants in the Forum pushed for international recognition and action on Israel's racially motivated offenses against Palestinians, thereby showing the strength of Palestinian civil society and its capacity to network across borders to mobilize support. Palestinian civil society also proved that it would be a reliable sector for mobilization when calls for boycott, divestment, and sanctions were circulated among groups and organizations in the coming years.

EARLY PALESTINIAN CALLS FOR BOYCOTT AND THE CREATION OF THE PALESTINIAN CAMPAIGN FOR THE ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

On March 29, 2002, Israel launched "Operation Defensive Shield" in the West Bank, the largest military invasion into the territory since the 1967 war. All major Palestinian cities and surrounding towns were reoccupied by the IDF during the operation with curfews imposed, movement restricted, and international journalists, human rights monitors, and medical personnel frequently denied entry to assess conditions and provide humanitarian assistance.

In the midst of Israel's widespread invasion in 2002, prominent Palestinian intellectuals published a letter online. The letter called on "global civil society to use the momentum it has generated and the ethical integrity it has demonstrated" to immediately act to end Israel's unprecedented invasion by intensifying efforts to stop Israel's sustained campaign of apartheid, occupation, and ethnic cleansing.[32] The call specifically asked activists to demand governments end military assistance to Israel and suspend economic relations.

A few months later, Palestinian civil society organizations published a more comprehensive call. The majority of the statements recalled the declarations made the previous year at the NGO Forum of the WCAR in Durban. In particular, the call by Palestinian civil society organizations directly quoted the article on establishing a global antiapartheid movement and the article calling on the complete isolation of Israel through sanctions and embargos. The call states:

> We as members of Palestinian civil society welcome all recent initiatives to boycott Israel which have been launched in many parts of the world. For the sake of freedom and justice in Palestine and the world, we call upon the solidarity movement, NGOs, academic and cultural institutions, business companies, political parties and unions, as well as concerned individuals to strengthen and broaden the global Israel Boycott Campaign.[33]

In the following year (2003), a group of Palestinian academics and intellectuals in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the diaspora issued another call for boycott.[34] This was built on in the following year when in April 2004, Palestinian academics and intellectuals formally established the Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

Just three days before the ruling of the ICJ Advisory Opinion was read in July 2004, PACBI issued its official call for the international community to boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions or state-sponsored events in support of the Palestinian struggle against continued Israeli occupation, colonization, and apartheid. The academic and cultural boycott of Israel was based on the premise that Israeli institutions of higher education are complicit in the state's violations of international law and human rights through direct funding or intellectual support. The boycott called on academics and cultural workers around the world "to comprehensively and consistently boycott all

Israeli academic and cultural institutions…" in support of the Palestinian struggle.[35]

The establishment of PACBI was important because it built on and extended previous efforts since 2000 to establish a formal boycott campaign among Palestinians. Prior Palestinian boycott calls were noteworthy, but tended to be isolated appeals. The global call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel along with the establishment of PACBI provided an avenue for Palestinian boycott activists to connect with other campaigns and activists across borders. The formation of PACBI and its global call represented a determination among Palestinian academics and intellectuals to expand the organizational capacity and repertoire of boycott in Palestine. It also indicated the establishment of a mobilizing mechanism among Palestinian academics and intellectuals that would be used to organize and develop border-crossing academic and cultural boycotts of Israel in years to come.

EARLY DIVESTMENT INITIATIVES

In November 2000, Francis Boyle, a professor of international law, gave a public lecture at the Illinois State University in which he called on students in the United States to learn from their predecessors in the antiapartheid movement against South Africa and develop a similar movement to bring down the apartheid regime in Israel. He specifically mentioned divestment as a tactic that played a crucial role in building the antiapartheid movement, which helped to create tangible victories in the movement and was an important component in bringing down formal apartheid in South Africa.[36]

Inspired by Boyle's speech, which was subsequently disseminated as a call to action, students from around the United States started organizing, and in the following year, the first formal divestment campaign was launched by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at the University of California—Berkeley. A divestment petition was circulated around campus and in 2002, SJP hosted the first national student conference. This led to the establishment of a national coalition of mostly student-based Palestine solidarity groups, whose top priority was to establish divestment campaigns on campuses across the United States. In the following years, the student activists held four additional conferences at universities across the United States to share knowledge with each other and coordinate national days of action. By 2004, activists in over 40 campuses in the United States were working on divestment campaigns.[37]

In addition to campus-based divestment initiatives, divestment among faith-based groups started to increase.

For a number of years, several Christian Churches in the United States had made statements calling for economic pressure on corporations as a way to effect change in the Middle East. In 2004, the Presbyterian Church became the first to officially begin a process of "corporate engagement" and "selective divestment" from companies that support or maintain the Israeli occupation, contribute to the expansion or maintenance of Israeli settlements, or assist any organization/group that enables violent attacks against civilians.[38] In the following years, the United Church of Christ, the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the Church of England would all take up divestment as a means to exert economic and symbolic pressure on multinational corporations contributing to conditions preventing a just peace in the region.[39]

A number of corporations were targeted as a result of divestment campaigns; however, the maximum emphasis was placed on the Caterpillar Corporation, whose equipment was being used by the Israeli military in their operations (home demolitions, construction of the wall, razing olive trees and agricultural land, etc.) in the occupied Palestinian territories. Numerous groups took up divestment campaigns, specifically against the Caterpillar Corporation. Among a host of smaller groups taking up the Caterpillar campaign, large groups and coalitions also targeted the company. This included StopCat, a Chicago-based coalition of Caterpillar boycott and divestment initiatives; Stop US Tax-funded Aid to Israel Now! (SUSTAIN), a DC-based organization with chapters around the country; the US Campaign to End the Occupation, a coalition of US Palestine solidarity organizations; the Rachel Corrie Foundation, an organization started by the parents of Rachel Corrie, an American peace activist who was killed in Gaza with a Caterpillar bulldozer in 2003; and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), a Jewish peace and justice organization with chapters throughout the United States.[40]

These organizations along with smaller community-based groups pressured Caterpillar through divestment campaigns and raised awareness about the issues by sending letters to congressional representatives, signing petitions, writing letters to Caterpillar's CEO, and contacting local Caterpillar dealerships to encourage them to hold the company accountable for use of its equipment in Israel/Palestine. The groups and organizations working on Caterpillar campaigns organized international days of action that included

demonstrations at the company's headquarters in Peoria, Illinois, and smaller actions, usually at Caterpillar dealerships in local communities. Similar to the Presbyterian Church that first began a process of corporate engagement with Caterpillar and other companies, JVP began pursuing shareholder activism by purchasing stock in Caterpillar as a way to influence the company's activities from the inside.

In 2005, the US Campaign to End the Occupation, a large coalition of US Palestine solidarity groups, voted in its Annual Conference to make the Caterpillar Campaign a top priority for the organization that year. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of the use of the company's equipment in ongoing international law and human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory and pressure the company to terminate sales of its equipment to the Israeli military. Organizing the national campaign included a three-pronged approach—grassroots, institutional, and legislative—to educate people on the company's complicity in war crimes and mobilize participants into the campaign. To help do this the US Campaign established a collection of online resources (fact sheets, tool kits, presentations, posters, etc.) to help activists start local divestment campaigns against Caterpillar and facilitate the development of the national campaign.[41]

The early divestment initiatives were important as they indicated a substantial interest among some activists to pursue Palestine solidarity through divestment campaigns. These initial activities—by US university students, Christian church members, community-based and coalition organizations—all helped set in motion a process for additional and better-strategized divestment projects in the future. In this way, the early divestment initiatives were a precursor to the mobilizing mechanisms that would develop more concretely after the call from Palestinian civil society was made in 2005. It was also these initial activities that helped incorporate divestment as a viable tactic within a collective action framework that would coalesce into a global movement in the years following the Palestinian BDS call.

INITIAL CALLS FOR A MORATORIUM ON RESEARCH FUNDING AND AN ACADEMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

In the midst of Israel's widespread invasion into the West Bank, on April 6, 2002, Hilary and Steven Rose, two British academics, published an open letter in *The Guardian* newspaper calling for a moratorium on collaborative research funding between the EU and Israel until Israel complied with UN

resolutions and entered into serious negotiations with the Palestinians.[42] The call was issued on the basis that any member country, or trading or research partner with member states, must adhere to human rights under the terms of the Framework of the European Research Area. The letter was originally signed by 123 other academics and by July of that year, the number had reached 700.[43]

After the Roses published their open letter, interest in the call spread as it was forwarded to more scholars around the world. In December 2002, the Administrative Council of the Pierre and Marie Curie University (Paris VI) passed a resolution similar to the Roses' call for a moratorium on EU research funding with Israel, and was later joined by two other universities—Grenoble and Montpellier III—that took similar positions.[44] John Docker of the Australian National University and Ghassan Hage of the University of Sydney organized a call for boycott that was quickly endorsed by nearly a 100 Australian scholars.[45]

Although the Australian call gained fewer signatures than the Roses call, it was significant for a number of reasons. The letter by the Roses and the resolutions passed in the French universities called for a moratorium on joint research funding due to the specific relationship between Europe and Israel on collaborative projects; however, Australia had no such funding relationship with Israeli academic institutions at the time. The call from Australia specifically called for an academic and cultural boycott, and made a comparison to the role of boycotts in bringing down apartheid in South Africa. Docker and Hage's call was similar to the Roses in that it drew attention to Israel's activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, specifically the intensification since 2000, although the call from Australia went further by contextualizing these activities in a larger historical program of Israeli colonization.[46] The distinction between the two calls illuminates a range of options that scholars were debating and strategizing for future organizing of academic boycotts.

Then, in 2005, the Council of Associations of University Teachers (AUT) in the United Kingdom passed a historic resolution that called for a boycott of the University of Haifa and Bar Ilan University in Israel for their active role in perpetuating Israeli state policies toward the Palestinians.[47] After intense pressure a special meeting was called and a month later the AUT membership overturned the vote, and the union set up a special commission to investigate international boycotts.[48] The following year the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education in the United Kingdom passed

a stronger resolution than the AUT, which criticized Israel's apartheid policies and encouraged its members to boycott Israeli academics and institutions that are complicit in Israel's policies. Although both resolutions were overturned at the time, the issue of academic boycott would be kept alive at union meetings in future years and would continue to be a top priority among a committed segment of union membership.

The critical engagements that scholars were undertaking in Palestine, Britain, France, Australia, and elsewhere would help shape mechanisms for mobilizing formidable academic boycott campaigns in various countries. Analyzing the Roses' initial open letter calling for a moratorium on joint research funding with Israel, one anti-BDS critic commented, "The petition brought about the globalization of the boycott."[49] Indeed, the early efforts by dedicated individuals were important for mobilizing collective action in the future. In addition, the early moratorium and boycott calls that were occurring at the same time as numerous divestment campaigns were similarly important in referring to human rights violations and the South Africa analogy. These recurring themes formed collective action frames that would be utilized throughout the emergence and development of the BDS movement.

OTHER EARLY BOYCOTT EFFORTS

In April 2001, a group of 35 Israelis and Jews of other nationalities called for a boycott of Israel. The call was issued six months after the second intifada began, as Israel had set in motion its brutal campaign to suppress the Palestinian uprising. The call referenced South Africa, noting the positive impact boycott had on bringing down the apartheid regime, and the hope that a similar effect could be produced from a boycott of Israel. The boycott asked people to endorse and circulate the call, immediately begin boycotting Israel on a personal level by not buying Israeli industrial and agricultural products or coming to Israel for vacation, and encouraging respective governments to sever economic relations and preferential trade agreements with Israel. The call gained the support of nearly 1,000 signatories from around the world.[50]

At the same time that the Roses published their open letter in *The Guardian* and divestment petitions were circulating at prominent US universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard, a petition for an artistic and cultural boycott was disseminated online. The petition asked artists to "…cancel all exhibitions and other cultural events that are scheduled to occur in Israel, to mobilize immediately and not allow the continuation of

the Israeli offensive to breed complacency." Similar to other calls for boycott, the appeal mentioned the positive role of artistic boycotts in South Africa. The petition garnered signatures in 18 countries.[51]

2004 CONFERENCE ON RESISTING ISRAELI APARTHEID: STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES

Shortly after the launch of PACBI in July 2004, a conference was held in December at the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London titled, "Resisting Israeli Apartheid: Strategies and Principles." The purpose of the conference was to rationalize the principles and ideas, refine arguments, and strategize how to mobilize participants and develop the boycott movement. The conference brought together a diverse group of speakers and participants that had been active in crafting early boycott efforts such as Hilary and Steven Rose, Ilan Pappe, Omar Barghouti, John Docker, Mona Baker, Nur Masalha, Lawrence Davidson, and Lisa Taraki. Although not yet forged into a comprehensive movement, people were meeting each other, forming networks, and sharing ideas and knowledge about boycott campaigns. Many of the conference speakers also drew parallels between the boycott movement that helped bring down the apartheid regime in South Africa and their hopes that a similar movement could bring change to Israel/Palestine.

Omar Barghouti, a founding member of PACBI, presented at the conference on the moral dimension of boycott as resistance. As Barghouti explained, this oppression takes shape in three main forms—the rejection of the Palestinian right of return, the military occupation of the Palestinian territories taken over in 1967, and the racial discrimination experienced by Palestinian Israeli citizens. The three forms of oppression that Barghouti described were outlined in the NGO Forum Declaration in 2001 in Durban and were ultimately formulated into the three demands enumerated in the formal call for boycott announced in 2005 by Palestinian civil society.

Overall, the conference contributed to the development of the movement in several ways. It was the first formal international gathering after PACBI made its official call for boycott of academic and cultural institutions of Israel in July 2004. This provided PACBI an international arena to explain its rationale for boycott, present powerful rebuttals to arguments against it, and promote the academic and cultural boycott globally. Although conferences had occurred in the past relating to Palestine, it was the first international conference of its kind that brought together numerous leading proponents of boycott

from various countries, and included over 200 participants.[52] The conference represented the coming together of boycott and divestment initiatives and was a key event in strengthening the dynamics of mobilization in the movement by providing a space for activists to meet and network with each other, share information, and strategize future organizing of BDS campaigns.

COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES IN THE BDS MOVEMENT

Political opportunities/constraints and mobilizing dynamics can explain when and why certain social movements emerge at particular times; however, these theoretical concepts pay little attention to the roles of culture and ideology in shaping causation and participant mobilization.[53] From the mid-1980s onward, social movement theorists starting considering these reasons, especially cultural aspects that may inform agency. These scholars said that previous theories of social movements overlooked the role of meanings and ideas in mobilization and failed to acknowledge the extent to which social movements are involved in the production of and struggle over meanings.[54]

To incorporate these considerations into the theoretical literature, Erving Goffman's concept of a "frame," which he defined as a "schemata of interpretation" for making sense of the world and our experiences, was adapted to the investigation of social movements.[55] In doing this, Snow and Benford say that collective action frames "assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists."[56] Collective action frames are constructed to articulate shared grievances and identify responsibility of a target for action.

In the BDS movement, activists frequently highlight Israel's violations of international law, its disregard for Palestinian human rights, and parallels are frequently made with the South African BDS movement. These themes are used to frame the movement so that it is understood who the target is (Israel), why it is being targeted (violations of international law), and a compelling historical example is made for overcoming injustice through a global boycotts, divestments, and sanctions movement (South African model).

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

As the BDS movement started to emerge, activists incorporated the frames of international law and human rights into the campaigns and initiatives they

organized. While the concept of human rights has increasingly been legally codified and protected, and as such, international human rights law is a type of international law, in the BDS movement, the terms "international law" and "human rights" often appear as separate frames, without clearly identifying the relationship between the two. To legal scholars this may seem imprecise; however, the purpose for consistently referring to both international law and human rights is to shed light on a variety of Israel's policies and practices toward the Palestinians and on a range of consequences that Palestinians experience as a result.

Similar to other social movements that have utilized these familiar collective action frames, they have helped articulate grievances of the movement and identify targets for responsibility. Regular references to Israel's indifference to international law and principles of human rights have been purposefully and strategically used by activists to convey information, raise awareness, and mobilize participants into the movement.

The framing of the movement in this way was evident in the early BDS organizing efforts. These themes were incorporated into the NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action in Durban in 2001, and in early divestment initiatives on university campuses and in churches. The initial call from Britain, and later in France, for a moratorium on joint research funding between Israel and the European Union was based on human rights terms as part of the research agreement. Similarly, many of the activist resources that the US Campaign to End the Occupation complied online to help activists start local divestment campaigns focused on breaches of international law and violations of human rights by the Caterpillar corporation and the state of Israel.

In addition, international law played heavily into the actions of the UN to resume its Emergency Session and condemn Israel's construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory. Likewise, the significance of international law guided the pursuit and eventual Advisory Opinion on the wall by the ICJ in 2004. While the recurring themes were utilized by activists in the early years of BDS organizing, the ICJ Advisory Opinion was seen by many as a landmark for the movement. As many previous initiatives had invoked international law as a reason to support boycott of Israel, the Advisory Opinion only validated and reinforced these already existing frames of reference to those involved in boycott initiatives.

Activists highlighted Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian human rights as a way to articulate grievances and provide rationale for

supporting and/or participating in BDS campaigns against Israel. In this way, these collective action frames were important for the emergence and development of the BDS movement because they played a role in mobilizing activists and helped gain support for the movement. The framing of the movement through international law and Palestinian human rights was useful in early BDS organizing efforts and increasingly referred to in future calls for BDS, particularly in the Palestinian calls for boycott in 2004 and 2005.

SOUTH AFRICA

The South African frame of reference has been deployed in a twofold fashion in the BDS movement. First, the apartheid comparison is made to emphasize the racial and ethnic motivations behind Israel's settler colonialism. This frame is utilized in terms of justification for BDS campaigns, that is, BDS campaigns are a necessary response to apartheid conditions in Israel/Palestine. For example, in the Declaration of the NGO Forum in Durban in 2001, Israel was declared an apartheid state. The text of the NGO Forum in Durban strategically referenced South Africa's struggle against apartheid and provided many examples of Israel's violations of international law and human rights, illustrating Israel's "brand of apartheid."[57]

The second frame refers to the positive role that BDS campaigns played, as part of the antiapartheid movement, in bringing major changes to South Africa. The second frame is used as a tool for mobilization given the positive influence of the historical South African model. In his speech in 2000 Francis Boyle cited the antiapartheid movement in South Africa as a model US students should consider in developing divestment campaigns against Israel. When Docker and Hage circulated a call among Australian scholars for academic boycott, it referenced boycotts in South Africa. The boycott call by Israeli-Jews and Jews of other nationalities in 2001, and the artistic boycott call disseminated in the following year, both referred to the positive role of boycotts in bringing down apartheid. At the strategizing and organizing conference held at SOAS in London in 2004, many of the conference speakers drew parallels between South Africa and Israel/Palestine and expressed their hopes that a similar movement could develop to make positive changes in the Middle East.

Similar to the frames of international law and human rights, parallels to boycott campaigns in the South African antiapartheid movement were important for the emergence and development of the BDS movement. Through constant reference to these themes, activists were able to raise awareness of the

movement and its targets, justify action through BDS campaigns, and mobilize participants into the movement. The initial framing of the movement through these lenses also played a role in constructing how the movement would be framed in the future. As important principles embraced through the development of the global movement, the themes would become part of a template that nearly every BDS campaign in the future would draw on in some way.

THE PALESTINIAN GLOBAL CALL FOR BDS IN 2005

Since 2000, Palestinians and border-crossing solidarity activists have adopted a boycott repertoire through the creation of various BDS campaigns and initiatives. The official BDS call in 2005 represented the culmination of previous Palestinian boycott efforts, from the groundbreaking work at the NGO Forum in Durban in 2001 to the formal establishment of the Palestinian academic and cultural campaign and its associated global call in 2004. One year after the historic Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice that declared Israel's construction of the wall illegal under international law, the official Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions was issued to the world.

The BDS statement calls on "international civil society organizations and people of conscience" to enact boycott initiatives, and pressure their respective governments to sanction Israel until it complies with international law and respects principles of human rights.[58] Over 170 Palestinian organizations, unions, political parties, and coalitions endorsed the call. The call for BDS represents the three main segments of the Palestinian population around the world—those living in the occupied territories, Palestinians in the diaspora (including refugees), and Arab Palestinian citizens in Israel. Similarly, the three requirements made in the BDS call represent the main demands made by each of these groups. These conditions for Israel include

1. ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.[59]

Much of what was written in the Palestinian call for BDS had been previously articulated in early boycott and divestment efforts. The Advisory Opinion was referenced and helped international law become a central frame that activists would strategically deploy in future BDS campaigns. Following the consistency of already existing boycott initiatives, both Palestinian calls for boycott also cited the South African BDS example and emphasized the positive role that boycotts played in creating change in the country.

The comprehensive Palestinian call for BDS also built on and extended the previous border-crossing divestment and boycott initiatives that were launched by individuals and small groups around the world. These initial mobilizations by Palestinians and Palestine solidarity activists helped establish dynamics for mobilizing participants into the movement that would become more concretely developed after the formal Palestinian calls for boycott in 2004 and 2005. The global movement for BDS that clearly took off in the subsequent years can be traced back to the hard work and foundation built by the original campaigners. These early organizing efforts were the impetus for developing a movement around a collective action repertoire of boycott that emerged following the official Palestinian call for BDS in 2005.

CONCLUSION

Although boycott is not a new tactic used in the Palestinian struggle, the emergence of the current BDS movement can be traced to a variety of processes from 2000 onward. Using social movement theory analytical tools of political constraints and opportunities, mobilizing dynamics, and collective action frames, this chapter has argued that a number of factors led to the emergence of a global BDS movement. Far from being objective historical conditions, these factors were interpreted as moments for action by those seeking to build a movement. During this time, boycott developed as a tactical repertoire for organization, and a border-crossing BDS movement for justice to Palestinians started to materialize.

In particular, this chapter has posited that the political context of the Oslo process, factional fragmentation, transformations within Palestinian civil society, the construction of the wall, and the subsequent ICJ Advisory Opinion were interpreted by activists as opportunities for mobilization. The NGO Forum in 2001, the early divestment initiatives, the initial calls for a moratorium on joint research funding and academic boycott, Palestinian boycott appeals, and the establishment of the academic and cultural boycott in

Palestine all led to further mobilizations in the years to come. These dynamics, along with consistent use of specific themes such as the comparison with South Africa, the application of international law, and human rights violations, helped establish and shape a global movement that would take off after the Palestinian BDS call in 2005.

Using a social movement theoretical framework can help identify a range of causal factors that led to the emergence of the BDS movement, and lessons from the BDS case show that the analytical tools of social movement theory can be useful for tracing how and why the movement came into existence. Political opportunities can shed light on the structural context in which the movement emerged and collective action frames are useful for understanding the meaning production of the movement. That stated, the BDS case shows that consideration of the mobilizing dynamics of the movement is key to understanding how the movement has been organized from the beginning as these processes contain contextualized clues for understanding how the movement developed after the Palestinian civil society global call for boycott in 2005. In the range of BDS activities that took place between 2000 and 2005, the organizational seeds of the movement were planted, which were then further built on and modified as the movement progressed and became more coordinated. It was these initial efforts by activists that helped form a global movement that would become evident in the years to come.

Since 2005, the movement has expanded and developed. More BDS campaigns have been initiated, as activists build on the initial organizing of the movement, some of which has been discussed in this chapter. The 2005 global call for boycott by Palestinian civil society organizations facilitated a direction for border-crossing Palestine solidarity activism that helped coalesce various BDS activities into a movement that were hitherto largely uncoordinated ad-hoc endeavors. Additionally, Palestinians have created a Boycott National Committee and organized an annual boycott conference each year in Palestine, which has helped further root the movement in Palestinian principles and ideas and advance the boycott among Palestinians. The development of the movement after 2005 in part was possible because of the formative period that gave rise to its existence, and has laid the groundwork for a growing BDS movement across borders.

NOTES

1. For an overview of causal factors that can contribute to social movement emergence, see D. McAdam, J. McCarthy, and M. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

2. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982); Tarrow, *Struggling to Reform: Social Movements and Policy Change during Cycles of Protest* (Ithaca, NY: Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1983) and *Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
3. W. Pearlman, *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 126, Ebook; Accessed at: http://ebooks.cambridge.org.
4. J. Hilal, "The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no.3 (Spring 2010), 26.
5. Pearlman, *Violence,* 136.
6. Seventh Arab League Summit Conference, "Resolution on Palestine," Rabat, Morocco October 28, 1974; Accessed at: http://unispal.un.org.
7. In Area A, Palestinians manage civil administration and security. Area B is a mix of Palestinian civil administration and Israeli security. Israel fully controls civil administration and security matters in Area C. In total, Israel oversees 82.8 percent of the West Bank, while Palestinians are only in full control of the remaining 17.2 percent. See "Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," Article XI, Map No. 1, Appendix 6 to Annex I (Washington, DC, September 28, 1995); Accessed at: www.mfa.gov.il.
8. Amnesty International, "Israel and the Occupied Territories: The Issue of Settlements must Be Addressed According to International Law," Amnesty International AI Index: MDE 15/085/2003 (September 8, 2003); Accessed at: www.amnesty.org.
9. I am aware of the debate surrounding the concept of "civil society"; however, this chapter applies the term "Palestinian civil society" as used by Palestinians in the BDS movement, and thus includes associations, grassroots organizations, professional NGOs, trade unions, charities, youth groups, etc.
10. J. Hilal, "Civil Society in Palestine: A Literature Review." Accessed at: http://foundationforfuture.org.
11. H. Jamjoum, "The Global Campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel," in *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada*, ed. M. Carter Hallward and J. Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 138.
12. In this chapter, the term "wall" is used for the structure that Israel is building, as this is the label adopted by the UNGA and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in their Advisory Opinion on the matter. See ICJ, Reports 2004, Advisory Opinion, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," July 9, 2004, 164 paragraph 67 and 170 paragraph 82; Accessed at: www.icj-cij.org.
13. UNGA, A/ES-10/242, "Letter dated 15 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly," October 15, 2003; A/ES-10/243, "Letter dated 15 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly," October 15, 2003; A/ES-10/244, "Letter dated 16 October 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly," October 20, 2003; all accessed at http://unispal.un.org/.
14. UNGA, A/ES-10/248, "Report of the Secretary-General Prepared Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution ES-10/13," November 24, 2003, 5; Accessed at: http://unispal.un.org/.

15. Ibid., 5.
16. UNGA, Resolution ES-10/14, "Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory," December 8, 2003, 3; Accessed at: http://unispal.un.org/.
17. ICJ, "How the Court Works." Accessed at: http://www.icj-cij.org.
18. ICJ, "The Court." Accessed at: www.icj-cij.org; UN, "The UN in Brief: How the UN Works, The International Court of Justice." Accessed at: www.un.org.
19. UNGA, Press Release GA/10216, "General Assembly Adopts Text Requesting International Court of Justice to Issue Advisory Opinion on West Bank Separation Wall," December 8, 2003; Accessed at: http://unispal.un.org/.
20. ICJ, Reports 2004, Advisory Opinion, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," July 9, 2004, 184 paragraph 120; Accessed at: www.icj-cij.org.
21. Ibid., paragraph 121; Accessed at: www.icj-cij.org.
22. Ibid., 189–192 paragraphs 132–134; Accessed at: www.icj-cij.org.
23. Ibid., 195 paragraph 142; Accessed at: www.icj-cij.org.
24. UN, Charter of the United Nations, "Chapter V: The Security Council," Article 24 and "Chapter IV: The General Assembly" Articles 10, 11, 13, and 14; Accessed at: www.un.org.
25. The tenth emergency session of the UNGA was resumed at the request of Arab states, who then submitted two resolutions for the UNGA to consider and vote on with respect to Israel's wall. Of the 18 speakers who made statements prior to the passing of the UNGA resolutions, nearly all condemned Israel's building of a wall in occupied territory. This included the representatives of the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, the OIC, as well as Afghanistan (as vice chairman of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People), South Africa, Indonesia, Cuba, Senegal, and Pakistan. The following resolution in October demanding Israel stop and reverse construction of the wall was approved with 144 votes in favor to 4 against (Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, United States), with 12 abstentions. The resolution in December requesting as Advisory Opinion on the wall from the ICJ passed with 90 in favor to 8 against (Australia, Ethiopia, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 74 abstentions.
26. Madjdal Editorial Team, "The ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Wall: An Alternative Road Map," *al-Majdal* (Autumn 2004); Accessed at: www.badil.org.
27. S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 123.
28. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 23, Ebook, LSE.
29. Ibid., 312.
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31. Ibid., 57–59.
32. H. Abdel-Shafi, H. Ashrawi, M. Barghouti et al. "Urgent Call to World Civil Society: Break the Conspiracy of Silence, Act Before It Is too Late," March 29, 2002;
33. "Boycott Israel to Enforce Respect and Implementation of International Law, Human Rights, and UN Resolutions," 2002; Accessed at: www.badil.org.
34. PACBI, "History." Accessed at: http://pacbi.org.
35. Ibid., "Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel," July 6, 2004; Accessed at: http://pacbi.org.
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PART III

COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES, MINORITIES, AND THE POLITICS OF CONTENTION

10

CONTENTIOUS COPTS: THE EMERGENCE, SUCCESS, AND DECLINE OF THE MASPERO YOUTH MOVEMENT IN EGYPT

Magdalena C. Delgado

INTRODUCTION

On October 9, 2011, a group of 200 primarily Coptic Christians marched from the Shubra district in Cairo to Maspero Square, demonstrating against the demolition of Saint George's church in the Aswan province in Upper Egypt a few weeks prior.[1] What was intended to culminate in a peaceful sit-in on Maspero Square turned into violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces, as the latter beat protesters with canes and crushed others by driving through crowds with armored vehicles. The clashes, which left 26 people dead and many more injured, caused domestic and international outrage and has popularly been described as "the Maspero Massacre."[2]

The demonstration was organized by the Maspero Youth Union—a social movement formed in March 2011 by activist Copts in Egypt with the aim to see Coptic rights enforced through a secular, democratic Egyptian government.[3] At the time of the demonstration, Maspero Youth Union enjoyed great popularity: its membership exceeded 15,000 people; its opinion was sought on all Coptic issues; and statements from its members featured prominently in the press.[4] These aspects explain the large scale of the October 9, 2011 protests. While neither protests arranged by Copts nor Coptic movements are unprecedented in Egypt, the level of success vis-a-vis membership numbers and popularity of Maspero Youth Union is.

This chapter argues that the success of Maspero Youth Union can be understood within the context of the January 25, 2011, revolution in Egypt. More specifically, it employs Political Opportunity Theory to explain that the initial phases of the said revolution were marked by shifting alliances and divisions within the elite, which gave Copts the sense of having increased access to political participation and the support of influential allies. Altogether, these conditions fostered high levels of mobilization within the Maspero Youth Union, allowing for the movement to reach the level of success that it did. The decline of the Maspero Youth Union following the Maspero Massacre is explained with reference to the repressive measures with which the October 9 protests were met.

The chapter proceeds in four main parts. First, a brief historical overview highlights that sporadic cases of contention have existed in Egypt since the late nineteenth century, none of which were sustained, however, to reach the level of intensity and magnitude of the Maspero Youth Union. Second, it presents a brief discussion about the field of Contentious Politics from which Political Opportunity Theory stems, in order to situate the Maspero Youth Union within that literature. Third, the dimensions of political opportunity are explicated with reference to Maspero Youth Union. Fourth, it evaluates that the explanatory power of Political Opportunity Theory is strong, as far as the Maspero Youth Union's formation, success, and decline is concerned. It additionally points out that the ever-fluid alliances between various factions of the Egyptian society and elite make it difficult to assess whether Political Opportunity Theory's explanatory value is indeed strong or rather coincidental. If the latter, the theory's predictive value becomes questionable.

In conclusion, it is suggested that by conducting cross-case comparisons on social movements in Egypt, it is possible to determine whether fluid alliances have an inhibiting effect on social movements' development. This would also enable a more informed assessment of Political Opportunity Theory's explanatory value in the context of social movements in Egypt.

FROM POPE CYRIL V TO THE MASPERO YOUTH UNION: A HISTORY OF COPTS' POLITICAL ACTIVISM

For most of Egypt's history, examples of Coptic Christians (religious authorities and civilians alike) taking critical stances against the ruling authority have been rare, as has contentious behavior on their part. The few examples that do exist include revolts against British colonizers in the late nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries, which were vehemently backed by the then Coptic pope Cyril V,[5] despite the support among some Copts who cooperated with the British.[6] The Copts participated in these revolts alongside Muslims in the context of their common pursuit of nationalist and liberal principles, whose institutionalization depended entirely on ridding Egypt of Britain's dominance. As Makari (2007) perceptively highlights, it was the unifying context of the 1919 revolution in Egypt that facilitated cooperation between Christians and Muslims by diminishing their respective concerns about sectarian differences between each other.[7] It can furthermore be thought that the Copts' impetus for participating in the rebellion leading up to the 1919 revolution was heightened by their prospect of having a legitimate stake in the political process that would, in theory, be a guaranteed result from the new political system. Indeed, Copts at the time had reason to be optimistic about these prospects for, as Makari notes, the Wafd party which gained prominence leading up to the 1919 revolution and was the ruling party through the 1930s, not only encouraged political pluralism rhetorically, it also did so in practice, by including Coptic ministers in its cabinet and other prominent positions of political power.[8] Political pluralism in postindependence Egypt's was short-lived, however, and so were prospects of Coptic political participation. By the 1930s the Wafd party was largely seen to be facilitating the continuation of British presence in the country, which it had earlier so vehemently rejected. This acquiescence was pinnacled by the Wafd Party's implicit acceptance of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 between the Farouk government and the British.[9] Following the 1952 coup, the Wafd Party was dissolved by Nasser and his Free Officers.

Little, if any, tension occurred between Church and state in Nasserist Egypt, due partly to the fear that the Free Officers' leader inspired among aspiring dissidents, and partly due to, then, pope Kyrillos's[10] markedly disengaged approach to national politics.[11] As Pennington (2006) notes, the patriarch was rather concerned with facilitating reform of the Coptic Church. To that effect, the Church under Kyrillos's leadership ended its historic isolation from other Christian Churches, increased the level and quality of priestly education, initiated postgraduate study in Coptic history, art, and social science, and facilitated monks' work on development projects, including building a new cathedral in Cairo. Such material achievements resulted in increased religious feelings among Egypt's Coptic Christians and mobilized the youth in particular. The relatively small number of young Copts who had been

politically active in the Egyptian left in the 40s and early 50s, diminished due to the Church's hostility to the political left. Political involvement on the part of Pope Kyrillos was by and large limited to his support of Nasser's government, when the latter needed formal support from religious leaders.[12]

Kyrillos's successor, Pope Shenouda,[13] was by comparison outspoken about his opposition to what he viewed as structural discrimination against Copts in Egypt's political, educational, and societal spheres. He was also particularly vigilant about the sympathy toward Islamists and Islamic influences on politics and law discernible in Sadat's discourse, somethingthat, under Nasser, had been nonexistent. Various sporadic episodes of clashes between Copts and Muslims, which to Pope Shenouda were manifestations of the said discrimination, culminated in the Church's issuing of a strongly worded statement condemning the government's perceived ignoring of discrimination against Copts.[14] Pope Shenouda's public opposition eventually resulted in his being sentenced to 1213 days of house arrest in a remote monastery. [15]

Jason Casper, an Egypt-based writer and researcher who has conducted extensive primary research on activism among Egypt's Christian minority, shows that from the early 2000s, political activism started to emanate from the national Kifayah movement[16] of which Coptic Catholic George Ishaq was a co-leader. Against the political corruption that characterized Hosni Mubarak's presidency as well as the rumored power transfer to his son Gamal Mubarak, Kifayah staged various protests for political reform, in which Copts and non-Copts took part. Among those involved in Kifayah was Hani Jaziri, a Christian Copt, who initiated the Copts for Egypt movement in 2009, which led what Jaziri claims to be "the first Coptic protest outside the walls of the church"[17] to demonstrate against the "Nag Hammadi Massacre" of January 7, 2010, in which eight Copts were killed during a drive-by shooting following a Christmas midnight mass at the Nag Hammadi Cathedral, over earlier allegations that a 12-year-old Muslim girl was raped by a Christian man.[18]

Another movement, the Coptic Youth Front, formed in November 2010 after clashes between police and young Copts in the Umraniyyah neighborhood in Giza, in which Coptic youth threw rocks at security forces in protest over police's halting of a church-building project, which resulted in the shooting and killing of two young Copts.[19] Shortly before the outbreak of the January 25 Revolution, members from Copts for Egypt went from Cairo to Alexandria to protest against a suicide-bombing in Alexandria's al-Qiddissin Church, and the perceived lack of security that could have prevented it.

Archbishop Arweis, a leading Coptic cleric, expressed his discontent about the lack of protection for the Church and said that "the security services wanted to blame a suicide bomber instead of a car bomb so they could write it off as something carried out by a lone attacker."[20] This event also motivated the group Copts for Egypt, in conjunction with a non-Coptic-based activist group, Egyptians against Discrimination, to organize daily protests on the streets of Cairo that symbolically concluded on Coptic Christmas, January 7.

As Casper's insightful analysis shows, these outbreaks of contention in Egypt's recent modern history tell the story of a sporadic, yet consistent, struggle on the part of Coptic Christians in Egypt and that can together be thought to have "planted the seeds which sprouted in the 25 January Revolution."[21] While many Copts remained hesitant to join the Revolution, due in part, perhaps, to Pope Shenouda III's initial discouragement of Coptic participation in protests,[22] one of the characteristic images displayed by news outlets worldwide depicts Muslims and Christians on Tahrir Square, united in their calls for Mubarak to end his reign.[23] Apart from encouraging signs of unity across sectarian divides, such images demonstrate Copts' active participation in the political activities.

Casper suggests that while sporadic instances of activism are evident in the immediate lead-up to the January 25 Revolution and throughout its development, it was the church attacks in Atfih in March 2011 that truly sparked Coptic activism. These attacks stimulated masses of Copts to spontaneously stage a sit-in at Maspero Square, where they, according to Casper, "got a taste for activism, as they demonstrated side by side with those used to leading protest."[24] A few months later in May 2011, following a church burning in Cairo's Imbaba neighborhood, Copts staged another sit-in at Maspero Square, this one organized entirely by activists, however, namely, the Maspero Youth Union, who apparently claimed to represent the entire second sit-in at the square.[25]

Maspero Youth Union, referred to in Egyptian media as "a Coptic Rights Group,"[26] was established in March 2011 by activist Copts who previously formed part of other Coptic Youth movements mentioned above (Coptic Youth Front and Copts for Egypt). The second sit-in at Maspero Square gained significant popularity for Copts in Egypt and among the Diaspora via lectures, media statements, and social networking sites. This was largely made possible by the support lent to the group by two prominent Coptic priests: Fr. Mityas and Fr. Philopater. Its membership quickly reached above 15,000

members, and there was popular demand for the group's stance on all issues Coptic as they related to the Revolution.

The popularity of the Maspero Youth Union would continue until October 9, 2011. On that day, it organized for a crowd of 200 primarily Coptic Christians to march from Cairo's Shubra district to Maspero Square. While the march specifically protested the demolition of Saint George's church in the Aswan province a few months prior, it was—much like the outbreaks of contention in Egypt's recent modern history, described before—a protest demanding justice on broader issues of civic rights for Copts. The march did not end with a peaceful sit-it on Maspero Square, as planned. Instead, it culminated in violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces, which left 26 people dead and many more injured. The events of October 9, 2011, which have since been dubbed "the Maspero Massacre"[27] fractured the Maspero Youth Union into 20–30 smaller groups, including Coalition for Egypt's Copts, the Martyr's Blood Movement, the October 9 Movement. and Union of Families of Maspero Martyrs. Although the Maspero Youth Union still exists and its position on various political issues of contemporary Egypt continues to feature in the media, it has, along with other Coptic movements, been largely silent after the Maspero Massacre.

Why did Coptic political activism take full force following the church attacks in Aftih and Imbaba in March and May 2011, and not after any other episodes of contention in Egypt's modern history, not least the bomb attack on Alexandria's al-Qissidin Church on January 1, 2010, which caused a higher death toll than the two previous church attacks combined and was then considered "the worst attack against Egypt's Christian minority in recent memory?".[28] Each event was unique in its own right, of course, but common for all three was a prevalent sense among Copts that the police and military forces were not sufficiently forceful in their attempts to protect Copts and their places of worship.[29] One could therefore assume that all three events would have had similar aftermaths. Yet only the attacks in Aftih and Imbaba led to large-scale sit-ins at Maspero Square and, more importantly for the purposes of thischapter, only those attacks prompted the formation of the largest and most successful social movement for Coptic rights that Egypt has ever seen.

This chapter argues that it was the structural changes exposed by the January 25 Revolution and particularly the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011, that paved the way for a heightened sense of agency and urgency among Copts, which ultimately made for the success of the Maspero

Youth Union. The chapter substantiates this argument with reference to Political Opportunity Theory. Before embarking on this task, however, it gives a brief discussion about the field of Contentious Politics, from which Political Opportunity Theory stems, in order to contextualize the Maspero Youth Union within its literature.

ARE THE COPTS CONTENTIOUS?

At the very outset of their efforts to establish an interdisciplinary field of Contentious Politics, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly (1996) emphasized their conviction that different forms of contention, which had hitherto been studied within separate subfields, all formed part of contentious politics and should be studied together.[30] This later led to the following, specific definition of "contentious politics" as

> episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.[31]

McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly go on to specify the meaning of key terms in that definition: "episodic," they write, "excludes regularly scheduled events such as votes, parliamentary elections, associated meetings, although such events can become springboards for contentious politics.".[32] "Public," they explain, "excludes claim making that takes place within well-bounded organizations."[33] They add that contentious politics focuses specifically on having manifestly political ramifications.[34] In its specificity, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's definition remains inclusive, and can therefore include contention in various forms, including social movements, demonstrations, strikes, riots, protests, ethnic conflicts, and revolutions. As the definition above alludes to, and as McAdam, Tarrow, and Till posit, contention itself begins when people make collective claims on other people, claimsthat, if realized, would affect those others' interests. Contention therefore depends on mobilization, on creation of means and capacities for collective interaction.

Judging from these criteria, contention among Coptic Christians in Egypt goes back much further than the January 25 Revolution and would include the sporadic episodes of contention that occurred against British

colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the Copts' more consistent struggle of the twenty-first century. In this sense, contention among Copts cannot be explained exclusively in the context of Egypt's revolutionary events of recent years. One way to differentiate the Maspero Youth Union from previous outbreaks of contention among Copts is to identify it as a social movement. Definitions of social movements are plentiful,[35] but Tarrow's definition suffices for explanatory purposes, as it captures their essence. He defines social movements as "collective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarities in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities."[36] For a group to identify as a social movement, it must then comprise the four empirical properties of that definition, which are: collective challenge, common purpose, social solidarity, and sustained interaction.

All of those properties can be found in the Maspero Youth Union. That group staged numerous protests and sit-ins in demonstration of the authority's discrimination against Copts and, in doing so, posed a collective challenge against authorities. Its members collectively expressed their aim to see Coptic rights enforced through a secular, democratic government and, in this way, they displayed the common purpose of their contention. What is more, the shared Coptic identity of the members of the Maspero Youth Union implicitly fostered a sense of social solidarity between them. Finally and most importantly, the group has (and continues to have) a formal organizational structure, headed by its general coordinator, Andrawus Iwaydah, who communicates with the union's various committees and implements decisions voted on in the political office.[37] This structure institutionalizes and sustains the union's collective actions.

Defining Maspero Youth Union as a social movement, then, sets it apart from outbreaks of contention that occurred among Copts prior to the revolution, such as protests. Yet other Coptic social movements existed prior to the January 25 Revolution, including Copts for Egypt and Coptic Youth Front. The formation of the Maspero Youth Union in March 2011 cannot, then, be accounted for entirely with reference to revolutionary events. One significant aspect in which the union was different from social movements preceding it was in its level of success vis-a-vis membership numbers and popularity. Additionally, there was a unprecedented intensity that came to be expressed during the demonstrations. The remainder of this chapter demonstrates how the success of the Maspero Youth Union was made possible through the January 25 Revolution, by drawing on Political Opportunity Theory.

UNDERSTANDING MASPERO YOUTH UNION'S SUCCESS THROUGH POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY THEORY

A focus within social movement studies on movements as dependent variables has led to the conceptualization of "political opportunity theory," a concept typically accredited to Peter Eisinger (1973) and his work on black urban politics in America.[38] More specifically, Eisinger's work found that black protests in 1960s America were less likely to occur in closed political environments where protesters had reason to expect their protests to be met with violence, than in those political environments where protest demands stood a chance of being met with official tolerance in the form of, for example, a hearing in a public council.[39] Applied by a number of scholars after him, political opportunity theory is often mentioned in the context of Tocqueville's statement that "the most perilous moment for a bad government is one where it seeks to mend its ways."[40] As that statement indicates, political opportunity theory argues that the success or failure of a social movement is primarily determined by political opportunity and constraint. More specifically, it posits that movement formation is encouraged under certain conditions, causing political actors to collectively take the opportune time to push through a social change. Tarrow (1998) posits that such conditions come as a result of increasing access, shifting alignments, divided elites, influential allies, and finally, repression and facilitation.[41] While these dimensions of changing opportunity need not all happen at the same time, they can too. For example, changing alignments and divided elite can often be found simultaneously. Given the contingency of social movements' life cycle on political opportunity, Tarrow argues that social movements must necessarily be analyzed in the context of the larger political structures within which they operate. Each of the five dimensions of political opportunity theory are explicated in detail next, with reference to the Maspero Youth Union.

INCREASING ACCESS

Increasing access to political participation, according to Peter Eisinger, stimulates movement formation particularly in democratizing and/or liberalizing societies, and rarely in societies offering either full or no access to political participation. Where citizens enjoy full access, they are aware that they can assert influence through institutional processes and so have no need to become contentious, and where citizens' political participation is barred, they see limited benefits in becoming contentious in the first place.[42] In democratizing and/or

liberalizing societies where political structures and institutions are undergoing changes, however, citizens are able to conceptualize a real opportunity for their queries to be heard, considered, and reflected in policy.

Around the time of the formation of the Maspero Youth Union, Egypt had just entered the second phase of the January 25 Revolution, which was marked by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assuming control of the country, following Hosni Mubarak's ouster on February 11, 2011. Probably more than any other revolutionary milestone, Mubarak's ouster gave Copts a sense of achievement, a feeling that their pleas for a democratic Egypt were heard and acted upon. From the second revolutionary wave onward, Egypt was democratizing—rhetorically, at least. Immediately after Mubarak's ouster, the SCAF adopted a democratic discourse and held elections.[43] Its communiqué aired live on television shortly after its assumption of power promised "to hand power to an elected, civilian government."[44] The SCAF also took some practical measures to reinforce its commitment to democracy. One example of this is its creation of an official SCAF Facebook page[45] six days following its assumption to power, which was to serve the purpose of "communicating with the Egyptian people."[46] From that media outlet, SCAF issued various communiqués announcing, among other things, its desire to build bridges with the Egyptian youth. It also communicated with Egyptian citizens online.[47] Egyptian protesters were seemingly receptive to SCAF's message: recognizing the vital role that the army played in facilitating the resignation of Mubarak,[48] protesters hailed the army with chants such as "the army and people are one hand."[49]

This mutual sense of dependency and purpose between SCAF and protesters, however fluid it later turned out to be, was reinforced by images of General Fanary making a military salute to honor the revolution's martyrs, which appeared in newspapers and on television, and was sold in poster format on Tahrir Square.[50] Other official institutions also sent out the message that they supported the democratization process: the Egyptian Cabinet and Interior Ministry, for example, created Facebook pages,[51] through which they interacted with citizens; and the Cabinet additionally opened an official Twitter account.[52] For these institutions as well as for the SCAF, such initiatives were unprecedented.

Of course, similar promises about a democratizing Egypt were made by Mubarak throughout his presidency and in the last moments of his time in office. For example, during his swearing-in ceremony in 2005, Mubarak promised to "[…] work together with the next parliament to bring about

more political and economic reforms to enhance democracy and to liberalize the country's economy."[53] And similarly, in the middle of the revolution, Mubarak stated that he was "aware of [the protesters'] legitimate aspirations [including] a desire for more democracy, an improvement in the standard of living and resistance to poverty and corruption" and was "[…] working for [those] things every day."[54]

In sum, Egypt's elite delivered promises of an imminent transition to democracy long before Mubarak's toppling, as well as in its aftermath. However, only in the latter period did Egyptians galvanize in their support of the elite; and, more importantly for the purposes of this paper, only during that time did the Maspero Youth Union form and thrive. This can be explained with reference to Peter Eisinger's suggestion that increasing access to political participation stimulates movement formation in democratizing societies, and not in societies in which citizens' political participation is barred: the victorious overthrow of Mubarak signaled to Copts (and Egyptians in general) that their queries for democracy were reacted upon within the elite. Upon that realization, prompted as it was by the toppling of Mubarak, Copts no longer saw themselves as barred from political participation but rather as forming part of a democratizing society. One example that speaks to this assumed sentiment among Copts, is Sally Moore's reflection of the 2011 revolution as being "[…] a revolution of the people. It's a new phase for the Muslim Brotherhood as well." By ending her sentence with "as well,"[55] Moore, a member of the Coptic Christian community and protester during the 2011 revolution, implicitly suggested that she expected a post-Mubarak Egypt to herald in desired change for both Copts and Muslims.

SHIFTING ALIGNMENTS AND DIVIDED ELITES

The second dimension of changing opportunity has to do with shifting alignments in the political sphere, in the form of a coalition breakup or seemingly tense relations between enduring alliances. These can serve as a stimulants for contention and encourage even resource-poor groups to take the risks of collective action.[56] Dissidents deem the risk worth taking because insecurity and uncertainty within government structures makes the latter seem easier for dissidents to penetrate, than would be a unified government. The third dimension of changing opportunity follows the same logic: divided elites encourage outbreaks of contention, and may additionally encourage portions of the elite that are out of power to seize the role of "tribunes of the people," for example to serve as the protectors of the rights of people.[57]

In Egypt, the SCAF's break from Mubarak on January 25, 2011 was crucially symbolic and telling of a shift in a hitherto seemingly unbreakable alliance between the president and the armed forces.[58] The examples drawn on in the earlier section lend themselves to explaining exactly how Egyptians—Copts and non-Copts alike—embraced this shift in alliance, and indeed also how generals such as Fanary took on the role that Tarrow describes as "tribunes of the people." Important though this shift in alliance between SCAF and Mubarak was, it alone does not account for the perception among Copts that uncertainty existed in their government. Shortly after SCAF's assumption of power, four important figures of Mubarak's regime—former interior minister, Habib el-Adly, former minister of housing, Ahmed Maghrabi, former minister of tourism, H. E. Zuheir Garana, and steel tycoon, Ahmed Ezz—were detained.[59] The following month, Ahmed Shafik who had assumed the post of interim prime minister stepped down and was replaced by Essam Sharaf. Together, these events confirmed to protesters the uncertainty and divisions within elite ranks that had first become clear to them the day of Mubarak's toppling. What is more, the Egyptian constitution was all the while in a state of fluidity and was only passed by the majority in late March 2011, adding also a general sense of uncertainty as far as Egypt's political affairs were concerned.

Similar to the discussion about increasing access, events which took place in revolutionary Egypt were not necessarily unprecedented. Uncertainty in the government and divisions within the elite also existed during Mubarak's presidency. One example is the power struggle that played out between old and new guards inside the National Democratic Party[60] prior to Egypt's parliamentary elections in November 2011. The powerful business elite—the "new guards"—whose representatives dominated the cabinet under Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif were opposed by the cabinet's "old guards," who publicly criticized the former's neoliberal economic course. All the while, the army implicitly supported the "old guard," and indirectly opposed the prime minister and his cabinet.[61] Presumably, Copts did not view prerevolutionary elite divisions such as these as significant enough for protesters to penetrate them, and only after a significant shift in the elite (i.e., Mubarak's removal) did this seem realistic. Following Tarrow's logic, one can presume that protesters at Maspero deemed the risk of protest worth taking as the elite seemed sufficiently divided at that point.

INFLUENTIAL ALLIES

The fourth dimension of opportunity concerns influential allies. Tarrow notes that having influential alliances, particularly within the government,

can stimulate contention by providing protesters with a certain sense of security or guarantee that their pleas will be exposed to decision makers by sources whose opinions are taken into account by decision makers. What is more, Tarrow points out that influential allies have proved particularly important in nondemocratic societies, where new movements have limited access to few internal resources. In authoritarian and repressive environments, he explains, such allies are an external resource that otherwise resource-deficient actors can lean on.[62]

To explain the formation and success of the Maspero Youth Union with reference to this dimension of opportunity, one can yet again draw on the alliance between SCAF and the Egyptian protesters, including Copts: General Fanary's military salute in honor of the revolution's martyrs was the ultimate signal to protesters that they had the allegiance of the, at the time, most important player in government. One need not look any further than to the protesters' chants, "the army and people are one hand"[63] to understand that they were aware of, and indeed embraced, the SCAF's allegiance. Similarly, efforts on the part of the Egyptian Cabinet and Interior Ministry to support democratization processes by creating social media profiles (described above), presumably signaled to protesters that those institutions lent their allegiance to the people as well.

It is worth noting that the alliances mentioned were formed between between various parts of the elite and the Egyptian protesters as a whole—not between the elite and Copts, exclusively. However, throughout the revolution's first phase and in the early stages of its second phase, which is when the above-mentioned allegiances were pledged, Copts were one with other revolutionaries in their demands for democracy. This unity was demonstrated powerfully by protesters holding up crosses and Qur'ans next to each other [64] and by chants that "Muslim, Christian, [are] all Egyptian."[65] Moreover, their unified demands for democracy were heard in chants such as the one calling for "Bread, Freedom, Social justice."[66] Given the democratic nature of protesters' unified demands, it is plausible to assume that Copts perceived that the elite's pledged alliance would open an opportunity for specific Coptic concerns, alongside those of Egyptians more broadly. Certainly, the reflections of Peter el-Naggar, a lawyer working for Christians' rights to have their religion recognized, suggest that this was the case. El-Naggar noted, in an interview conducted shortly after Mubarak's toppling in mid-February 2011, that "the Ministry of Interior has issued a decision saying everyone who has a church document stating that his faith is Christianity will be recognized as such by

the state."[67] This is clear indication that Copts may well have seen an alliance forming with the elite that would yield specific benefits for Egypt's Christians. Thus, Tarrow's fourth dimension of opportunity—influential allies—can be applied here, and can be thought to have played a role in stimulating the formation of the Maspero Youth Union.

The success of that movement however, is perhaps better explained with reference to a different type of alliance, namely one with selected Coptic Church officials. Two practicing priests in particular, Fr. Philopater and Fr. Mityas, publicly declared their support for the Maspero Youth Union. In an interview conducted in late June 2011, Fadi Philip, who was then the Maspero Youth Union's English language media spokesman, said of Fr. Philopater and Fr. Mityas that "these two priests have been with us from the beginning, when the MYU was created [...]."[68] While Philip went on to state that the movement's members did not assume that the priests represented the church through their support, he acknowledged that "[...] in being priests they do confer legitimacy upon us in the eyes of many Egyptian Christians [...]. They can certainly help us with inner church workings."[69] In other words, the support of Fr. Philopater and Fr. Mityas was acknowledged by movement members, as was its potential to galvanize further support from within the Church. What is more, Fr. Philopater provided a link between the Maspero Youth Union and the government, and negotiated prominently with the government during the second sit-in at Maspero Square.[70] The alliance that the Maspero Youth Union had with these priests was then influential on two fronts: within the church, and within the government. While Tarrow notes that having influential allies within the government is particularly useful for stimulating contention, he does not exclude that stimulus for contention can come from nongovernmental allies as well, and so both alliances can be thought to have played a role in the success of the Maspero Youth Union.

REPRESSION AND FACILITATION

The fifth and final dimension of opportunity has to do with repression and facilitation, which Tarrow discusses in the context of the demobilization of social movements. He defines repression and facilitation respectively as "any action by another group which raises the contender's cost of collective action"[71] and "an action which lowers the group's cost of collective action."[72] Both represent ways for authorities to respond to contentious movements. While authoritarian states tend to employ repressive means to eliminate or

subdue contention, and democratic states typically opt for facilitating ones, authorities can in reality employ certain measures of both. Depending on which reaction contention triggers from authorities, the demobilization of social movements can lead to different outcomes of those movements, including radicalization and institutionalization.[73]

The Maspero Youth Union reached the peak of its mobilization cycle on October 9, 2011, when a group of 200, primarily Copts, joined a march to Maspero Square, in demonstration of the demolition of Saint George's church a few weeks prior. This outbreak of contention was met with violent repression from police forces and the army. The event is described in further detail in the previous section titled "From Pope Cyril V to Maspero Youth Union"; in this context suffice it to point out that levels of repression caused 26 deaths and many more injuries. Following the "Maspero Massacre," as the clashes have since been dubbed, the Maspero Youth Union has been largely silent, although it is still in existence and its opinion features sporadically in the media. It has neither radicalized nor institutionalized, but rather has become a more subdued and fluid version of itself at its peak. In a way, it behaves in much the same way as Coptic movements prior to the January 25 Revolution. That is, with sporadic outbreaks of contention but much less dynamic and popular ones than those seen from the revolution's first and early second phases until the Maspero Massacre.

The contentious activities that the Maspero Youth Union has conducted in the aftermath of the Maspero Massacre include public statements of condemnation; for example, its opposition to an unconstitutional declaration issued by Egypt's interim president Adly Mansour onJuly 8, 2013, which it said "[was] not compatible with the ideals of the 30 June uprising.... that went out for a civil state that upholds religious and cultural diversity."[74] The group has also taken part in general protests, including a large demonstration on January 25, 2013, in which other Coptic movements and national forces demonstrated using the slogan "Down with the Regime."[75] Finally, the Maspero Youth Union has organized some individual protests, including one that took place a year following the Maspero Massacre, to commemorate the latter.[76]

While it is clear that the Maspero Youth Union has far from given up on its mission to see Coptic rights enforced through a democratic Egyptian government, none of the above-mentioned outbreaks of contention matched the popularity of those preceding October 9, 2011. This is perhaps best explained by the lack of political opportunity that Copts perceived following the Maspero Massacre. Mohammad Morsi's government certainly offered no signals

that could be interpreted as such. In fact, he sent a contrary signal, by scheduling the first round of parliamentary elections on dates that coincided with the beginning of Copt's Holy Week and Palm Sunday; and holding the runoffs on dates that clashed with Holy Saturday and Easter. In other words, President Morsi took clear and very public steps to marginalize Copts' political participation. Regrettable though this reality was for Copts in Morsi's Egypt, it does to a large extent consolidate the explanatory power of Political Opportunity Theory in the context of Maspero Youth Union's formation, success, and decline. This is discussed in further detailnext.

EVALUATING THE EXPLANATORY POWER "POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY THEORY"

The evidence above demonstrates how the existence of various dimensions of opportunity, including increasing access to political participation and shifting alignments and divisions within the elite and influential alliances created an environment for the Maspero Youth Union to thrive in. While the dimensions of opportunity are explicated separately above for analytical purposes, they are of course interrelated and much more complex, in reality. All the same, the theory lends itself very well to explaining the life cycle of the Maspero Youth Union, that is, how structural shifts paved the way for an increased sense of agency and urgency among Copts, which ultimately made for the success of the movement.

One overriding critique of the Political Opportunity Theory concerns its structural approach, which, critics note, comes at the expense of agency. In other words, the theory does not consider the possibility that social movements, in and of themselves, have sufficient agency to leverage structural shifts. Although this criticism is important to consider, its obvious counterargument is that structural shifts, which the theory posits pave the way for agency, are only influential if agents catch on to them. That is, agents must perceive that structural shifts are taking place in order for those shifts to have any leverage. As such, the theory is arguably significantly less structural than critics take it to be. Moreover, in the context of the Maspero Youth Union, this means that the movement has the potential to reach high levels of intense contention again, should its members sense that the structural milieu is ripe for it.

Another drawback of the theory is that it does not capture all of the factors that are significant in causing the mobilization of social movements. In

the case of the Maspero Youth Union, one factor that is not accounted for in Tarrow's dimensions of opportunity could be a heightened level of threat among Copts, created by the possibility of an immanent Islamic government. Such a government would, as it happened during Mohammed Morsi's presidency, make Copts even more marginalized in society than they were under Mubarak's leadership. Indeed, this was one of the reasons why many Copts were hesitant to join the revolution in its very early stages.

These drawbacks (in particular, the latter) notwithstanding, Political Opportunity Theory is a useful theoretical tool to understand why the Maspero Youth Union reached levels of success that Coptic social movements before it did not. By applying the theory to empirical events in the early stages of Egypt's revolution, one can understand that structural shifts—acknowledged as they were by challengers—stimulated Maspero Youth Union to mobilize to the great extent that it did. The explanatory power of the theory is captured nicely by the following statement of one Union member: "If we do not demand our rights now, we will be the losers."[77]

One important caveat remains, however. This has to do with whether the usefulness of Political Opportunity Theory in explaining the Maspero Youth Union's development is significant, when it is evaluated in the context of Egyptian social and political dynamics at large. In postrevolutionary Egypt, the people's alliance with various government representatives and the Armed Forces are, as examples above have shown, ever fluid. Additionally, there have been cases of sectarianism among the Egyptian people itself. The most illustrative example of the latter is perhaps the deadly fighting that broke out between the Muslim Brotherhood supporters on the one hand and liberal Muslims and Copts on the other, [78] following SCAF's removal of President Morsi from power on July 3, 2012. Such post-coup clashes fragmented the alliance between Egyptian citizens that had proved robust during the first and second phase of Egypt's revolution. At the same time, the coup itself mended relations between SCAF and Copts, which had otherwise been fractured since the Maspero Massacre in 2011. Copts who in the latter context had labeled SCAF "terrorists," due to their violent attacks on demonstrators, would in the post-coup context use the same label to describe Morsi's supporters. All the while, SCAF officials were celebrated by Copts and liberal Muslims as heroes of democracy.

This is but one of many examples of the ever-fluid dynamics within Egyptian society post–25 January Revolution. It raises the question of whether

Political Opportunity Theory offers anything beyond a plausible explanatory account of a relatively short-lived cycle of contention. In particular, it questions the theory's predictive value in the context of social movements in Egypt, and perhaps even regionally. This drawback can be partially mitigated by conducting cross-case comparisons on social movements in Egypt, to determine whether fluid alliances have an inhibiting effect on social movement's development.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the Maspero Youth Union reached a level of contention (measured in terms of popularity, media presence, and membership rate) higher than that of any other Coptic movement in pre- and postrevolutionary Egypt. With reference to Political Opportunity Theory, it has argued that the movement's success can be explained by the structural shifts that took place during the January 25 revolution, particularly immediately following the toppling of Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011. These shifts, which included shifting alliances and divisions within the elite, gave Copts the sense of having increased access to political participation and the support of influential allies. Altogether, these conditions fostered high levels of mobilization within the Maspero Youth Union, allowing for the movement to reach the level of success that it did. The movement's decline has been explained with reference to the repressive action employed by security forces following the Maspero Massacre. Importantly, such repressive measures did not prompt a complete disintegration of the movement, but rather caused the movement to fragment and enjoy a much lessened degree of the popular enthusiasm.

Whilst Political Opportunity Theory captures neither the complexity nor scope of Maspero Youth Union dynamics—and the movement's dynamics were undoubtedly both complex and broad—it lends itself as a useful explanatory tool. This is so because the theory can be applied not only to explain the life cycle of the Maspero Youth Union, but also to explain why other Coptic movements did not reach similar levels of success.

One important caveat remains, however, that has to do with the ever-fluid alliances between various factions of the Egyptian society and elite. Such a fluidity makes it difficult to assess whether Political Opportunity Theory's explanatory value is indeed strong or rather coincidental. If the latter, the theory's predictive value becomes questionable. This considerable drawback can be mitigated by conducting cross-case comparisons on social movements

in Egypt; as such a study would shed light on whether fluid alliances have an inhibiting effect on social movements' development. This would also enable a more informed assessment of Political Opportunity Theory's explanatory value in the context of Egyptian social movements.

Indeed, the importance of comparative approaches to the study of contentious politics was highlighted by Doug McAdam, Charles Tilly, and Sidney Tarrow (1996), when they first laid out their vision for a field in which the study of contention would synthesize findings from subfields of distinct disciplines.[79] This was imperative, they argued, to be able to generate overarching theories and concepts of contentious politics. This chapter cannot, due to its necessarily narrow focus, yield the benefits of such comparison. It is hoped, however, that this crucial comparative dimension can be fleshed out as this chapteris read in conjunction with the other chapters of this volume, each of which sheds light on distinct aspects of contentious politics in the Middle East.

NOTES

1. Salafis in the Aswan region had argued for loudspeakers and steeples to be removed from St. George's Church. When Copts refused to do so, Salafis began to demolish the Church, in response to which Copts accused the governor and security forces of Aswan of allowing the demolition to take place illegally. "Protesters Marching to Maspero Met with Violence," *Daily News Egypt*, February 9, 2011. Accessed at: http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2011/10/09/coptic-protesters-marching-to-maspero-met-with-violence/.
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3. *Egypt Independent*, "Maspero Victims' Families Accuse Activists of Profiting," *Ahram Online*, September 9, 2013. Accessed at: http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/maspero-victims-families-accuse-activists-profiting.
4. Jayson Casper, *Mapping the Coptic Movements: Coptic Activism in a Revolutionary Setting Date* (Cairo: Arab West Report, 2013), 3
5. Pope Cyril V served as the 112th Pope of Alexandria from 1874 until 1927.
6. J. D. Pennington, "The Copts in Modern Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no.2 (2006): 160.
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8. Ibid.
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11. Pennington, "The Copts in Modern Egypt," 165.
12. Ibid., 165–67.
13. Pope Shenouda III served as the 117th Pope of Alexandria from 1971 to 2012.
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17. Casper, "Mapping the Coptic Movements," 3.
18. "Egypt Copts Killed in Christmas Church Attack," BBC, January 7, 2010. Accessed at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8444851.stm on September 11, 2013.
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20. "Egypt Bomb Kills 21 at Alexandria Coptic Church," BBC, January 1, 2011. Accessed at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12101748 on September 11, 2013.
21. Casper, "Mapping the Coptic Movements," 3.
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31. D. McAdam, S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. See D. De la Porta and M. Diano, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 20, and J. Freeman and V. Johnson, *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 1–2.
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40. Tocqueville (1955:176–77) cited in S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 74. The listed quote featured in Tocqueville's discussion of the collapse of the French Regime. Tarrow refers to it in his discussion of the immanent collapse of the USSR that, he argues, was prompted by Gorbachev's rise to power, which created new opportunities for access and stimulated political groups to organize.
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42. Ibid., 76–78.
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72. Ibid.
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11

FROM PROGRESS TO ORDER: THE "KURDISH OPENINGS" AND THE LIMITS TO CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN TURKEY

Oğuzhan Göksel

INTRODUCTION

Since the first electoral victory of the party in 2002, the AKP (Justice and Development Party) has set out to radically alter the nature of political structures and power relations in Turkey. Bolstered by successive electoral victories in 2007 and 2011, the AKP has altogether eliminated the influence of the military over the government and reformulated the mechanisms of the judiciary through a referendum—clearly challenging the political hegemony of the old Kemalist elite. Furthermore, the party has also initiated a series of dialogues and programs aimed to resolve the "Kurdish question" that has claimed the lives of thousands of citizens due to the ongoing low-intensity military conflict since the 1980s. All these initiatives have led some observers in Turkey and abroad to brand the AKP as a "party of progress," a highly unconventional description for a social conservative and center-right party.[1] It is as if the exclusive official ideology of the Turkish state based on Turkish nationalism was changing. However, over the years, the AKP administration has not followed a consistent strategy toward the Kurdish minority but resorted to a variety of contradictory methods, from organizing private meetings with Kurdish politicians and representatives of civil society organizations to imprisoning hundreds of Kurdish activists and academics on charges of terrorism. Since the last electoral victory of the AKP in 2011, public speeches of Prime Minister (elected president in 2014) Recep Tayyip Erdo an and the party rhetoric has radically shifted to a conservative-nationalist ideology, as demonstrated in

the recent transfer of Numan Kurtulmu to the AKP, the former chairman of the Islamist HAS (People's Voice) Party, which was known for its opposition to the peace talks with the Kurdish social movement. As the AKP has consolidated its hold over the politics of Turkey, it has come under heavy criticism of its once-ardent supporters—liberal intellectuals such as the columnists of the *Taraf* newspaper—due to its alleged move toward the right of the political spectrum, leading some to question whether the AKP has become a "party of the order."

This chapter will explain the reasons behind the shift in the AKP's policies and assess the case of the AKP's Kurdish openings in reference to the broader discourse on contentious and high politics. This is a key dimension overlooked in the existing literature[2] on the Turkish government's policy toward the Kurdish minority and this study aims to contribute not only to empirical studies on this topic, but also to the broader theoretical literature on social movements by clearly positioning this case within the spectrum of contentious and high politics. It will be demonstrated that despite continuous attempts of the AKP to portray its policy toward the Kurdish minority as an indicator of a government that is receptive to the demands of its citizens, the Kurdish openings are examples of top-down policy making that has more to do with temporary political calculations about elections rather than responding to the ever-intensifying contentious politics campaign of the Kurdish social movement.

Regardless of the indeterminate outcome and uncertain trajectory of the political transition processes that had followed the 2011 Arab uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria, there is no doubt that the social movements that had emerged and shook the entire Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region constitute a turning point for the discourse on contentious politics. Besides the aforementioned countries, the so-called Arab Spring had not resulted in region-wide regime or policy changes, but it had impacted on almost all MENA societies. It can be argued that one of the key consequences of the uprisings has been the realization that the top-down policy-making method preferred not only by authoritarian regimes of the region such as Saudi Arabia but also by comparatively more democratic countries such as Turkey had come under greater scrutiny as MENA governments have been taken by surprise by the success of the contentious politics campaign initiated by social movements.

Since the beginning of the Arab uprisings, the AKP administration in Turkey has been willing to voice its approval of the social movements—particularly

in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria—in an attempt to project Turkey as a democratic model for the region. While the enthusiasm of Turkey in its support of the postrevolutionary regimes has triggered a heated debate about the applicability of its modernization model for the region, it has also resulted in the questioning of its own democratic credentials, particularly with regard to the long and ongoing struggle of the Kurdish social movement to gain more political freedom from the highly centralized nation-state ruled by Ankara—one that has been exclusively based on the Turkish identity. Thus, out of the Arab uprisings emerged a new debate, the so-called Kurdish Spring. The ability of street movements in overthrowing regimes and bringing about radical change in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya has also stimulated the hopes of the Kurdish social movement for political change and freedom, resulting in a wave of protests and demonstrations in predominantly Kurdish cities across southeastern Turkey.[3] In this context, the AKP government initiated the Kurdish opening program, a negotiation process with the self-proclaimed representatives of the Kurdish social movement—namely a number of Kurdish intellectuals, the pro-Kurdish political party BDP (Peace and Democracy Party), and the imprisoned leader of the armed organization PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), Abdullah Öcalan. Should the Kurdish opening be evaluated as evidence of the success of contentious politics in triggering a policy change in Turkey? This is a key question that this chapter will address and it will be argued that even though the ability of the Kurdish social movement to shape Turkish policy making has relatively increased as a result of the democratization process, the main rationale behind the AKP's initiative lies in the political calculations of the party rather than in responding to the demands of the movement.

Contentious politics refers to the situation "when collective actors join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents around their claims or the claims of those they claim to represent."[4] Even though the increasing role of contentious politics campaigns in shaping government policies is noted in the literature,[5] arguably the influence of social movements differs in each country, depending on factors such as regime type and political culture. Analysis of mechanisms of policy making in country cases is essential to understand the role played by contentious politics in different settings. In this context, an assessment of the case of Kurdish rights issue and the impact of Kurdish social movement on the policy making of Turkish governments is helpful in terms of enriching the literature on contentious politics. As will be shown, due to a variety of factors such as the state tradition, the

nation-building process that prioritized the Turkish identity at the expense of minority ones, and the limits to the influence of external actors, the policy making of Turkey remains characterized by a top-down approach to politics. Apart from Cengiz Gunes's book[6] that examines the evolution of the Kurdish social movement from the 1970s to the rise of the PKK in the 1980s and 1990s, the scholarly literature[7] lacks studies that analyze the characteristics of the Kurdish rights struggle in Turkey through the framework of social movements and contentious politics as developed by influential scholars of the field such as Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow.[8] Due to constraints of space in this study, this chapter will only briefly cover the historical roots and evolution of the Kurdish contentious politics campaign, instead largely focusing on interpreting the latest Kurdish initiatives developed by the incumbent AKP from this methodological perspective. Nevertheless, this chapter aims to fill the aforementioned gap in the literature via assessing to what extent the latest initiatives of the AKP are the products of the interaction between the state and the Kurdish movement in Turkey, and showing the rationale behind the Kurdish openings.

First, the modern roots of the Kurdish rights issue and the evolution of the Kurdish social movement in Turkey will be introduced; then the AKP's changing approach toward the Kurdish question will be explored via interpreting the party's fluctuating policies over the years—resulting in the emergence of two different narratives on the AKP's role in the country, namely "the party of progress" versus "the party of order." This will be followed by a critical analysis of the policies of the AKP and the contentious politics campaign launched by the Kurdish social movement in order to determine to what extent the Kurdish movement shapes the policy making of Ankara. It will be argued that even though the influence of the Kurdish social movement in Turkish policy making has increased as a result of the democratization process since 2002, the main rationale behind the Kurdish openings lies in the political calculations of the ruling party on the eve of the 2014 municipal elections and the 2015 parliamentary elections.

THE ROOTS OF THE KURDISH QUESTION AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE KURDISH SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The Kurdish rights issue in Turkey is commonly traced to the nation-building process initiated by the Kemalist policy makers in the formative years of the

Republic of Turkey—the 1920s and 1930s. The early Republican policy toward the Kurdish people was characterized by an assimilationist approach exercised through measures such as banning the use of Kurdish language and traditional Kurdish costumes, and the state-imposed Turkification of the names of Kurdish villages, towns, and cities.[9] A widely used and popular example for the denial of Kurdish identity by the Republic is the terms preferred by the state to define Kurds, namely the "mountain Turks" or the euphemism of "easterners." Through the exercise of these policies, it was hoped that the Kurds would eventually be assimilated into the newly created concept of "Turkishness" despite the initial opposition of the Kurds to the new Turkish state with mass rebellions in the mid-1920s and the early 1930s. Today, it is quite clear that the past policies based on assimilation, denial, and military solution have failed to eliminate the Kurdish rights issue as these measures appears to have only accelerated the national identity formation process of Kurds, with the Turkish state playing the role of the "antagonist" in Kurdish nationalist discourses.[10] Despite all attempts by successive administrations, the Kurdish identity has not disappeared, and the Kurds gradually asserted themselves as a community in its own right rather than adopting the imposed concept of Turkishness.[11]

The early Kurdish uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s were led by the disenfranchised local Islamic clergy and landowners against the secularism and the centralization policy of the Republican regime that threatened the interests of these two social classes.[12] Lacking the strong support of masses across the Kurdish-populated region, these movements remained localized. The contemporary Kurdish social movement in Turkey began to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s, initially as part of a left-wing coalition of Turkish and Kurdish students' movement—the Marxist organization *THKP-C* (People's Liberation Front-Party of Turkey). In addition to the long Republican history of cultural and political repression, the military coup in 1980 played a major role in marginalizing the Kurds as an unprecedented level of pressure was exercised on the Kurdish people during the military rule through mass imprisonments, widely reported torture, and displacement of civilians.[13] The draconian measures of the junta resulted in the radicalization of the emergent Kurdish social movement. Shortly after the military rule ended in 1983, an armed organization, which is widely recognized as "terrorist" by Turkey, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), launched a violent contentious politics campaign against the Turkish armed forces as well as Kurdish landowners

and peasants who collaborated with the state, starting a low-intensity civil conflict. In the mobilization of Kurds into a well-organized and influential social movement, this armed struggle played a key role. An explanation of the critical role of violence in the emergence and expansion of social movements can be found in Tarrow, a distinguished expert on contentious politics:

> It may be surprising to think of death as a source of collective action. But it is the reaction to the *living*—especially to violent death—that is the source of protest, rather than death itself. Death has the power to trigger violent emotions and brings people together with little in common but their grief and their solidarity. It provides legitimate occasions for public gatherings, and is one of the few occasions on which officials will hesitate to charge into a crowd or ban public assemblies.[14]

Until the armed uprising initiated by the PKK in 1984, demands for more political rights did not appeal to Kurdish masses, remaining exclusive to the Kurdish intellectuals and Kurdish students' movements organized in the campuses of universities across the country, particularly in most developed cities such as Istanbul and Ankara. For instance, the organization that was later known as the PKK was founded by Abdullah Öcalan and a small group of Kurdish students in 1974 at Ankara University. There were many such groups in Turkey at the time and the PKK did not have a distinguishing characteristic among them.[15] The group acquired fame only after its violent attacks against the Turkish military personnel and civilians in the 1980s and 1990s. What began as a violent uprising by the PKK against a semiauthoritarian state in Turkey has caught the attention of Kurdish masses and evolved into a large and multidimensional social movement that, today, includes both armed elements such as the PKK and peaceful activists such as Kurdish intellectuals, nongovernmental organizations, and a political party that has seats in the parliament, the BDP. Since the early 1990s, pro-Kurdish parties have participated in general and municipal elections with ever-increasing percentages of votes as witnessed in the performance of the banned DTP (Democratic Society Party) and its successor BDP (Peace and Democracy Party).

The first attempt to find a peaceful political solution to the Kurdish issue emerged during the administration of Turgut Özal (prime minister 1983–1989, later president 1989–1993) in the late 1980s. The ban on the public use of Kurdish language was lifted by Özal and unprecedented open public discussions on the issue began in the early 1990s. The elections in October 1991

saw 22 deputies from the pro-Kurdish rights party of the time, HEP (People's Labor Party), elected to the parliament as a result of their electoral pact with the SHP (Social Democratic People's Party), which became the junior partner of the new coalition government with the DYP (True Path Party).[16] Despite the initial enthusiasm of the coalition government and the positive atmosphere of the time, a concrete initiative was not launched. Military solutions were adopted by the successive administrations with little apparent success.

Even though the presence of sociopolitical networks increased across the predominantly Kurdish-populated southeast Turkey, the ability of the Kurdish social movement to impact on policy making of the Turkish state remained negligible during the 1980s and 1990s. This was largely due to the deficits of Turkish democracy characterized in this era by the military tutelage over elected civilian administrations. The military, although officially withdrew from politics in 1983 and allowed democratic elections to take place, continued to play a highly influential role in political affairs, particularly on the Kurdish issue. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Kurdish issue was perceived by the Turkish state as a "national security problem" that could only be resolved with a military victory, the armed conflict with the PKK being portrayed as an existential threat against the territorial integrity and survival of the Turkish Republic.[17] The 1990s was dominated by coalition governments that lacked unity and cohesiveness in their policy making, resulting in a vacuum of power that was filled by the military. The military had no intention of negotiating with the PKK or other Kurdish organizations as the only solution to the problem was said to be the virtual elimination of all PKK militants and the stabilization of the security situation in southeast Turkey through banning nongovernmental organizations suspected of pro-Kurdish tendencies.[18] Turkey had to wait until the AKP for reinitiating peaceful political strategies to handle the issue.

Through a number of democratization reforms developed as part of the EU membership process of Turkey in the early 2000s, the AKP has been able to contain the influence of the Kemalist military in politics. Military tutelage over elected government was mainly based on the NSC (National Security Council) that guaranteed the continuation of military influence as the institution had the authority to advise the government.[19] As the AKP has increased its legitimacy and hegemony over Turkish politics after three successive electoral victories that had raised the vote percentage of the party to around 50 percent by 2011, the influence of the military declined as the role

of the NSC decreased during the democratization process. The advisory role of the institution was reduced and the control of its agenda was passed from the military to the elected government.

Akin to the Kurdish organizations, the AKP grew out of an antisystemic social movement, the Islamist NOM (*Milli Görüş Hareketi*—National Outlook Movement) that emerged in the late 1960s. The NOM founded a number of Islamic political parties, all banned by the Constitutional Court for their alleged antisecular activities. One predecessor of the AKP, the RP (Welfare Party), was overthrown by a coalition of secularist forces led by the military in 1997, an incident known as the "post-modern coup" in Turkey. The democratization reforms of the last decade has enabled the AKP to come to power, while allowing the pro-Kurdish party, the BDP, to have a strong presence in the parliament with 36 deputies after the 2011 elections. Nevertheless, in spite of this democratic move toward a more inclusive official ideology that recognizes the existence of political Islamists/conservatives and pro-Kurdish political parties, the unilateral decision-making paradigm of Turkish governments has remained intact during the AKP administration as well. The AKP, akin to the old Kemalist elite, does not take into account the opinions of nongovernmental organizations and opposition parties in its decision-making processes.[20] As will be analyzed here, even in political matters where a consensus is essential, such as the Kurdish question, the top-down nature of policy making is apparent.

THE SHIFTING POLICIES OF THE AKP TOWARDS THE KURDISH QUESTION

An analysis of the AKP's approach to the Kurdish issue should begin with a brief look at the position of the party within the spectrum of Turkish political life. There is an ongoing scholarly debate about the AKP's ideology as some prefer the term "conservative" while others opt for "moderate Islamist." In this context, İhsan Dağı argues that it would be more accurate to define the party as a conservative movement that can be located within the "tradition of Turkish centre-right politics."[21] Conversely, other scholars have argued that the AKP does not possess a clearly defined identity and ideology.[22] It is apparent that there is great confusion among the observers about the party's ideology. The solution for this conundrum lies not in comparing the party to other political movements but in reevaluating the AKP on its own, because the party actually possesses two identities simultaneously—thus making it very difficult for analysts to produce a single definition. The worldview of the AKP

is based on a hybrid identity formed out of two different ideologies, namely globalist/neoliberal ideals and conservative/nationalist sentiments, that are strong among contemporary Turkey's population.[23] A historical and detailed study of the source of these two identities is beyond the scope of this work, but the new conceptualization that will be utilized throughout this study can contribute to the discourse.[24] It can be argued that the confusion around the party's ideology is not a mere coincidence, but it has emerged as the populist AKP attempted to "walk a tight rope" between neoliberalism and conservative nationalism in order to attract the largest possible numbers of voters.

One of the first acts of the AKP regarding the Kurdish issue after its electoral victory in 2002 was to lift the emergency rule in southeastern Turkey—the pre-dominantly Kurdish region. This was followed by the removal of the ban on the teaching of Kurdish language by private institutions in 2004. Arguably, one of the most influential initiatives in terms of demonstrating the extent of the party's different approach compared to previous administrations was the establishment of a state-owned TV channel by the government, *TRT 6 (Şeş)*, broadcasting in Kurdish language.[25] The actions of the AKP raised hopes for the beginning of a new era in Turkish politics referred as the "post-nationalist" state, namely the establishment of a much more inclusive political system that would not only serve the interests of the majority Sunni Turkish community but also preserve the rights of minority groups in the country such as Kurds, Alevis, and non-Muslims.[26] All actions of the AKP in its early years in government had been in line with this vision of a "party of progress."[27] The party had been the main supporter of the EU membership process and it had initiated a series of reforms as part of the accession negotiations between 2002 and 2005 that gradually reduced the tutelage of the Kemalist military and judiciary over the elected civilian government, increasing the quality of democracy in the country. While the AKP emerged as the leader of the democratization process in Turkey, two main opposition parties, the secularist CHP (Republican People's Party) and the nationalist MHP (Nationalist Action Party), adopted a reactionary stance and chose to side with the state establishment, often acting as the voice of the *ancien regime* as demonstrated since the *Ergenekon* case came to the surface—the alleged coup plan against the AKP government said to be plotted by some elements of the armed forces and secret intelligence services with the backing of a number of journalists. Even though a verdict has not been reached yet, the two political rivals of the AKP publicly proclaimed the innocence of the defendants.

The AKP's first "Kurdish Opening" in 2009 was opposed by the CHP and the MHP from the beginning, the latter going so far as to accuse the AKP government of "high treason."[28] The event that triggered the failure of the first initiative was the so-called Habur incident, when 26 Kurdish civilians from a refugee camp in Northern Iraq in addition to 8 PKK members surrendered to Turkish authorities and, subsequently, had been treated as "heroes" by the pro-Kurdish media and the BDP, resulting in a strong backlash from the opposition parties and the Turkish public as protests against the government's initiative were launched in major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir.[29] In the aftermath of the Habur incident, the AKP quickly shelved its Kurdish initiative. The AKP's reaction to the pressure of the Turkish public opinion demonstrated the limits of the Kurdish initiative.

It is important to note that a group of scholars and intellectuals—many of them former supporters of the AKP and its reforms—have recently begun to criticize what they see as the emerging establishment of a "civilian tutelage" replacing the "military tutelage" of the past, particularly since the last two elections in 2007 and 2011. The dramatic shift that has been seen in the stance of the government toward the Kurdish issue and the broader democratization process became most apparent during the 2011 election campaign as the then prime minister, Erdo an, adopted a hard-line stance and made a number of speeches in favor of a military solution to the Kurdish issue.[30] After the victory of the party in the 2011 elections, the same pattern of radical change was also demonstrated in the approach of the AKP toward the EU membership process as the EU minister Egemen Ba ı insisted on blaming the EU governments such as France and Germany for the lack of progress in the negotiations for Turkey's membership, while the AKP government itself did not focus on preparing packages for any of the legal and institutional reforms that had been envisaged as part of the process since 2005.[31] This was accompanied by a series of ultranationalist speeches given by the former interior minister, Idris Naim ahin, on the Kurdish issue, ahin declaring that there is no "Kurdish issue" in Turkey and that all Kurds support the government.[32] Moreover, the AKP revealed the full extent of its new stance when the former leader of the Islamist HAS Party, Numan Kurtulmu , joined the AKP and became its new deputy chairman in late 2012. Kurtulmu was known to be a skeptic of the EU membership process and a Turkish nationalist, a politician who used to publicly criticize the AKP's Kurdish Opening initiative for allegedly jeopardizing the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic.

By 2012, the AKP adopted the post-1980 formula of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, emerging as the new flag-bearer of conservative/nationalist Turkish rightist politics, causing great disillusionment among the party's ardent supporters within the liberal Turkish and Kurdish intelligentsia. In this context, Ziya Öni notes:

> What we seem to be witnessing in the later phase of the AKP era is a kind of limited or majoritarian understanding of democracy with new elements of exclusion built into the democratic system. While the old regime provided little leeway for the religious and conservative segments to express their identity claims, the new system similarly limited the expression of identity claims of secularists or minority groups, such as the Alevites or others.[33]

Many columnists of the liberal newspaper *Taraf* and its chief editor Ahmet Altan, who initially supported the AKP reforms that limited the influence of the Kemalist establishment, began to strongly criticize the AKP's social policies, the lack of progress toward democratization, as well as opposing the speeches of Prime Minister Erdo an alleged to be constraining the freedom of press in the country.

Cuma Çiçek reports that since 2009 "about 1.500 Kurdish politicians, including mayors, vice presidents, former MPs and directors of the central and local branches of the DTP were arrested. These arrests took place as the result of operations against the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK), an organization that allegedly functions as the urban branch of the PKK."[34] This demonstrates that even when the party's first Kurdish initiative, the so-called democratization opening, was ongoing in 2009, the AKP actually continued to resort to securitization tactics in handling the Kurdish issue, thus employing a variant of the "carrots and stick" approach. After the first initiative collapsed, the hard-line approach came to the foreground and arrests intensified across the Kurdish populated southeastern region. The source of much controversy and criticism, Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalizes insults to "Turkishness," defined by many intellectuals as racist and a residue of the military dictatorship of the early 1980s, has been heavily utilized by the judiciary in the last few years of the AKP rule to imprison pro-Kurdish activists. [35] The government has not displayed any sign of eliminating this article from the penal code.

In addition to the Habur incident, another main reason behind the failure of the first AKP initiative regarding the Kurdish issue in 2009 was the wide gap between what the AKP was willing to offer and what Kurdish organizations, such as the PKK, DTP, and KCK, demanded. According to the list of demands released by the PKK during the last initiative; official education in the Kurdish language, general amnesty to all PKK and KCK members, and constitutional changes were indicated as "pre-conditions" for entering into negotiations with the government. Nevertheless, the AKP did not add any of these to its political agenda during negotiations with Kurdish politicians in 2009.[36] A document titled "Democratic Autonomy Project" lists a number of concrete expectations and it is officially supported by the largest pro-Kurdish party BDP and Abdullah Öcalan—the imprisoned leader of the PKK. Moreover, public opinion polls show that most of the Kurdish people across Turkey also endorse this document.[37] Some of the demands listed are decentralization to the extent of establishing regional assemblies that would be responsible for all services except foreign affairs and defense, the abolition of the village guards system, the use of languages other than Turkish in public, education, and political affairs, though the document refrains from making overt references to federalism.[38] The program of the AKP and the public speeches given by its key politicians did not address these demands except the language issue.

Overall, the manner in which the 2009 Kurdish initiative was implemented and the subsequent failure of the program revealed the top-down characteristics of the policy making of the AKP administration. Akin to the policy making of the old Kemalist elite that "acted in the name of the state by assuming virtually complete autonomy from other groups in the policy," the AKP developed the program independently from representatives of the Kurdish social movement, focusing only on issues the government was ready to make compromises on, such as lifting the ban on the use and teaching of Kurdish language, while overlooking other expectations of Kurds.[39] Thus, the Kurdish Opening emerged as the product of a unilateral decision by the AKP without any input from the Kurdish social movement. A study[40] on the 2009 Kurdish initiative summarizes the approach of the AKP:

> The AKP government has shown sustained resistance to accommodating Kurdish actors. There seems to be no dialogue between the AKP and the DTP [the predecessor of the BDP], the major Kurdish party in the country and in the parliament. The same criticism also seems to be

valid with regard to a dialogue with Kurdish civil society organizations, as they also complain of not being invited to city councils (*Kent Konseyleri*) by AKP municipalities through which they can be integrated into local decision-making processes.

"DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE": THE TWO IDENTITIES OF THE AKP AND THE KURDISH INITIATIVE

As mentioned previously, the AKP displayed two opposing stances toward the democratization process and the Kurdish rights issue throughout its rule since 2002. How can the shift of the AKP policies from its early years of pro-democratic reforms to a new form of nationalist conservatism be explained? The answer lies in the inherent contradiction within the two political identities of the party. Some scholars identify a "reform fatigue" that is said to have begun in late 2006 as the AKP started to resort to the old strategy of securitization in its approach to the Kurdish question, but the literature has not fully analyzed the reasons behind this fatigue. Ümit Cizre, a distinguished scholar on Turkish democratization, indicates that the AKP succumbed to the demands of the Kemalist establishment and ceased its challenge to the system by slowing down the reform process.[41] However, the Kemalist state establishment had actually been pacified through the democratization process in the early years of the AKP rule. Therefore, a reevaluation of the AKP's identity is necessary to explain the dramatic shifts in its policies. From the beginning, the AKP has tried to appeal to voters from two different ideological positions that pushed the party toward contrasting stances of conservatism and liberalism. Thus, the party does not possess an established policy toward the Kurdish rights issue due to the clash of these identities.

The AKP has inherited a conservative/nationalist ideology from the long tradition of Turkish center-right movements as its leading cadre has established the party in this political paradigm since its foundation in 2001.[42] Thus, the party appears to be the last representative of a homogenizing ideology of social control rooted in the Turkish-Islamic synthesis—a concept initially developed by the sociologist Ziya Gökalp—which gained momentum in Turkish political life after 1980.[43] A key factor that is said to have contributed to the rise of the party in 2002 and its subsequent electoral victories is its unique blend of reformist and conservative identities, which, according to Öni , is quite a remarkable achievement despite the fact that the two identities seem incompatible with one another.[44] In spite of the short-term success of

the AKP, however, the preservation of these two identities in the long term does not appear to be sustainable. The Kurdish issue has exposed the inconsistencies within the ideology of the party. The AKP increased its votes three times since 2002, but it reached the height of its electoral power in 2011 in terms of obtaining all the center-right and Islamist votes in the country. Thus, the only way the AKP could increase its votes further in the municipal and presidential elections of 2014 was through entering the domain of more ideologically charged parties such as the pro-Kurdish BDP and the Turkish nationalist MHP.[45] In this context, the ongoing post-2013 Kurdish initiative of the AKP can be evaluated as a radical move to gain pro-Kurdish votes in the elections of the year. In the long term, the AKP suffers from a dilemma: either turn itself to a "national front coalition" and completely rely on Turkish nationalism to obtain the support of MHP voters as they had been doing in recent years with the interior minister's hard-line speeches and the imprisonment of pro-Kurdish activists, or try to appeal the Kurdish electorate, risking the loss of its votes within the nationalist Central Anatolia and elsewhere to the MHP.

The current direction the AKP adopted via the Kurdish initiative is designed to obtain the support of Kurds at the expense of Turkish nationalists. These two objectives cannot be reconciled with each other. Sooner or later, the AKP will need to choose one stance among the two, and the evidence, so far, points to the party opting for the first option. However, this option also contains difficulties. First, the Kurdish national movement desires more than what the AKP is willing to provide, such as the release of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. The incumbent leader of the PKK, Murat Karayılan, and several members of parliament from the BDP released numerous public statements demanding freedom for Öcalan.[46] Moreover, the primary objective of the Kurdish national movement goes beyond obtaining cultural rights, extending to regional autonomy.[47] Another reason that makes it extremely difficult to sustain the ongoing Kurdish initiative is that the AKP administration seems aware that it is losing the support of conservative nationalist Turkish constituency across Anatolia as such compromising policies toward Kurdish organizations are perceived as "treason" by Turkish nationalists.[48] The AKP's source of political power lies mainly in the Anatolian bourgeoisie and the Central Anatolian voters. Public opinion polls show that support for the Kurdish initiative remains very low among Turkish voters.[49] The current dialogue is not sustainable in the long term unless the AKP is willing to

sacrifice its votes and financial backing. There is a real danger that the AKP, not unlike the other center-right parties before, may repeat the old pattern of Turkish politics, adopting a populist stance and moving to the right, which would disappoint the Kurdish nationalists who desire more political rights, including regional autonomy.

Before the democratization reforms of 2002–2005 that eroded the authority of the Kemalist military in Turkish politics, the military tutelage was the main factor barring the impact of the Kurdish contentious politics campaign on policy making in Turkey. Today, as this factor has vanished during the AKP rule of the last decade, the ability of the Kurdish social movement in affecting government policies has relatively increased. However, now the impact of the movement appears to be constrained by the relatively low number of voters sympathetic to the Kurdish cause as pro-Kurdish parties such as the BDP proved unable to increase their votes above 7 percent in parliamentary elections. The Turkish nationalist MHP, on the other hand, possesses more than 13 percent votes, enjoying a greater degree of influence on Turkish politics. The numbers of Turkish nationalist voters outweigh the pro-Kurdish constituency, thus putting a new limit for the resolution of the conflict in Turkey.

THE KURDISH CONTENTIOUS POLITICS CAMPAIGN AND THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE AKP'S KURDISH INITIATIVES

Given the difficulties to sustain the initiatives, what is the rationale behind the AKP's failed 2009 initiative and the post-2013 Kurdish Openings? In terms of explaining the AKP's desire to find a solution to the Kurdish rights issue, scholars emphasize the role of external factors on Turkish policy making. Too much emphasis is placed on the EU and the United States as the drivers behind the Kurdish opening, which is becoming a "myth" constantly reproduced. Çiçek, for instance, refers to the influence of three factors for the initiation of the Kurdish openings, namely the pressure of the Obama administration, Turkey's own search for an increased political role in the Middle East and North Africa, which is said to oblige the country to solve its internal problems before presenting itself as a "model" and the energy issue related to Turkey's relations with the oil-producer KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) in northern Iraq.[50] Kıvanç Ulusoy notes that "the US government was stuck in Iraq and the AKP seems to see this as a window of opportunity, a positive international environment, to initiate such a difficult process of political transformation. The EU would also fully support such a democratic

initiative."[51] There is a strong tendency in this literature[52] that attributes the AKP's relatively moderate stance on Kurds to the party's objective of joining the EU. However, the AKP seems convinced that Turkey does not need the EU anymore as Erdo an repeatedly emphasized in their public speeches.[53] In fact, there has been a dramatic decline in the influence of the EU on policy making in Ankara as the EU reports on Turkey's progress are no longer taken as key references in the media. Furthermore, a newly found self-confidence characterizes the speeches of Turkish politicians, mainly because of the ability of Turkey to handle the negative impact of the ongoing financial crisis better than some European economies, such as Greece, Italy, Ireland, and Spain.[54] Thus, the AKP does not need to refer to EU membership objective as often as it used to, because the party has already established itself as the dominant actor of Turkish political life, which brings a high degree of legitimacy and independence from foreign actors.

The influence of external factors regarding the Kurdish initiative is limited because no foreign power, including the United States and the EU, has sufficient influence over the Turkish government to impose a settlement. In fact, the EU has been engulfed in an endless series of political and economic troubles since the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis, while the US government has not been able to produce a coherent foreign policy due to the deadlock in its bicameral system and the heated debates about President Obama's economic reforms and health program. Thus, neither of these two external actors were able to give much attention to Turkey's Kurdish issue in recent years. If the external factors are taken as main drivers of such policy, then how can we account for the shifts in the AKP's approach witnessed over the years? The external factors remained constant throughout these years from 2009 to 2014, yet the policy fluctuated. Instead, the explanation should be sought in the domestic dynamics of Turkey's changeable political life and the connection between elections, public opinion polls, and the AKP's policies should be understood.

The party program of the AKP in 2002 listed the Kurdish issue as a key problem of the country, one that required a peaceful solution. Nevertheless, the first Kurdish opening was launched seven years later in 2009. One may argue that there was resistance from the Kemalist establishment to such policies, namely the military elite and the judiciary elite within the Constitutional Court, which repeatedly banned pro-Kurdish parties such as the DTP; however, both of these political forces were pacified by the AKP by 2007. The AKP

policy toward the Kurds was initiated in 2009 when its votes began to decline vis-à-vis the pro-Kurdish BDP in southeastern Turkey.[55] The first initiative ended in failure and the support of the AKP in the predominantly Kurdish southeastern Turkey was in a downward trend since 2011 as the party shifted towards a Turkish nationalist stance, increasingly relying on securitization and military approaches. The confusion surrounding the *Uludere* bombing that resulted in the deaths of Kurdish civilians in Turkish-Iraqi border remains to be a key factor that caused a decline in the support for the AKP in this region.[56] With the new 2013 Kurdish opening, the AKP clearly hoped to change this trend in its favor and gain an advantage in the municipal and presidential elections of 2014, to be followed by parliamentary election in the summer of 2015. In fact, the results of the municipal and presidential elections of 2014 showed that the AKP and its presidential candidate, Erdo an, were able to preserve their percentage of votes vis-à-vis the pro-Kurdish political movement in the pre-dominantly Kurdish region of Turkey; therefore the post-2013 Kurdish opening initiative can be evaluated as a political success for the AKP.

The timing of both AKP's Kurdish initiatives (2009 and 2013) provides clues as to the main reason behind these policies. Both programs were implemented on the eve of elections as the 2009 Kurdish initiative was followed by the municipal elections of 2009 and the parliamentary elections of 2011, while the 2013 initiative was followed by the municipal and presidential elections of 2014. The activities of the Kurdish social movement were influential in shaping the Kurdish initiatives of the government, yet it is not the armed uprising led by the PKK that affects the decision making of the government. Violent attacks of the PKK on Turkish military personnel strengthen the appeal of the Turkish nationalist MHP, which favors a military solution to the problem.[57] In order to prevent the loss of its votes to the MHP in nationalist Central Turkey, the AKP needs to present a more nationalist image in times when the PKK attacks increase.[58] The rationale behind the Kurdish initiatives of the party, therefore, lies in the electoral success of another agent of the Kurdish social movement, the BDP. The pro-Kurdish party steadily increased its votes in parliamentary and municipal elections, positively impacting on the ability of the Kurdish social movement to shape the policy making of Turkish government (see table 11.1). In order to gain pro-Kurdish votes from the BDP and continue its hegemony in the predominantly southeast region of Turkey, the AKP developed the 2009 and 2013 initiatives shortly before the

Table 11.1 Pro-Kurdish party's increase in vote percentage

2011 Parliamentary Elections	6.57* %
2009 Municipal Elections	5.41%
2007 Parliamentary Elections	4.05*%

* The members of parliament from the pro-Kurdish parties DTP and BDP entered these elections as independent candidates in order to bypass the national election threshold (10 percent of all votes) required for parties to enter the Turkish parliament. The figures above are estimated by the author based on the number of seats won by independent candidates, who later formed the parliamentary group of the pro-Kurdish party.
Source: T. C. Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (Republic of Turkey—Presidency of Supreme Election Council), "Seçim Sonuçları" [Online]. Accessed at: https://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/GenelSecimler.html, on January 16, 2014.

Table 11.2 The performance of the Turkish Nationalist Party MHP and Pro-Kurdish Party DTP/BDP

	MHP	*DTP/BDP*
2011 Parliamentary Elections	13.01%	6.57%
2007 Parliamentary Elections	14.29%	4.05%

Source: T. C. Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (Republic of Turkey—Presidency of Supreme Election Council)

elections. Nevertheless, due to the considerably higher number of Turkish nationalist voters, the AKP cannot risk to lose in the elections; therefore the ability of the Kurdish initiatives of the AKP to resolve the Kurdish rights issue via responding to the demands of the Kurdish social movement remains limited (see table 11.2).

Overall, the Turkish case shows that social movements and the ability of their contentious politics campaigns to shape policy making are highly connected with regime types as well as political calculations regarding elections. The analysis of the AKP's policy making and the Kurdish contentious politics campaign supports an argument made by Tarrow:[59] "We cannot understand episodes of contention without examining how contentious and institutional politics—including electoral politics—intersect." As shown earlier, the consolidation of democracy in Turkey via the elimination of military tutelage by the AKP has increased the ability of the Kurdish social movement to impact on Turkish politics. As pro-Kurdish such as the DTP and the BDP were allowed to compete in elections and gain seats in the parliament, the AKP needed to develop policies to gain pro-Kurdish votes. However, the AKP's initiatives were launched unilaterally with minimal input from representatives of the Kurdish social movement. Moreover, these programs could not fully grant the demands of the Kurdish social movement as the AKP cannot afford to grant concessions that would result in the party losing the votes of

Turkish nationalists to the MHP. Thus, democratic elections, paradoxically, also limit the influence that the Kurdish social movement can exert on the Turkish government.

Above all, the post-2013 Kurdish initiative of the AKP should be evaluated in conjunction with the 2014 elections in Turkey. One of the key political actors responsible for directing the Kurdish initiatives within the AKP, the vice president of the party—Hüseyin Çelik—overtly indicated the key incentive for the government to initiate this policy: the gradual marginalization of the nationalist parties on both sides of the conflict, the Turkish nationalist MHP and the Kurdish nationalist BDP.[60] Since the beginning of the 2013 initiative, the determinacy of the AKP to consult with the imprisoned leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, more so than the elected representatives of the pre-dominantly Kurdish southeast region—the BDP members of parliament—may be interpreted as part of this policy of marginalizing the BDP. The AKP pursues this policy to the point of legitimizing the PKK so as to not involve the BDP and prevent the party from getting the credit for solving the century-long Kurdish question in Turkey. Therefore, the post-2013 Kurdish initiative appears to be an election tactic by the AKP to gain Kurdish voters in the southeast, weakening the hand of the pro-Kurdish BDP on the eve of the 2015 parliamentary elections. Simultaneously, the AKP hopes that if bloodshed between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK ceases, the Turkish nationalist MHP that appeals to hard-liner Turkish voters would also be marginalized and its voters be persuaded to shift their support to the AKP.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that a key factor blocking progress with the Kurdish initiative is the contradiction within the AKP's two identities, the conservative-nationalist ideology of the Turkish center-right and the liberal democratic identity that the AKP demonstrated at times since its first electoral victory in 2002. Even though the AKP poses a challenge to the tenets of the Kemalist establishment, particularly to Kemalists' assertive secularism, the AKP also strongly adheres to Turkish nationalism albeit in a less-pronounced way compared to the right-wing MHP. The constituency of the AKP is not different from that of the MHP, particularly in Central and Eastern Anatolia where the two parties compete for the same bloc of voters. Public opinion polls have found that majority of AKP voters identify themselves as "conservative

and nationalist" akin to the MHP voters who define themselves primarily as "nationalist."[61]

The AKP faces a dilemma at the present: either risk losing the support of the Kurds to the rising BDP or risk losing the support of Turkish rightists across Anatolia to the MHP. For now, the AKP seems to risk the latter, with the 2013 Kurdish opening. The AKP may continue with this strategy so long as the party gains the upper hand in its struggle against BDP to win the votes of the Kurdish constituency. This strategy proved successful in winning the party many municipalities in the predominantly Kurdish region in 2014. Prime Minister Erdoğan also proved successful in his election bid for the presidency in the summer of 2014, while the votes cast for pro-Kurdish candidate, Selahattin Demirtaş, remained below 10 percent.

This study has argued that the rationale behind the AKP's Kurdish opening policy should be located in the political calculations of the party leadership on the eve of the municipal and presidential elections of 2014. Thus, so far, hopes for a "Kurdish Spring" in Turkey, namely the achievement of more political freedom via a contentious politics campaign by the Kurdish national movement appears to have not resulted in a radical policy change in the country. Rather, the Kurdish opening can be seen as the latest product of an established top-down policy-making mechanism in Turkey that develops policies with minimum input from social movements. Instead, the policy has been developed as part of a government strategy aimed to maximize votes in the elections in Turkey. Therefore, it stands as a typical example of high politics in contrast to contentious politics.

A number of factors have shaped the nature of policy making in Turkey, placing it differently from countries that are more susceptible to the influence of contentious politics campaigns launched by social movements. Initially, the influence of the military on the political life resulted in securing the Kurdish rights issue and prevented negotiations between the government and the Kurdish social movement during the 1980s and 1990s. Later, the AKP was able to develop its Kurdish initiatives after the military tutelage over elected governments was eliminated via democratization reforms. During this process, the Kurdish social movement also gained more leverage over the government by competing in elections and gaining seats in the parliament. Nevertheless, the lack of strong international support for the Kurdish cause and the absence of strong external actors such as the EU, which could influence Ankara's policy making, has limited the impact of the Kurdish contentious campaign

sustained by the armed uprising of the PKK as well as the peaceful demonstrations of the pro-Kurdish civil society. Above all, the higher percentage of Turkish nationalist votes vis-à-vis Kurdish nationalist votes prevents the incumbent AKP from providing concessions to the Kurdish social movement and serves to constrain the effects of Kurdish contentious politics campaign on the policy making of the government. The Turkish case offers a key insight for the broader discourse on social movements and contentious politics: Democratization is a prerequisite for increasing the influence of social movements on policy making, but regime type, by itself, does not guarantee the success of contentious politics campaigns if other factors such as electoral politics encourage top-down policy making within political systems.

NOTES

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3. Özkırımlı, "Vigilance and Apprehension."
4. S. G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movement and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.
5. See, for instance, Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; Tarrow, *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); C. Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); W. A. Gamson,, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1990); Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds., *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning and Emotion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
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8. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; Tarrow, *Strangers at the Gates*; Tilly, *Contentious Performances*.
9. P. Robins, "The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue," *International Affairs* 69, no. 4 (1993): 661.

10. Çiçek, "Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics," 18.
11. M. Yeğen, "Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 119.
12. B. Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1981).
13. Özkırımlı, "Vigilance and Apprehension," 29.
14. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 45.
15. Güneş, *Kurdish National Movement in Turkey.*
16. Robins, "The Overlord State," 666.
17. Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey."
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19. Ersel Aydınlı, "Civil-Military Relations Transformed," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (2012).
20. S. Gumuscu and D. Sert, "The March 2009 Local Elections and the Inconsistent Democratic Transformation of the AKP in Turkey," *Middle East Critique*, 19, no. 1 (2010); Metin Heper and Fuat Keyman, "Double-Faced State: Political Patronage and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998).
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34. Çiçek, "Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics," 16.
35. Cizre, "Turkey at the Crossroads," 86.
36. Çiçek, "Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics," 20.
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44. Öni , "Sharing Power," 112.
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58. Tezcür, "Prospects for Resolution of the Kurdish Question"; Çakır, "Kurdish Political Movement."
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12

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND BOTTOM-UP MOBILIZATION IN REVOLUTIONARY EGYPT: THE CASE OF EGYPTIAN FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS IN CAIRO

Suzan Gibril

INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa have raised fundamental questions about political change, the development of collective action, as well as the making of a common struggle. The uprisings in Tahrir Square have further led to the examination and interrogation of the different ways by which collective action is thought, organized, and staged. It additionally questions the production as well as the formation of political protest in areas dominated by authoritarian rule. Egyptian football fans, in particular, have taken center stage in the clashes with security and police forces. Indeed, established social movements such as the 6th of April movement and Kefaya called upon these football supporters because of their experience in street fights against the police. Subsequently, they played a key role in some of the deadliest clashes, pushing security forces to retreat and securing decisive victories against the Mubarak regime.

This chapter will address the football supporters' role and participation in the revolution, as well as what the implications of their participation can tell us about contentious politics in Egypt. In other words, this chapter aims at examining how and in what ways football supporters played a significant role in the historic developments unfolding in Egypt. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section addresses the issue of contentious politics in authoritarian regimes by focusing firstly on the Egyptian political system and secondly on the security forces as powerful agents of government.

Next, the focus is on the Egyptian Ultras and their identification processes: what it means to be an Ultra, how they identify themselves, and why they mobilize. Finally, the chapter analyzes the implications of the Ultras in the uprisings, as a result of a combination of factors, including the Ultra code, their experience in street fights, their feeling of injustice, and their will to "fight for what is right."

A study of the Egyptian case and, more specifically, of a bottom-up case focusing on traditionally nonpolitical groups, such as the Ultras, is useful as it provides new insights for the study of contentious politics in the Middle East. These everyday dynamics are reshaping societies in the Middle East in ways that are not usually acknowledged by Western onlookers and unwelcomed by authoritarian power holders in the region[1]. Recognizing the power of local actors such as the Ultras and examining the day-to-day activities of these "non-political movements" shed light on the new ways by which ordinary individuals diminish the state's overwhelming power to bring about profound changes within their communities.[2]

The idea here is not to elaborate nor develop existing theories, but rather to analyze and question these supporters' action through the use of existing theories and concepts related to theories of collective action, collective identity, and mobilization. Although collective action is a core characteristic of social movements, it is too soon, in our view, to dub these supporters as being part of a "social movement" because they refrain from the political debate as well as lack hindsight to allow for a proper analysis. The subject may be too current to conduct a rigorous analysis without risking a misguided and misinformed examination.

It is hoped that this chapter will contribute to the growing literature on contentious politics by focusing on a topic that has rarely been studied in this regard, namely the implication of football supporters. How and in what way(s) did football supporters play a significant role in the events unfolding in Egypt? The goal is to examine the ways by which a nonpolitical group of football supporters was brought to engage in a highly political contentious struggle with the Egyptian authorities, alongside activists, protesters, and established social movements. Using concepts related to identity and a perceived sense of injustice, the chapter sheds light on the growing phenomenon that is the "Oltras."[3]

The study is based on seven semistructured interviews conducted with supporters of the two main football clubs in Cairo, namely Ahly and Zamalek,

as well as a participatory observation conducted between May and June 2013. Interviews are an important tool for "making sense of political phenomena,"[4] For research that focuses on, what Mosley calls, "microfoundations," meaning research in terms of beliefs, incentives, and behaviors of individuals, interviews can thoroughly gauge the foundations of individuals' attitudes and actions. Such interviews can further be used to reveal causal mechanisms or to test the accuracy of theories[5]. For the purpose of the case at hand, the choice of interviews is motivated by the desire to understand the supporters' motives for participation in the uprisings as well as to grasp the elements of their identification process that help shed light on these same motives. Although interviews include a smaller sample of respondents than surveys, they gather a much wider and deeper range of responses that can lead to follow-up questions, penetrating more acutely in the actions and attitudes of the participants. Follow-ups can be of particular interest when the respondent appears to hold a contradictory rhetoric, and it came in handy when interviewing the Ultras, especially with regard to the contradiction between their will to refrain from political participation and their highly political actions.

The sample does not aim at being representative of Egyptian supporters. It includes six young men between the ages of 19 and 27 and one young 24-year-old woman; four are Ahly supporters and three are Zamalek supporters. Among the respondents, five are university students and two are working: one in the textile industry, the other as a freelance photographer and artist. The female respondent is a leading figure in the Women's Ultras White Knights (Zamalek), while the male respondents cover a wider range within the group. Two of them are prominent figures within the Ultras Ahlawy (Ahly), and Ultras White Knights (Zamalek) respectively. The remaining four are active members of the group but do not hold key positions within it. The difficulty with such groups is the heterogeneity and multifaceted diversity. In addition to being supporters, some are involved in political or religious movements. To overcome the diverging opinions and religious confessions, the different supporter groups collectively agreed to avoid discussing sensitive issues such as religion or politics and focus on their original purpose, which is football. The gathered data helped to establish connections between members of the group as well as between the members of opposing groups. The interviews finally and more importantly reveal a strong presence of collective identity within the supporter groups and a strong sense of belonging and identification with the country and its struggle.

CONTESTING THE INCONTESTABLE: CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

When approaching the study of contentious collective action in the Middle East, this the first question that arises: When are these mobilizations most likely to emerge, especially in authoritarian contexts? While many scholars give a central role to grievance,[6] this is not sufficient reason for mobilizations to be turned into a sustained protest. They have to include the availability of resources (material and symbolic), regime opponents, changes in the international context, and changes in the political opportunity structure to name but a few[7]. Indeed, according to Paszynska, the emergence and presence of fissures among the ruling elite are often accompanied by the appearance of elite allies willing to establish an "alliance" with the social groups. The State becomes less willing or less able to deploy repression, meaning that challenging authority is less costly and more likely to succeed. Contentious collective action is more frequent when there is the "perceived probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving the desired outcome."[8]

EGYPT'S DEMOCRATIC FAÇADE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENTIOUS COLLECTIVE ACTION

When contentious collective action develops in authoritarian contexts, another question that arises is the probability of the dictatorship leading to a process of democratization rather than its replacement by another authoritarian rule. The political system in Egypt, since the abdication of King Farouk in 1952, has been a succession of semi-authoritarian rules. When news broke that Mubarak had stepped down from power on February 11, 2011, it came as a surprise not only to the world but also, and more importantly, to specialists in the study of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Albrecht's book *Contentious Politics in the Middle East,*[9] although published a few months before the beginning of the uprisings, failed to underline the gaping level of discontent among the population that led to the countrywide and large-scale popular mobilizations of January 2011.[10]

Building upon the literature of authoritarian politics, Geddes[11] focused on the strategies of cooperation and conflict among elites in the different kinds of authoritarian regimes and divided them into four categories, namely *personalist*, *single party*, *military*, or *hybrid regimes*. *Single party regimes* are characterized by the dominance of one party which controls policy, though other parties may legally exist. *Military regimes* are ruled by a group of officers

who influences policy and decides who will rule. *Personalist regimes*, on the other hand, are based on the accession to power of a single charismatic leader (who may wear a uniform or create a single party) but where neither the military nor the party exercises independent power in the decision-making process. Their leaders emerge through different selection processes, use different decision-making procedures, and rely on various sections of society for backing and support. They further deal with opposition as well as with succession in contrasting ways, which highly depends on the nature of the intra-elite competition.[12] Finally, *hybrid regimes* combine characteristics from both single-party regimes and either personalist or military regimes. In practice, most hybrid regimes are single-party personalist amalgams because there are very few single-party military combinations.[13] Key characteristics of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes include the use of formally democratic rhetoric and institutions; limit the risks of plurality and free competition; use new institutions to maintain their grip on power; and allow for political pluralism, free media, and free association while establishing several unofficial instruments and tools of corruption, violence, and intimidation.[14]

Egypt, according to this classification, combined[15] features pertaining to all three regimes, with a strong military, the presence of a single party, as well as the establishment of a long-lasting charismatic leader (personal authoritarian rule having lasted for almost 60 years). According to Bishry, the regime that ruled Egypt was not merely authoritarian, defining the problem as one relating to the "personalisation of power." He explains that unlike traditional authoritarian regimes, the ruling elite does not represent a particular fragment of society. Rather, it controls power simply by empowering its own personnel, overcoming pressures for change by keeping a small circle of loyalists, thus creating a system in which professional and political exchanges are replaced with personal interests and individual ties.[16] Consequently, all branches of government remain under the overpowering control of the executive body, hindering the development of autonomous groupings.[17] In a context where military officials are linked to regime elites through bonds of blood or sect or ethnicity, where career advancement is dependent on political loyalty rather than merit, where the distinction between public and private is obscure, and where economic corruption and patronage are ubiquitous, the fate of the army's leadership becomes inherently linked to the regime's capacity to remain in power.[18] The presence of such a regime in Egypt has strong consequences on collective mobilization. Civil society is subject to the

overwhelming power of the executive apparatus and strong state control on a daily basis, which discourages mobilization. Public gatherings and all forms of political contestation are violently repressed by the police, and all political activists are arrested under random pretenses and locked away.[19]

Democracy and elections are, in regimes such as Egypt, a façade providing the regime with the needed legitimacy without truly exposing it to the risks of political competition.[20] Indeed, before the outbreak of the uprising, the regime had adopted coercive measure to stop other political parties from developing, including passing the "law on political parties." This law included certain articles that limited the opposition's actions, thus preventing the new parties from conducting their activities until approval was granted by the regime—a lengthy process more often than not resulting in a rejection.[21] The law was notably used for the elections of October 2010 in which Mubarak's party got 95 percent of the seats, alienating the population. One of the early demands of the 25th of January's was the abrogation of the rigged parliament.

By providing institutional mechanisms to regulate access to public office and by promising future opportunities for career advancement, ruling parties manage to generate a sense of "security" among power holders "that their immediate and long-term interests are best served by remaining within the party's organisation."[22] To survive, however—and preserve its legitimacy—such a system must allow for the development of the counterpowers that they try to neutralize, which will open up new opportunities and spaces for contention.

Contentious collective action is defined as "collective events, which represent potentially subversive acts that challenge normalized practices, modes of contestation, or systems of authority."[23] Scholars in the field of contentious politics conclude that collective action, though not a sufficient condition for democratization, can be a decisive factor in regime transformation.[24] More recently, McAdam et al. made a stronger claim, arguing that democratization and contentious collective action are inseparable: "Democracy results from, mobilizes, and reshapes popular contestation."[25] In their opinion, contentious collective action is an "episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants."

As mentioned earlier, the development of contentious action in Egypt is complicated by the regime's response to counterpowers: strong "coercive

agencies" who have "carte blanche" when it comes to "defending state interests." These police forces usually resolve to "routine" forms of repression, such as surveillance, threats, harassment, detention, and "legal persecution," to restrict and discourage any kind of dissident behaviour. The Egyptian case is interesting in this regard, first, because it sheds light on the weaknesses of such authoritarian regimes and, second, because it allows for a firsthand analysis of the development of large-scale mobilization.

THE POLICE: A POWERFUL AGENT OF GOVERNMENT

In the next section, we will focus on the government's instrumentalization of police forces as a means to resist any opposing force, regardless of its political orientation. It is important to underline that national security in Egypt is divided between the police and the army. Collective mobilizations are complicated by the presence of a strong and stable state control in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes. It is essential to distinguish between the police and the army. While the army was credited by the population for restoring stability to the country after the ousting of Mubarak in the wake of the uprisings,[26] the police's role was that of the oppressor and the physical representative of the Ministry of Interior. In Egypt, the police act not only as the organization in charge of public security but also, first and foremost, as an agent of the government. In addition to ensuring public and national security, the police's power covers other areas, such as the market, transport, roads, food supplies, public utilities, taxation, and public morality.[27] The Egyptian police apparatus is, by design, intrusive, abusive, and violent. The organizational chart of Egypt's Ministry of Interior is quite revealing with regard to the extensive remit of police monitoring and surveillance as well as the degree of specialization and complexity of its departments.[28]

This intrusiveness can be attributable to several political factors that have aided the police in consolidating their power, notably the role it was assigned in repressing the Islamist opposition, dating back to the 1950s and 1960s. Another important factor was the state's decision to withdraw from certain welfare provisions and its promotion of neoliberal economic policies, which led to the development of an informal labor market as well as the privatization of social services.[29] Both these factors resulted not only in the heightening of security controls, but also, and more importantly, it reinforced the existing corrupt system. In addition to serving the interests of the ruling elite, security forces developed their own corrupt culture, instating a system of bribes and

placing what is known as "plain-clothes" policemen—civilians hired by the police and security forces to collect information—in neighborhoods under the pretext of ensuring stability and peace. To do so without raising suspicion,[30] the police usually position their undercover informants in local communities by providing them with a vending kiosk or by appointing them to the *carta* system, shuttle buses and vans. As an Egyptian aptly put it, "We don't feel safe because we always feel like we are being watched. […] The other day, I was coming home and I was approached by a policeman. I got fined because I did not have my passport. I am Egyptian, I don't need a passport. It's their way of showing who is the boss."[31]

Many Egyptians view the police as people who are corrupting society[32]; by using violence, security forces become the instigators of corruption and unrest. The police justifies the use of force against any person suspected of taking part in "dubious activities" citing the need to ensure public safety against the *baltagiyya* or thugs. Originally, *baltagiyya* was a name given to the subjects attached to the Islamist activists in the popular quarters.[33] Later considered a national security issue, the term was used by the Mubarak regime to justify the containment of militant Islamist groups in the mid-1990s. The police instituted fear of these "young and violent men" to justify their presence in different neighborhoods or their use of violence. The meaning of *baltagiyya,* however, varies. While the state and its bodies describe them as a "social problem" and or as "young troublemakers," they are known to the population as "police informants," or drug dealers: "people paid by the police to spy on the population and report back to their superior."[34]

A key characteristic of the 25th of January Revolution was the fact that the extent of the protest caught the police off guard, as they were not expecting such an outcome. On January 28 (Friday of Anger), police forces were overwhelmed and forced to retreat. Because of the increasing desertion within their ranks, as well as the army's refusal to use fire against "the people of Egypt,"[35] regime officials called upon the *baltagiyya*—the hired armed thugs—to disperse the crowds of protesters in exchange for money. This ploy, however, was not successful. One of the hired thugs explains: "[Anti Mubarak protesters] were willing to die for what they believed in, and I was just fighting them because I had been paid LE200 (about £30) to do so."[36] This phenomenon, however, remains unobservable to international actors because of the authorities' tendency to rely on an arbitrary, informal social control of protest.[37] Intimidation, harassment, and threats of violence are tools used by both

"local police officers" and the *baltagiyya,* by "state agents loosely connected to national political elites."[38]

Egyptian football supporters—the Ultras—have a long history of encounters with police forces and the *baltagiyya.* These Ultras are an organized group of supporters, officially active since 2007 (as the group "Ultras"; the supporters were active before that but were not a distinct group). The Ultras group evolved in a context that still relies on "*violent, state-based repression.*"[39] Generally speaking, Ultras are groups whose activities center around the stadium, their support for their team, and violence.[40] Football supporters and Ultras, in particular, resort to violence in cases of "self-defense," notably when they are being hassled by the police at the end of football matches due to their use of flares and "politically incorrect" slogans.[41] Police forces routinely arrest supporters the night before the game for "questioning," to ensure that they do not represent a threat to "national security" and release them the day after, sometimes in a bad shape.[42] Their use of violence is not only limited to self-defense. Some of the more "hard-core" fans customarily organize "street fights" with rival supporter clubs bringing their activities closer to those of traditional hooligans.[43]

The Ultras' clashes with the police have been cultivated in a long history of violent encounters, of humiliations (the police often use the expression "*ya walad*" meaning "you boy," closely related to the reference to "boy" used during the segregationist period in the United States), and harassment.[44] One of the respondents explained his encounter with the police in these terms: "I was arrested by the police because he recognised me. The day before we went to Tahrir with the oltras and he saw us. He feared us when we walked by him. But felt so powerful when I was alone with him and his 'friends." The difference is we didn't attack him. It's a question of principle." He was released the day after, and had been beaten up when he refused to give up information regarding his "suspicious activities" (he implied that they wanted information regarding his activities as an Ultra but they never said it openly): "It's easier to attack someone when they are alone and cannot defend himself. They are cowards."

This feeling of anger and humiliation is an important feature of the relationship between the Ultras and the police, as it contributes to the development of a sense of injustice, which in turn encourages an upsurge of violence against police forces and shapes the supporters' identity ("I am an Ultra, and as an Ultra, I am opposed to any kind of figure of authority").

EGYPTIAN ULTRAS: IDENTITY, IDEALISM, AND POLITICS

One key component of the Ultras' identity is this intrinsic opposition to police and security forces. This relationship structures their motives for mobilization as well as reinforces their sense of belonging to the Ultras as a group. Identity refers to a place occupied by an individual in society. A person can, therefore, occupy many different places depending on the context as well as he/she can share this identity with other people.[45] It then becomes a *collective identity* and a motive for mobilization. In the next section, theories of collective identity are analyzed to understand the Ultras' patterns of mobilization and identification with the group and the motives for participating in the Egyptian Revolution.

PORT SAID: A POWERFUL CATALYST FOR MOBILIZATION

On February 1, 2012, 74 Ahly fans were killed in what was presented as a "riot between football fans gone wrong."[46] The Ultras interpret the Port Said clashes as a kind of vendetta on the part of security forces for their participation in the Revolution. Following the events, massive protests erupted in Cairo and around the country, with people coming out and blaming security forces for the deadly violence: "This is a conspiracy. We wouldn't do this to our brothers," said Mohamed Abdel Fattah, standing outside the governor's office. "The Ahly supporters were predominantly from Port Said. My brother was one of them. Port Said is sad today; all residents of the city are sad and feel as if their own relatives have died."[47] An Ultra Masrawy added that the "situation was strange. To see people dead at a football game. [...] This is something unheard of. This could never come from us."[48]

Al-Masry supporters, as well as Al-Ahly supporters, who were interviewed, insist there was a security lapse, saying that they saw supporters storm onto the pitch without being stopped by security forces. One Masry Ultra said that he did go onto the pitch to celebrate with his friends, but when he saw what was going on in the Ahly stands, "we ran to form a cordon at the bottom and prevent more people from going up." He added: "At half time, four buses with [so called][49] Masry fans arrived. I had never seen them before. They were the ones who attacked them. The others the infiltrators ran past to chase the Ahly fans. We won the game, why would we attack them?"

Masry Ultras later pointed out that the governor and head of security were absent from the match, which was uncommon for games against Ahly. Many agreed that those who attacked the Ahly supporters were not regular

Masry Ultras, one of them (Yasser) adding, "Are you trying to convince me that the police and the military can secure parliamentary elections involving 27 million people and they can't secure two stands with a few thousand people?"

Many sources confirmed what had been said by Masry Ultras, saying that it was the government's way of taking revenge for the "humiliation we inflicted during the battles." One of my respondents a Zamalek Ultra who lost his best friend in the violent clashes of Port Said, explained that they "are not afraid of police brutality. If anything, it motivates us even more to fight for what is right. We have lived in fear and violence for so long. We have seen death and experienced the pain of gunshots and loss. What worse could happen? If we die, we will have died fighting and there will be many more after us to fight for Egypt."

Ultras in Egypt have always had a difficult and "dysfunctional" relationship with security forces. Many of them, as well as an large section of the protesters, believe the Port Said clashes were a way for security forces and, by extension, the government to take revenge on the supporters for their participation in the uprisings. One of the respondents explained that, in his opinion, "we are a threat to them [the police and regime] because we were there in Tahrir. We know what they did. [...] We know who the agents [the undercover agents] are so we mess with their investigations. We can also spot the *baltagiyya* who help the police and that is why we get arrested and beaten up. And that is why they killed them in Port Said."[50]

More than just a "football riot," Port Said represents a breaking point in the involvement of the Ultras in the large-scale mobilization. While their participation was undeniable in the first days of the uprisings, it was limited to a passive engagement. Their presence in Tahrir Square was specifically aimed at defending the protesters against police brutality. It is essential to bear in mind that the Ultras were not one of the leading forces of the movement. They responded to a call from those organizing the social movements, namely the Kefaya and the 6th of April Movement by uploading an anonymous video on YouTube, where they assured those committed to demonstrate on 25 January and those fearful of police brutality that there would be an Egyptian *fasil*, squadron, present and competent to defend them. The video also showed footage of clashes between Ultras groups, particularly Al-Ahly and Zamalek fans, and the police.[51]

On the days leading up to the 25th of January, messages that the Ultras would come were posted on the *Kullina Khaled Saeed*—We Are All Khaled

Said—page.[52] To emphasize and stress their nonpolitical affiliation however, Ahlawy Ultras posted a message on their Facebook page saying: "Ultras Ahlawy declares that it is a sports group only, which has no political inclinations or affiliations of whatever kind. Therefore the group is not participating in the demonstrations planned to take place on this Tuesday 25 of January."[53] Similarly, the Ultras White Knights underlined that "[The report saying that the Ultras White Knights are participating in the January 25 demonstrations] are without any truthful basis and are lacking in consideration of the role of the group and the fundamental reason for its establishment."[54]

It is therefore very difficult to establish the Ultras' intentions in the early days of the uprisings, and it seems improbable that there was any collective intention in participating as a distinguished group, the Ultras. They basically brought their years of experience in fighting against the police—and rival supporter groups—from the stadium to the streets, thus playing an indispensable role in major key battles, including the Battle of the Camel and the infamous Battle of Mohammed Mahmoud.

The clashes of Port Said, on the other hand, were, from the Ultras' point of view, a direct attempt, from the Ministry of Interior, on the Ultras as a social group and resulted in nationwide mobilizations. The whole incident raises too many questions to be dismissed as a violent act of hooliganism. Seen as an act orchestrated by the Ministry of Interior, and moving up the hierarchy as high as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the ruling force at the time of the events, the Ultras massively mobilized to voice their discontent, shifting their energy and activities from the stadium to civil society.

Their politicization process was epitomized by the truce called between both Ahly and Zamalek clubs. In effect, after the death of the 74 Ahly fans, both supporter groups decided to suspend their rival activities and unite in support of the victims. This decision can be explained by the fact that the "Ultras," as a social group, felt they were under attack and were singled out—in their view—by the Ministry of Interior as a threat, causing the deaths of Port Said. Symbols of this union adorn the walls of Cairo, Alexandria, and Egypt as a whole. It also galvanized a wave of solidarity among supporters in other major cities such as Istanbul and Rome, revealing the extent of solidarity between these supporter groups as well as a strong "supporters' identity," which cuts through linguistic, cultural, and territorial boundaries. Indeed, the Port Said incident threatened their *identity* as a social group, independent from their other activities, and explains their mobilization.

THE "ULTRA IDENTITY": FOOTBALL, LOYALTY, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

"What does it mean to be an Ultra"?

> Being an Ultra is more than football. Being an Ultra means you respect the code and live by it. […] Being an Ultra is about loving football, your team and your people. You know … we look out for each other.[55]

The Ultras' identity is deeply rooted in football and is revealed most frequently during the games, but is not limited to the sporting arena. Ultras groups started forming in the early 2000s via the Internet and through fan forums before materializing into distinctive organizations in 2007, based on the Italian model.[56] They differ, however, from their Italian counterparts, in the sense that Italian Ultras have right-wing tendencies whereas Egyptian Ultras lean toward anti-authoritarian tendencies.[57] Ultras Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights were the first groups to appear in Egypt and soon became the two largest and most visible organizations in the country.[58] Their activities are focused on the club and the support for their respective teams and are aimed at inspiring a sense of belonging among the supporters, impressing spectators with the flare shows and the chants, and intimidating rival teams' supporters.

What is ignored about these football supporters is the high level of organization and structure within the group. The leadership structure is centralized, subdivided into regional structures, and local meetings are organized when important decisions need to be made. However, in practice, the organization is both centralized and decentralized. The predominance of a horizontal structure helps reinforce group attitudes and moderates divisive issues between members with diverging ideological opinions or convictions.[59]

Castells defines *identity* as referring to social actors, as being a process of "construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning."[60] For any given individual or collective actor, there may be a plurality of identities. Identity, however, must be distinguished from what sociologists call "roles" or "role-sets." According to Castells, roles (being a student, a mother, a politician, a football player) are defined by society and its definition of norms. This chapter will apply the definition of identity as "a source of meaning for the actors themselves, constructed through a process of individuation,[61] as well as a way of distinguishing themselves for other people/groups."

Identity is a key concept when analyzing the dynamics of social protest in Egypt. According to Klandermans and Simon, "People evince political collective identity to the extent that they engage as self-conscious group members in a power struggle on behalf of their group knowing that it is the wider, more inclusive societal context in which this struggle has to be fought out."[62] A special emphasis needs to be put on the role of space in the formation of collective identity, especially when studying groups such as the football supporters. Fernando Bosco argues that "place-based collective rituals" serve to maintain social network cohesion both spatially and symbolically[63]. Places that are collectively identified as meaningful to the cause become symbols to build and maintain existing network connections.[64] The concept of territory and public space is closely related to the Ultras and their activities. As was noted in an earlier segment, Egypt's authoritarian rule and the overbearing presence of police reduced public space considerably through extensive surveillance techniques and physical intimidation and abuse.[65] The stadium and its surroundings, as well as the groups of Ultras, became virtual spaces of freedom and autonomy where the frustrations of humiliation and abuse could be channeled. Tahrir Square became, in this respect, a public space of transformative political action and radical progressive change, in the heart of the government's quarters.[66] Collective rituals reinforce participants' feelings of group membership, their "basic moral commitments and group solidarity and…their activist identities."[67]

As discussed earlier, the identity of football supporters is consolidated not only around team commitment, but also, and more importantly, around pride and discipline. Beshir explains: "Your eyes cannot miss an Ultra, whether inside or outside the stadium. By nature, he is proud, aware of his importance among the rest of his people who respect him for his capabilities."[68] More importantly, it seems that their identity as football supporters, as Ultras, goes beyond the stadium and guides their daily lives, as is shown by the presence of an Ultra Code. This code includes notably the obligation not to get involved politically, (remain neutral with regard to political ideas—this is to be understood as political in the sense of "party politics"); to treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, class, religion, conviction; to not attack the weak; and to always stand for what is right.[69] Though they claim to be "just a group of supporters" who express their love and loyalty to their club as well as set themselves apart from regular fans, the presence of such a code implies that their identity may exceed the sole purpose of supporting and conceal another, deeper dimension.

The most striking element in this set of rules is the obligation to remain "politically neutral," which contradicts what has been observed during the uprisings. How does one explain the inconsistency between their actions and their discourse? Jean Leca underlined that the definition of the "political object" depends on two factors, namely the value given to an action by the subject and its evaluation by the power holders[70]. The limits of the "political object" are thus to be found in the balance of powers between the different groups at play as well as by the group/subject itself. In other words, the Ultras' actions can be interpreted as political, essentially because they are given a political overtone by power holders and analysts, even though the group itself has not grounded its actions politically.

Football supporters in Egypt (and around the world) do not wish to be seen as political or politicized, because being "political," to them, relates to "party politics" and being "politicized" implies that they are being used by political forces: "We steer clear of politics. Competition in Egypt is on the pitch. We break the rules and regulations when we think they are wrong. You don't change things in Egypt talking about politics. We're not political, the government knows that and that is why it has to deal with us."[71] Their refrain from the political sphere is also justified by the fact that it would question their autonomy as well as clash with the group's core beliefs. They set themselves apart from any other group of supporters and identify themselves only with the club. Being subject to "political manipulation" or allowing politics to enter the group would undermine their credibility and even their existence. One respondent explains: "In the Ultras you have leftists, and liberals, and salafis, and Ikhuan (Muslim Brotherhood). There are even Jews and Copts so we don't talk about those things. Politics is not important. We love our club so we don't lose time fighting for no reason. We let politicians do that."[72]

BOTTOM-UP MOBILISATIONS IN EGYPT: THE ULTRAS' PARTICIPATION IN THE REVOLUTION

The Ultras identify by way of their love for their club and direct their mobilizations toward visibility and support for the club. In the context of the Egyptian Revolution, however, their actions took a highly political turn, not because they chose to fight for political ideals, but because their actions were interpreted by onlookers—national and international—as being highly political. We have chosen to stick to a broad conceptualization of political participation with reference to activities of a "political nature or having political implications

that aim at affecting policy change whether formally or informally by actors within civil society organisations, social movements, and/or citizens."[73]

WHAT ROLE, WHAT MOTIVES?

The established social movements such as Kefaya and the 6th of April Movement called upon the Ultras to ensure the security of protesters during the first demonstrations on January 25, 2011. These movements turned to the Ultras because they are notorious for their clashes with the police and the security forces. Cultivated in a history of violence due to their football-related activities, the Ultras were seen, by the population, as the only group not only capable of resisting the riot police, but also competent enough to teach them the necessary guerrilla techniques to fight back if the push came to a shove.

Ultras became a surprisingly central actor in the large-scale popular uprisings, bringing their organizational unity, their turbulent spirit, and their fighting experience to Tahrir Square. As their actions against the riot police became increasingly visible, and their participation and numbers grew, their reputation shifted. They went from "stadium hooligans" to "national heroes."[74] Their efforts were massively relayed on social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as by bloggers and journalists such as James Montague, Ali Mustafa, Alaa Abd El Fattah, and James Dorsey among others.[75] Among the thousands of featured posts, tweets such as "*The Ultras have arrived!*" or "*Ikhuan tremble! The Oltras are coming!*"[76] are fairly representative of the newfound respect the Ultras inspired among the public. Nawara Negm, a well-known opposition activist and journalist, tweeted: "During the revolution sit-in in Mohamed Mahmoud, Ultras youth used to donate their blankets to the women sleeping in the street in the cold winter days. They usually gave the excuse that they are not continuing and will go home. I followed one of them from a distance to see if he was really going home. But no. He walked away a short distance and then crouched in the entrance of a building to sleep. Without cover."[77]

The football supporters' will to maintain a "neutral political colour" should be regarded as an asset rather than a weakness, according to Melucci's theory of collective action.[78] Rather than rallying with a given political or religious force, the Ultras used their dynamism, group mentality, and turbulent attitude to rally with the protesters and give them the necessary motivation and positivity to pursue the political struggle.[79]

Defrance further noted that apoliticism could be described as "a way of doing politics, by seeking to unite unanimous masses and shared goals beyond partisan divisions."[80] Following this logic, the supporters' apolitical stance enables them to legitimize certain positions or actions passed as "actions of collective good" that transcend any political opinion. The Ultras do not relate their demands for justice to any kind of political or social activism, but as a way of "doing what is right—for the group". They view themselves as entirely independent from the world of party politics, which they condemn as "just a bunch of rich men drinking tea and talking about nonsense. They don't care about the real problems". The Ultras Code is a guideline in daily life for these supporters and they abide by its rules whether they are in or out of the stadium: "When we are in the stadium with our colours, we are the Ultras. When we are outside on the street even with your mother, you are an Ultra. When something happens and it goes against your rules, you have the obligation to do something. That is what we do."[81]

The supporters' participation in the Egyptian revolution can be understood by utilizing the theories of collective identity. It is important, nonetheless, to highlight that collective identity refers to a sense of solidarity among members of a social group. It helps define the group's interests and cultural attributes, including skills, habits, loyalties, beliefs, and ideologies.[82] In the Ultras' case, this collective identity defines not only who they are as a group, but also what they support and where their loyalty stands.

Even though the Ultras refrain from politics, some of their basic values include the notions of freedom, justice, and dignity. The first element is related to the Ultra Code and their determination to do what is right. The Ultras are idealists and their acute sense of justice is one of the reasons they decided to return to Tahrir day after day. Even though their activities are intrinsically related to violence, may it be in their encounters with the riot police or in the staging of organized "street battles" with rival clubs,[83] one of their rules clearly states to "always stand for what is right." "At first I didn't want to go [to Tahrir]. But then I saw that people were getting beaten up by the police. People that didn't have what the police had. I called some of my friends and we went together. When your people are being attacked you cannot watch and not act. It is not who I am…who we are."[84]

By doing "what was right" in their opinion, these supporters implicated themselves in a political struggle alongside political activists and normal citizens, even though they did not necessarily adhere to the ideals they were

defending. They got involved, firstly, because violence is a central part of their activities, but mainly because the use of violence, limited to self-defense, is justified by their moral obligation—as members of the Ultras and believers of the "Code"—to act on behalf of "morality" and "righteousness."[85] The Ultras resort to violence in two cases. The first is related to their supporting activities and is tightly connected to their opposition with the riot police. They justify these violent encounters by underlining the fact that they are fighting on a level playing field, against an equal opponent. This element is strongly related to the second case in which they resort to violence, which is the case in which a person is being attacked by a stronger opponent. This last element is unequivocally correlated with their participation in the uprisings. The respondents' justification was to say "they were doing what was right"; however, one the leading figures of Ultras Ahlawy explained that "doing what is right" is rooted in a complete aversion for injustice.

The second factor that provides an explanation for the supporters' motives for mobilization, which is intrinsically linked to the first, is their fundamental opposition to police brutality. Football supporters and the police share a long history of violence and confrontation, dating back to their early actions as supporters. During the uprisings, the Ultras used their experience to resist police brutality. Their presence was unmistakably visible in some of the major battles, including the battle of Mohamed Mahmoud Street. Their involvement there was crucial because it marked the first big victory against the oppressive system. More importantly that victory exposed the cracks of a declining regime, which, in turn, encouraged current and future demonstrators to take to the streets.[86]

The final element refers to the perception of injustice developed within the group as a result of years of harassment, intimidation, and humiliation. The Egyptian Revolution was used as a pretext to unleash the anger and satisfy a desire for retribution fed by years of conflict and violent encounters with government officials. This factor took a particular meaning in the aftermath of the events of Port Said, when thousands of supporters around the country took to the streets and demanded the prosecution and incarceration of those responsible for the incidents. Ahly Ultras as well as Zamalek Ultras converged to different points of interest around Egypt (Tahrir, Port Said, Alexandria, the stadium) for weeks before the verdict, even threatening the regime: "justice or chaos."[87]

The truce called between both rival clubs (and between all rival supporter groups around the country) can be explained by the desire to fight injustice.

These groups share the same basic ideals. The only detail setting them apart from one another is the fact that they support rival clubs. So when the group of supporters (as a whole, no distinction between clubs or affiliations) comes under attack, it would be normal to see them express their support and rally against a common enemy or for a common cause. The events of Port Said not only affected the supporters but also the country as a whole. As mentioned previously, identity is central to the individual because it places him within broader society. More than just football supporters, these youngsters were also sons, brothers, cousins, friends, and students in a bigger social milieu. It is worth mentioning that the will of rival camps to make peace with one another and look in the same direction is symptomatic of the level of identification with the nation. As one respondent put it: "We are the Ultras, we are Egypt."

The elements presented here may suggest the development of a social movement, given that the Ultras share many common characteristics such as their high organizational skills, their will to congregate, and their willingness to mobilize. Nevertheless, it seems a bit premature to give them that label, mainly because the Ultras have yet to clearly express their determination to get involved politically and influence the public debate. Their mobilization is centered on the club, its members, and its interests, and their participation in the large-scale popular uprisings is ascribed to their shared enmity with the police forces and the Ministry of Interior. This being said, their mobilization has evolved in two regards since the Port Said incident. First, their array of tools mobilized in their "supporter activities" has been reinvested in their "civic" mobilizations. Tools such as the songs and the use of graffiti, which were written and painted to glorify the club and the team, have taken a political turn with songs glorifying the fallen and ridiculing Ministry officials and the police (although they already used these satiric songs), and graffiti bearing political messages. Second, the Ultras have adopted other resistance and mobilization techniques from traditional social movements, such as sit-ins and roadblocks, which can suggest a change in their participation and/or the nature of the movement.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Egyptian Revolution impacted on the dynamics of political participation. Formal political participation in Egypt was predominantly restricted to regime-affiliated party activity, co-opted civil society participation, and/

or voting in nontransparent and fraudulent elections.[88] This compelled the development of "underground movements" and alternative spaces of freedom. The stadium and the football arena as a whole became one of those spaces, allowed the free expression of opinions, and catalyzed social tensions and frustrations, ultimately becoming a space of political socialization, a space where individuals familiarized themselves with politics and social issues.[89] These spaces defied the coercive measures put in place by the government—such as the Law on political parties—to avoid any political opposition and limit the influence of social movements and opposition forces.[90]

The aim of this chapter was to use the concept of collective identity to explain the supporters' motives for mobilization. Through an analysis of their powerful sense of belonging and strong ties to the group and the nation, it was possible to identify several aspects that can be useful in deepening our knowledge of the issues and factors interfering in the mobilization processes and involvement of football supporters, including their strong identification with the group, their intrinsic opposition to police forces, as well as their use of tools such as slogans, chants, and graffiti.

Their participation started off passive and was specifically focused on security and defense against police brutality. There was no desire to get involved politically and their message was clear about going into the Revolution: "Ultras Ahlaway declares that it is a sports group only, which has no political inclinations or affiliations of whatever kind."[91] Other Ultras groups such as Ultras White Knights also circulated similar messages. Their involvement later developed into a more politicized one after the clashes at Port Said, precisely because it was interpreted as a personal attack on, and it threatened the identity of, Ultras groups, as a social category, in and out of the country.

When it comes to the Ultras' participation in the large-scale popular uprisings, one must distinguish between their participation as a group and their participation as individuals. The group's involvement in the mobilization is intrinsically linked and highly dependent on the individual Ultras' choice to take part in the action. This dichotomy further explains the discrepancy in the Ultras' discourse as opposed to their actions. Though the Ultras, as a social group, refuse to associate themselves with any form of ideology and refrain from participating in the political debate, the Ultras, as individuals, have been socialized to political issues within and outside of the stadium, which explains their will to mobilize and participate in the revolutionary movement, even supposing its limited scope in the early days.

The study of the Ultras' participation sheds light on the way traditionally nonpolitical groups such as sports groups or musicians and artists come to participate in a revolutionary process and contribute to the movement, even though their primary purpose is not to influence the public debate. More than just being about social movements and their mobilization, the popular uprisings in Egypt have brought focus to a wide range of actors. The Ultras' participation further suggests the permeability of boundaries between the different sections of society. As Sidney Tarrow pointed out, contentious politics "emerges in response to changes in the political opportunities and threats when participants perceive and respond to a variety of incentives: material and ideological, partisan and group-based, long-standing and episodic."[92] Recognizing the power of local actors such as the Ultras and examining the day-to-day activities of these "non-political movements" shed light on the new ways by which ordinary individuals diminish the state's overwhelming power, resulting in profound changes within their respective communities, as well as within society as a whole.

Future research in the field of sport and the Ultras should include studies on the issue of gender. Though the purpose of the present chapter was not to address these issues, they are a key element when it comes to the study of contentious politics in Egypt and in the Middle East as a whole. One cannot deny the fundamental part the women played in the uprisings. With regard to the Ultras, the question of gender is interesting in with regard to three aspects. First, because football and football fandom are mostly male dominated. Second, because Egypt is a very conservative society, interactions between the sexes is still taboo, and that the set of social expectations imposed on women is very different from those imposed on men. Finally, the question of women Ultras groups is very rarely addressed in the literature, and their presence is not always acknowledged. These women groups not only dismiss the sexist bias that dominates the world of football, but also question the whole conservative nature of the society in which they are evolving.

NOTES

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5. Ibid., 3

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13

A BERBER SPRING: THE BREAKTHROUGH OF AMAZIGH MINORITIES IN THE UPRISINGS' AFTERMATH

Cleo Jay

INTRODUCTION

Since the start of the "Arab Spring" in late 2010, much has been written about the uprisings that swept through North Africa. However, the role of Amazigh[1] militants in the demonstrations and their early support for popular contestation movements were barely acknowledged, despite the distinctive flags and banners used throughout the region.[2] These symbols sought both to assert their separate identity and to challenge the narrative of the Arab Spring as a uniform phenomenon caused by similar circumstances in different states. In several countries, beyond the socioeconomial difficulties, the protests have revealed "cultural claims"[3] from populations refusing assimilation to Arab culture. The Amazigh cultural movement has become increasingly influential and organized in the last decade, particularly with the development of the Internet, which has enabled it to become a truly transnational movement incorporating Amazigh minorities as well as the diaspora. This movement is difficult to define: it is composed of a multitude of cultural and (increasingly) political associations spread in various states and aiming at different goals. While some seek to promote the use of Amazigh languages and associated traditions, others have political ambitions and claim that Amazigh minorities are deprived of their basic constitutional rights.[4] The former tend to keep strong links with the rural communities constituting the majority of Amazigh dialects speakers;[5] the latter, on the contrary, are generally urban and educated, with ties to the international diaspora.

The Arab Spring has brought to light the new sense of cohesion in Amazigh activists from different states and their desire to engage in contentious politics as part of a separate political current based on their perceived ethnic belonging. This increasing visibility of the *Amazighité* and its claim to represent a specific minority group oblige us to consider several issues: What are the demands of Berber activists in the aftermath of the uprisings? Is the concept of a transnational Amazigh identity a historical reality or a political construction? How is the growing political prominence of this movement affecting the wider politics of the region? What is the significance of their engagement with contentious politics?

This chapter looks at the development of this movement in the pre- and post—Arab Spring era, during which it is making renewed political demands for recognition and trying to establish itself as a political force. It also analyzes the claim for a uniform Amazigh identity and the concept of *Tamazgha* as an Amazigh, indigenous North Africa. Finally, it looks at the risk of co-optation of this movement both by regimes seeking to promote it to counterbalance the rise of Islamism in the region and by foreign agencies.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: THE BIRTH OF AN AMAZIGH CONSCIOUSNESS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE NORTH AFRICA

While Amazigh minorities are often deemed to be the original, indigenous inhabitants of North Africa with roots going back to the Punic empires, the concept of an Amazigh identity (*Amazighité* is often used by activists), is quite recent. The word *Amazigh* itself is controversial: it is "more appropriately reserved for references to Berber militants."[6] In fact, both *Berber* and *Amazigh* are labels that remain alien for a large part of those populations, who rather describe themselves as part of a specific tribe as well as belonging to the Muslim *ummah*.[7] The Amazigh movement represents thus a will to define itself away both from the derogatory image associated with the French word *Berbère* (from the latin *barbarus*) and from an elitist group remaining largely inaccessible to the very people it claims to empower.

It is important to note that the first distinctions between "Berber" and "Arab" populations were made by the French colonists in Algeria, and then in Morocco. Rural Amazigh communities were perceived as sharing Western ideals and the French policy was to try to co-opt them as allies in a bid to divide the population. The "Berber decree" of 1930 stated that Berber minorities should not be subject to Islamic Law and would thus receive a privileged

status from the colonial authorities. The aim was to remove those minorities from the authority of the Sultan and to artificially separate North Africans in two groups: one which was perceived as friendlier, therefore easier to subdue, and one which was considered an enemy.[8] This decree caused uproar among the population and this policy backfired in many ways, prompting the colonized populations to ally against French imperialism through a "unified Arab/Berber coalition."[9]

The roots of the distinction between "Berber" and "Arab" are inherently political: though it was first a strategy of the French colonists to "divide and conquer," in the postcolonial era, it became a means of resistance against the standardization of identity and culture through Arabization and globalization[10]. Although Berberophones represent large minorities (estimated to be 40 percent in Morocco, 20 to 25 percent in Algeria,[11] although numbers vary), they were sidelined in the post-Independence era as leaders sought to unite the region by re-affirming its Arab, Muslim identity, which was perceived as being the antithesis of what the West stood for. The Arab League (created in 1945) and the Committee for the Liberation of the Arab Maghreb (1947) both aimed to unite colonized North African states around shared values and to facilitate their freedom by reaffirming their belonging to the Arab world, and by extension to the Muslim *ummah*. Pan-Arabic ideology was perceived as a challenge to colonialism and its Berberist projections,[12] thus an ideal tool for those nations to reaffirm their identity after decades of settlement.

While anthropological studies up to the 1970s, such as that of Ernest Gellner, didn't record any "Amazigh" consciousness,[13] there has been a clear shift in the last three decades, with activists increasingly creating ties with each other to address issues of alienation and lack of autonomy across borders. Mohammed Chafik, a figure of the moderate current Amazigh movement in Morocco, describes a growing awareness of "a racist aspect of pan Arabism," through which Arab nationalists considered themselves superior to "ethnic Muslim groups."[14] Mehdi Ben Barka, Moroccan left-wing political leader assassinated in 1965, resumes the description: "The Berber is simply someone who hasn't gone to school."[15] While French and Classical Arabic were spoken by the country's urban elites, Amazigh languages (as well as colloquial *darija* to some extent) were considered to be local dialects of low prestige. The Berberophone man was inherently "Other," illiterate, and unable to participate in the postcolonial building of the State. The privileged status of the urban Arabic speakers, particular the *fassi* notables,[16] led to much resentment; in fact, the two attempted coups against Hassan II in the early 1970s

were perceived as being a "Berber challenge"[17] because some of the officers responsible were of Berber descent.

Two important events marked the switch of Berberism from a localized cultural movement to a political, or militant, one: first, the Algerian "Berber Spring" in April-May 1980, which erupted after the cancellation of a conference dedicated to Kabyle poetry, perceived as a sign of the regime's hostility toward the Kabyle community. It represented the first popular protest post-Independence and was violently repressed, but it was successful in terms of breaking the taboos surrounding Amazigh identity. For the first time, Amazigh minorities asked for their culture and languages to be officially recognized and challenged the legitimacy of the State in terms of defining Algerian collective identity and memory.

Second, is the Charter of Agadir, signed in 1991 by a number of Amazigh cultural associations, which is a concerted document calling for a number of new measures aiming to protect Amazigh dialects by allowing them to be taught in schools, and by the creation of Amazigh media and cultural institutes in the region. The contentious politics exercised by the Berber movement both in Algeria and Morocco, conducted outside of political opposition and benefitting from a significant amount of support among Amazigh communities, was successful in that it obliged North African leaders to acknowledge that the pan-Arab model promoted since Independence had not been fully successful. In his 1994 speech, King Hassan II, in a context of growing tensions with Amazigh activists, declared: "There is not one of us who cannot be sure that there is in his dynasty, blood or body a small or large amount of cells which came from an origin which speaks one of Morocco's dialects."[18] These two events led to the collaborations between Algerian and Moroccan Berbers, creating a sense of community and solidarity.

In the last decade, the focus of the Berberism movement has shifted from a multicultural stance, seeking inclusion in the state's discourses on identity, toward a more political, more aggressive position, hostile to "the Arabo-Muslim conception of the nation."[19] Essentially, radical Berberism calls for a return to a precolonial, pre-Islamic *Tamazgha,* free from Arab influence. The discourse of Amazigh militants relies on a negation of the process of "métissage"[20] since the seventh century between local populations and waves of migrants from the Gulf.

Thus, to answer what they perceive as Arab hegemony, Amazigh activists have constructed a homogeneous Amazigh identity, as hegemonic as

the Arab one and denying the particularities of each specific group, such as the Kabyles in Algeria or the Siwa in Egygt. This includes the creation of a unique language, *Tamazight*, which they have established as a "Modern standard Berber" at the expense of the Berber dialects actually spoken by indigenous populations, in a similar way to Modern standard Arabic being taught at the expense of regional vernaculars. These issues are controversial among the Amazigh community. When King Mohammed VI announced the creation of the IRCAM[21] institute in 2001, the news was received with apprehension. While for some this reflected the opening up of the regime and its will to recognize all its citizens equally, others denounced it as a tool to co-opt the growing Amazigh movement. The adoption of the *tifinagh* alphabet also led to heated debate, as many activists, particularly online, used French characters to transcribe their language. While the urban Amazigh elite, led by Mohamed Chafik (author of the *Berber Manifesto*), welcomed these developments, local organizations such as *Tilleli* refused to take part in the IRCAM's activities and chose to remain outside of state-approved contention. Silverstein and Crawford note that "the establishment of IRCAM has arguably exacerbated the fragmentation of not only the Amazigh movement, but also Moroccan oppositional politics in general."[22]

Although the political Berberist movement as such is recent and has mainly developed in reaction to what they perceived to be pan-Arab hegemony, it is important to look at Berber identity politics in a wider context. Commentators have talked about an "Amazigh Renaissance" for years before the Arab Spring, supported by the flourishing of events and websites dedicated to Amazigh cultures and Berberism. Authors, poets, and artists have sought to affirm themselves as Berbers since the early days of the twentieth century,[23] in answer to the French authorities' trial to define their community "from outside." Since then, cultural productions have often been used as a medium to both promote and preserve Amazigh languages, traditions and history, without directly threatening regimes through political means. In particular, there has been a resurgence of performance, poetry, and literature in Amazigh dialects, facilitated by the adoption of the standard *tifinagh* alphabet in Morocco, and thus the development of a new educated audiences. Theater is a powerful social tool and has been used to revive precolonial traditions of public storytelling; several theater troupes now perform in an Amazigh language, mainly in Morocco and Algeria. The work of popular Algerian playwright Kateb Yacine, who was assassinated during the "Black decade"[24] is very

interesting in this respect, as it tried to fuse a Western tradition of theater with Kabyle ancestral performance practices and language.

While these cultural events were previously observed locally, highlighting the diversity of the people who fall under the "Berber" category, the last two decades has seen a uniformization of the Amazigh movement, seeking to affirm its unity. Sidney Tarrow speaks of several factors facilitating the formation of transnational movements in the modern era, such as globalization and the new means of communication, and the "universalisation" of culture.[25] These social changes are easily observable in North Africa, and the Amazigh movement has grown exponentially with increased access to new means of communication, which has allowed them to not only connect to each other, but also to establish links with other minorities such as the Basques in Spain and the Native Americans.

The North African youth is particularly active on the Internet, as attested by the many Internet cafés that have opened in urban areas and small towns over the last two decades. These websites have greatly contributed to the rising awareness of a transnational Amazigh community, with people from different areas sharing similar values and a common history and members the of the diaspora playing a very important role. Daniela Merolla speaks of a "landscape of group identity," which "counters cultural and political marginalisation" and "takes form thanks to the social formation of Berber intellectuals and groups."[26] The educated elite, both in North Africa and in the diaspora, is behind the revival of Amazigh languages, with a wealth of literature and research disseminated online as well as on a number of new TV channels, newspapers, and other media addressing the needs of the Amazigh populations. Although written material can only be accessed by a small minority able to read the *tifinagh* script, they are contributing to the newly found prestige of Tamazight as a lingua franca.

FROM THE "ARAB SPRING" TO A "BERBER SUMMER": A TURNING POINT

In both Western and Arab media, the popular uprisings of 2010–2011 were systematically described as the "Arab Spring," affecting the "Arab world" as if it were a monolithic, homogeneous group. Although this expression seeks to highlight the common causes that led to similar protests in different countries, it also hides an important factor: that of North Africa's deep identity crisis, heightened by both Islamism and the increasing visibility of Amazigh

minorities. This official narrative is particularly threatened by the idea of a transnational Amazigh group, which deeply challenges the construction of North Africa's collective identity and national unity around the two tenets of Arabic and Islam in the postcolonial era. According to Ben Nefissa, identity claims reveal the failure of the historical construction of national unity and demand its renegociation.[27]. Not only does the Amazigh movement as a whole call for specific reforms regarding language and regionalization, it also envisions a radically different society: "it seeks to re-fashion the identity of North African states, to rewrite their history, and fundamentally change the basis of collective life there."[28] Amazigh activists have been increasingly engaging in contentious politics in recent years, and they thus naturally joined protests against leaders such as Ben Ali and Gaddafi, both perceived as hostile to the "Berber cause." There have been several violently repressed demonstrations in the last decade, but most received little media attention and were a response to local issues: members of association *Tilelli* were arrested in Morocco in 2004; protests are organized every year in Algeria to commemorate the Berber Spring, often ending in clashes with the authorities; in Libya in 2010, the Buzkhar brothers were arrested for allegedly promoting Amazigh culture. On the contrary, the Arab Spring engaged a large part of the North African population around issues (socioeconomic, political, and cultural) that were a concern for many.

One of the most successful aspects of the involvement of Amazigh activists in the Arab Spring popular uprisings was their capacity to mobilize protesters from various backgrounds throughout the region. While they originally focused on cultural issues, in particular the need for their dialects to be officially recognized by the State, these protests showed a definite political turn, with demands for more autonomy and a fairer distribution of resources between urban centers and the countryside. These militants joined protest movements very early on, both because they saw an opportunity to get a wider audience for their own cause, and because they generally identified with the demands of the demonstrators, focusing on dignity, freedom, and equality. The context of the Arab Spring is therefore crucial to the emergence of Amazigh groups as a political force: it created a "cycle of contentions" (as described by Tarrow),[29] in which both the youth of the wider region and Amazigh activists came together in search of a political breakthrough. At the same time, their involvement introduced the idea that identity politics, as much as the economic and social situation, were key to understanding the roots of the revolts and of the growing discontent of the population.

Although its demands were surprisingly homogeneous, the Amazigh collective movement manifested itself differently in each country, rallying wider contentious groups. In Morocco, Amazigh militants joined the "20th February" movement and associated themselves with their calls for social justice and freedom of speech. In fact, these activists started working with human rights associations years before the uprisings,[30] associating their plight with a wider discourse on multiculturalism and minority rights, and they used the growing discontent of the general public to get their approval and to make themselves heard. This was particularly important because Amazigh populations are often confined to rural areas, and their concerns are not acknowledged in the urban centers where political decisions are taken..Through the impulse of King Mohammed VI, Amazighité was finally acknowledged as an important cultural and historical part of a multicultural Morocco, but Berber minorities remained isolated in terms of their economic and political power.

Similarly in Libya, Amazigh tribes were among the first to join the rebels, in particular the Infusen tribe in the northwest of the country. While in Morocco, alienation is more the result of social and economic gaps between rural and urban areas rather than ethnic discrimination, Libya's minorities were distrusted by the regime, and the tribal system put in place by Gaddafi prevented them from accessing constitutional rights. They thus saw the uprisings as an opportunity to rebel against their living conditions and their support to the revolution contributed to the ultimate fall of the regime. They facilitated the liberation of many cities in the region of the Nafusa Mountains, which became an important front for the resistance, and took part in the liberation of Tripoli.

In Egypt, where the Berber minority represents less than 30,000 people and is mainly concentrated around the Western oasis of Siwa, they struggle to protect their traditions and to survive in difficult economic traditions. Although they are practically nonexistent on the Egyptian political scene, they are active in the wider Amazigh community. A short film documenting their tribe, titled *The Amazighs of Siwa*, was presented at the Tizi Ouzou festival of Amazigh cinema in Algeria in 2013, in the presence of a Siwa delegation as guests of honor. Culture is an important tool for these populations, and allows them to document their quotidian and to give their customs and dialects status and prestige.

Algeria is perhaps the country where historically the possibility of civil unrest is the most present and daunting, with memories of the 1990s, the

"Black decade," and the death of dozens of thousands of Algerians in fights between the Algerian army and the Islamic salvation front. It is also one of the only countries in the region that has remained relatively peaceful so far, with protests being quickly quashed by President Bouteflika's announcements of new reforms and coming elections. However, the neighboring uprisings had a deep impact on Algerians, giving the youth confidence and self-consciousness. Human rights activist Hicham Yezza writes: "Algeria's youth are getting better organised, more vocal and less patient than ever."[31] During the year 2013, mass protests were organized in the southern part of the country to denounce rising poverty and unemployment, and these protests were a success, with no incidents of violence reported.

Crucially, the Arab Spring uprisings offered the Amazigh movement an opportunity to gather support from the masses, where they had in the past focused on governmental policies and recognition,[32] which represents a definite shift in its strategy. They performed as a united group throughout the region, insisting on their common goals rather than on their cultural and political differences. Whereas recent protests organized by local militants were confined to the countryside and didn't reach the urban centers, the Arab Spring saw them work hand in hand with youth movements based mainly in cities, and they associated their project to that of other North Africans, motivated by the ideals of democracy, freedom, and multiculturalism. The uprisings created a set of circumstances by which the overwhelming need for change allowed activists with antagonist ideologies to collaborate, but in the aftermath it remains to be seen how they will work together to build a better future for North Africa.

It has become clear that "despite a predominant pattern of peaceful demonstrations (except in Libya) [...] the 'Arab Spring' has been a profoundly national experience with quite distinct national outcomes."[33] Each state answered the Amazigh challenge in a different way: Morocco, where the Imazighen represents a very large minority (or a majority according to genetic studies),[34] answered demands for an official recognition of Amazigh languages, now enshrined in the new constitution alongside Arabic. In his speech of March 2011, King Mohammed VI acknowledged the multicultural roots of the country, speaking of "Arabic-Islamic, Berber, Saharan, African, Andalusian, Jewish and Mediterranean components," and spoke of Amazigh dialects as "a heritage belonging to all Moroccans."[35]

In Libya on the other hand, Amazigh tribes face a much more complex situation in the post–Arab Spring situation, in a country that is still

predominantly tribal and "stateless,"[36] without efficient structures. Despite their determining support for the rebels, their demands were not acknowledged by the Transitional Council formed in March 2011, resulting in tensions. In 2013, Amazigh militants stormed the Libyan Parliament in frustration, because of the continued discriminations against them. The recent election of Nuri Abu Sahmain, a man of Berber descent, as president of the National Congress represents a positive step toward the inclusion of ethnic minorities on Libya's political stage, but the situation remains precarious.

THE POST REVOLUTION PHASE: IDENTITY POLITICS AND THE AMAZIGH MOVEMENT IN THE FACE OF NEW CHALLENGES

The Berber movement, first in Algeria, but now increasingly in Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia, has long had strong political components, with a number of shared demands ranging from official recognition of their languages to better access to state facilities and more autonomy. The Arab Spring, which bolstered a seemingly apathetic youth into action and gave them hope of a better future, presented an unprecedented opportunity for Amazigh activists to be heard and to raise their demands. It also fostered the sense of community shared by many activists, who were able to organize themselves across countries and imagine a new North Africa based on a mythical *Tamazgha*, land of an imagined community. While the movement displays a strong unity, in particular through the use of symbols as seen during the "Arab Spring" protests, there are also internal divisions. The MAK (Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylia), founded in 2001 by popular singer Ferhat Mehenni, specifically comprises Kabyle Berbers and among its demands are territorial autonomy from Algeria as well as a focus on secularism and the recognition of their own specific language (rather than standard Tamazight).

The participation of Amazigh militants in the uprisings has helped consolidate them as a transnational movement: in July 2011, delegations from all over North Africa as well as from the Canary Islands met in Tangier and launched a new pan-Maghreb body, the Union of North African People (UNAP). This is a very important development, stemming directly from the Arab Spring as stated by Ahmed Arrehmouch, vice president of the newly formed group: "We felt that the situation across the region made it a very opportune moment, especially because the Amazigh movement played an important role in the February 20 movement in Morocco. [...] This is the geographical environment in which Amazigh voices expressing a political

vision have been heard."[37] The UNAP has a strong multicultural ethos, aiming to reconcile the people of North Africa and demanding for borders to be opened, particularly between Morocco and Algeria. At the same time, it also asks for the Kabyle Provisional government to be recognized, and thus it ultimately supports a separatist project for Amazigh communities.

In the chaotic post–Arab Spring era, the militant Amazigh movement has been successful in gaining wider international recognition and fully transforming into an organized, "hierarchized" transnational movement involving representatives from various Amazigh communities as well as from members of the diaspora. The apparent strength and unity of the movement, symbolized by the Amazigh symbols carried by protesters, obliged regimes to finally answer some of their demands as part of a wider project to rebuild North African nation-states. However, doubts remain regarding the legitimacy of this movement, particularlyin instances such as World Amazigh Congress and the Amazigh World Assembly, respectively, based in Paris and Brussels, and which have little relevance for rural Amazigh communities. In fact, the international Amazigh movement is mistrusted by local populations, who accuse activists of "ignoring local problems and prioritising instead abstract issues [...], of reducing the quotidian experience of material marginalisation to a global demand for cultural or language rights."[38]

Although some aims of the Arab Spring have been fulfilled, the situation remains unequal throughout the region. Amazigh activists are still taking part in contentious politics, particularly in Lybia where their status as a minority is still threatened. According to Chabane Bousseta, who represented the Nalut region in the National Congress before resigning, Amazigh populations are still discriminated against by the Transitional Council and are thus considering creating a separate political entity.[39] It was reported in 2012 that the country was divided into "militia zones," following the refusal of the National Transitional Council to include minorities such as the Infusen and the Toubou tribes, and a general climate of suspicion and corruption prevailed.[40] While in Morocco the regime recognized Amazigh demands as pressing and answered swiftly with constitutional reforms, in Libya, on thecontrary, Amazigh minorities are still trying to affirm themselves as a political force in a very unstable situation.

In addition, as the influence of the transnational movement grows, it is increasingly at risk of co-optation both internally and externally. In a tense context where Islamic parties in Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt have been

brought to power and are heavily criticized, the rise of the transnational Amazigh movement on the political scene could be used to counterbalance conservative groups. Although Islamist groups such as the FIS in Algeria originally supported Kabyle demands regarding language, while an important part of the Kabyle population supported the Islamic party in the early 1990s,[41] the Amazigh movement has increasingly turned toward a liberal, French-inspired rhetoric, calling for "state secularism" and thus leading to deep ideological clashes between these two groups. The radical current of the Amazigh movement has been promoting a return to *izerf*, Berber customary laws, which they imagine to be evidence of their secular antecedents. Activist Moha Ouhssain demands a clear separation between State and religion, which the activists claim could be achieved "by returning to *izerf* and by implementing it among the Berber tribes, as was the case in the past, not only before the arrival of the French, but before the arrival of Islam in the 7th century."[42] Evidently this is a project that would alienate not only Islamic parties and their followers, but also a large part of the Berberophone populations, who remain attached to their religious heritage. Alliances between Amazigh groups and secular liberal parties are creating further distrust about the aims of the movement.

These conflicts leaves the Amazigh movement open to political manipulations, particularly in Morocco and Algeria, where there is a long history of Islamists and Berber activists being pitted against each other in order to reaffirm the authority of the respective regimes and place them in the position of arbitrator. They play a "strategy of both inclusion and containment, as part of an overall policy of balancing off different social and political forces,"[43] which ensures that none of these groups are ever able to gain full power. Amazigh militants are thus also co-opted by their own governments to a certain extent: they are tolerated and even given token signs of encouragement, in particular on issues regarding language, but only as long as they serve the regime's strategy and are balanced by other forces on the political chessboard.

Finally, the Amazigh movement is regularly accused of being manipulated or co-opted into serving foreign interests. It is traditionally well represented and supported in France, as it perpetuates French values of secularism and democracy, as well as in other countries such as Holland where there is a significant Berber population. Indeed, the Kabyle political movement, which is at the root of Berber activism, originated from the Algerian diaspora in France, not from Algeria, and was supported by Francophile elements of the population. This continual support is perceived by the wider population

as "a renewed and more successful attempt by Western states—with France at the forefront—to weaken and undermine the natural unity of the states of the region through the sponsorship and encouragement of notions of a separate Berber identity'[44]. In the postcolonial era, it appears that European countries have continued to support the Amazigh project, both individually and through the European Union. An Amazigh/ Berber friendship group was established in 2010 in the European Parliament to ensure the defense of Amazigh minorities at a European level.

Bruce Maddy-Weiztman, from the Moshe Dayan Center, also talked about the need for Israel in particular to use "non-Arab agents" to further their interests in North Africa and the Middle East and to facilitate a relationship with these countries.[45] His paper created a controversy because of the suspicion it pointed on radical elements of the Berberist movement "with regards to their involvement in normalization activities with Israel."[46] As an example, the founder and former leader of the MAK, Ferhat Mehenni, the self-proclaimed "president of Kabylia' went for an official visit in Israel in 2012, whereas Algeria officially doesn't have any diplomatic relationship with the Hebrew state. This is an interesting case of co-optation: Sephardi Jews have very strong historical and cultural ties with North African Berbers, and there is a large North African Jewish community in Israel. Israel plays on those affinities to normalize its relationship with Arab states, bypassing official bodies and using these minorities as "proxy."

With the fall of long-standing North African leaders, the collective identity of North Africa is challenged not only by ethnic minorities, but also by a new religious fervor, as shown in the recent elections of Islamic parties in power. Tunisia in particular had always been perceived by the West as the most secular, tolerant, pro-women rights North African state, in spite of rampant corruption. Identity politics in North Africa are challenged not only by ethnic minorities, but also by the increasing weight of religion in society: "The fabric of Middle Eastern society has fundamentally changed. Being Muslim has replaced being Arab as the primary identifying factor. The consequences are profound."[47]. Salem Chaker, specialist of Berber linguistics, however, believes that despite their electoral success, Islamist ideologies will also fail to provide a viable alternative.[48] What we observe is an increasing polarization of North African identity around religious and "ethnic" movements, which the regimes, particularly in Morocco and Algeria that have remained relatively stable so far, use for their own benefits. The new polarization of the Amazigh

movement around organizations such as UNAP is now opening up the possibility for it to move from contentious activism to opposition politics and create appropriate political parties. This would indeed represent a major threat for regimes already weakened by the Arab Spring events, but it is a shift that does not create unanimity in the Amazigh community. The next challenge of the movement will thus be to find common groups within itself and create structures that can truly work toward a better future for Amazigh communities, particularly for the disempowered rural populations who occupy the Amazigh "heartland."

CONCLUSION

The "Arab Spring" events, which have radically redefined power balances in North Africa, particularly between secular and Islamic parties, also challenge the myth of a pan-Arab region united around Arab nationalism. The active participation of Amazigh minorities throughout the region, who saw in the uprisings an opportunity to promote their own cause, reveals the deep flaws of this strategy adopted by North African leaders after Independence. These events have been very successful for the Berberist movement, as it has provided a wide platform for them to make their demands heard by the local populations and the international community. Ultimately, their visibility led to the acceptance of several of their demands: the recognition of their languages as "official" in Morocco, on par with Arabic, the election of a new Berber president of Congress in Libya, giving for the first time a political voice to Amazigh minorities, and the creation of a large number of cultural and social associations throughout the region, dedicated to promoting their cause in a more open political realm. The use of shared symbols such as the Amazigh flag in the various revolutions and the coordination of local Amazigh groups hint at the rise of a transnational Berber movement as a real political force in the region. This is further confirmed by the creation of a Union of North African People in 2011.

The Berber Renaissance, far from being a new development, is in fact the result of decades of resistance against oppression and alienation, which has now culminated in a new momentum thanks to the media and the political interest in the region. Its increasing political demands however are a newer development, emerging from a conception of identity that perceives "Berbers" and "Arabs" as fundamentally different. This is a vision mainly inherited from the colonial era, as discussed earlier. Because this movement promotes

ideals of secularism and Western-style democracy at odds with both the fallen pan-Arab leaderships and the influential Islamic parties throughout North Africa, there are real risks of co-optation. This in turn creates a climate of distrust and tensions between Amazigh militants and Islamists, who previously had supported each other's visions (as in the case of Algeria). However, it is undeniable that the "Amazigh Spring" has been successful in ensuring the protection and sustainability of endangered Amazigh languages and traditions, as well as in strengthening the Amazigh movement as a transnational entity with a clear political voice. Through the use of Internet and new media, militants have successfully created networks dedicated to the promotion of their culture among the wider population, as well as abroad, and they now have a real political representation in the region.

NOTES

1. "Amazigh" (pl. Imazighen) is the preferred term used by Berber tribes to refer to themselves. It literally means "free man" and it is derived from the world *Tamazgha*, employed to refer to the North African region as a whole. Note that the use of these terms is relatively recent: they were first employed in Algeria in the 1940s, in the context of Kabylia.
2. See S. Smith. "Flying the Flag for North Africa's 'Berber Spring,'" BBC News. (2011). Accessed at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14650257.
3. M. Oiry-Varacca, "Le 'Printemps arabe' à l'épreuve des revendications amazighes au Maroc: Analyse des enjeux territoriaux et politiques des discours sur l'identité," *L'espace Politique* (2012). Accessed online at: http://espacepolitique.revues.org/2504.
4. See D. Crawford and K. Hoffman, "Essentially Amazigh: Urban Berbers and the Global Village," in *The Arab-African and Islamic World: Interdisciplinary Studies,* ed. K. Lacey (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 124. Activists claim that Berber communities are denied access to education, health care, and other services because these services are provided in Arabic only.
5. "Tamazight" here is employed to refer to the standard Amazigh language used as a *lingua franca* by militants throughout North Africa and usually employed in publications and media. It is not to be confused with the Tamazight dialect spoken by 4 to 5 million inhabitants of the High and Middle Atlas. For clarity this chapter will use the term "Berberophone" to refer to populations speaking a Berber dialect as their native language, in opposition to Tamazight speakers.
6. K. Hoffman, *We Share Walls: Language, Land and Gender in Berber Morocco* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 14.
7. M. Willis, "The Politics of Berber (Amazigh) Identity: Algeria and Morocco Compared," in *North Africa: Politics, Region and the Limits of Transformation,* ed. Y. Zoubeir & H. Amirah-Fernandez (London: Routledge, 2008), 228.
8. See P. Vermeren, *Maghreb, les origines de la révolution démocratique* (Paris: Fayard/Pluriel, 2011), 63.
9. Crawford and Hoffman "Essentially Amazigh," 118.
10. See M. Elkouche, "The Question of the Amazigh Language and Culture in Morocco," in *Moroccan Culture in the 21st Century,* ed. M Dellal and A Sellam (New York: Nova Publishers, 2013), 6.

11. See Willis, "The Politics of Berber (Amazigh) Identity," 241. Amazigh minorities also exist in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt but they are too small to have any real political power.
12. Vermeren, *Maghreb*, 66.
13. According to social anthropologist Gellner, Berber minorities did not perceive themselves as part of a transnational communitiy. He wrote: "The Berber sees himself as a member of this or that tribe [...] and not as a member of a linguistically defined ethnic group." See, E Gellner, "Introduction" in *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa,* ed. E Gellner and C Micaud (London: Duckworth, 1973), 13.
14. Quoted in S. Ben-Layashi, "Secularism in the Moroccan Amazigh Discourse," *The Journal of North African Studies* 12, no. 2 (2007): 154–71, 158.
15. Quoted in B. Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber Identity Movement and Challenge to North African States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 90.
16. The *fassi* (from Fes) Francophone elite long dominated the Moroccan political and economical scenes in the post-Independance era, and were particularly influential through the nationalist Istiqlal party.
17. Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber Identity Movement,* 92.
18. Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, "The Amazigh Factor: State-Movement Relations under Mohammed VI," in *Contemporary Morocco: State, Politics and Society under Mohammed VI,* ed. B Maddy-Weitzman and D Zisenwine (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 112.
19. H. Roberts, "Co-opting Identity: The Manipulation of Berberism, the Frustration of Democratisation and the Generation of Violence in Algeria," *LSE: Crisis State Programme* 6 (2001): 29.
20. Oiry-Varacca, "Le 'Printemps arabe.'"
21. The Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture was created in 2001 by royal decree and was an important step in Mohammed VI's strategy to allow more transparency and openness into his regime.
22. P. Silverstein and D. Crawford, "Amazigh Activism and the Moroccan State," *Middle East Report* 233 (2004): 44.
23. See Roberts, "Co-opting Identity."
24. The Algerian Civil War started in December 1991 with a military coup and the cancellation of national elections. The following decade was marked by conflicts between the Algerian government and Islamist groups, estimated to have cost up to 150,000 lives.
25. S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 181.
26. D. Merolla, "Digital Imagination and the 'Landscapes of Group Identities': The Flourishing of Theatre, Video and 'Amazigh Net' in the Maghrib and Berber Diaspora," *The Journal of North African Studies* 7, no.4 (2002): 122–31, 129.
27. S. Ben Nefissa, "Mobilisations et revolutions dans les pays de la Méditerranée arabe à l'heure de "l'hybridation" du politique," *Revue Tiers Monde* 5 (2011):12.
28. Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber Identity Movement,* 111.
29. Tarrow, *Power in Movement,* 141–60.
30. Oiry-Varacca, "Le 'Printemps arabe.'"
31. H. Yezza, "Algeria: Bouteflika Strikes Back," *Open Democracy* (2013). Accessed online at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/hicham-yezza/algeria-bouteflika-strikes-back.
32. Hoffman, *We Share Walls,* 21.
33. G. Joffé, "North Africa's Arab Spring Revisited." in *North Africa's Arab Spring,* ed. G. Joffé (Abingdon: Taylor& Francis, 2013), 197.

34. See E. Gomez-Casado, P. Del Moral, J. Martinez-Laso, A. Garcia-Gomez, L. Allende, C. Silvera-Redondo, J. Longas, M. Gonzalez-Hevilla, M. Kandil, "HLA Genes in Arabic-Speaking Moroccans: Close Relatedness to Berbers and Iberians," *Tissue Antigens* 55, no. 3 (2000): 239–49, which shows that there are no clear genetic differences between Arabic-speaking and Berber populations, suggesting that most Moroccans are in fact of Berber descent.
35. For a full transcript of King Mohammed VI's speech translated into English, see the Morocco News Board website: http://www.moroccoboard.com/news/5302-morocco-text-of-kings-speech-english. Accessed October 2013.
36. A. Brahimi, "Libya's Revolution," in *North Africa's Arab Spring,* ed. G. Joffe,115.
37. Quoted in I. Binoual, "Amazigh Activists Launch pan-Maghreb Body," *Magharebia* (2011). Accessed online at: http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2011/08/22/feature-02.
38. P. Silverstein, "The Pitfalls of Transnational Consciousness: Amazigh Activism as a Scalar Dilemma," *The Journal of North African Studies* 18, no. 5 (2013): 768–78, 774
39. Quoted in M. Ferkal, "Libye: L'Amazighité n'est pas à négocier!" *Tamazgha.fr* (2013).
40. See C. Stephen, "After Gaddafi, Libya Splits into Disparate Militia Zones," *The Guardian* 2012. Accessed online at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/10/libya-split-between-militias.
41. See Roberts, "Co-opting Identity," 36.
42. Quoted in S Ben-Layashi (2007), ibid., 159.
43. Maddy Weitzman, *The Berber Identity Movement,* 113.
44. M. Willis, "The Politics of Berber (Amazigh) Identity," 228.
45. B. Maddy-Weitzman, "The Limits and Potentials of Israeli-Maghreb Relations," *IPRIS Maghreb Review* 4 (2010): 15.
46. M. Masbah, "The Amazigh in Morocco: Between the Internal and the External," *Doha Institute* 1 (2011). Accessed online at: http://english.dohainstitute.org/release/b40ace5f-5491-4734-b7cf-0d05c6b7934d.
47. G. Bannerman, "The Key to Understanding the 'Arab Spring,'" *Reuters*, (2012). Accessed online at: http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2012/10/11/the-key-to-understanding-the-arab-spring/.
48. See R. Moussaoui, "A l'ombre des printemps arabes, le réveil des Berbères," *L'Humanité* (2013).

PART IV

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: EMBRACING THE MARGINS

14

NEW MODES OF COLLECTIVE ACTIONS: THE REEMERGENCE OF ANARCHISM IN EGYPT

Laura Galián

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND ANARCHISM

Anarchism has a long history of contentious politics. Some authors, such as Peter Marshall, have seen in the philosophy of the Taoist Lao-Tzu the beginning of an anarchist thought, since he was opposed to any form of authority.[1] However, it was the French thinker Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) who was the first to use the sobriquet "anarchist." Proudhon made a call to build a State-free society and he was ardently opposed to private property. His thought was the beginning for anticapitalist criticism used by other authors such as Mijail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and Errico Malatesta. All of them were opposed to hierarchy and decentralization and compromise with freedom and autonomy.[2]

From this point of view, the key aspect of contentious politics of anarchism is *direct action*: individual and collective work to politicize from a bottom-up perspective (propaganda by the deed and propaganda by the word) in order to achieve an anarchist society. The Spanish Civil War and the participation of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) are the quintessence of anarchist theory and practice. The formation of labor movements and the political culture of anarchism—education, cultural clubs, arts, iconography, clothing, language—are a perfect example of contentious politics, to which the Middle East is not an alien. So, in this sense, direct action occurs everywhere (workplace, domestic environment, neighborhood, etc.) and it includes strikes, boycotts, occupations, protests, sit-ins, nonpayment of taxes, blocking roads, and pressuring politicians or companies. As long as people act for themselves against oppression and injustice, direct action is a

way, according to anarchists, of breaking down the hierarchy of human relations and oppression. As a concept and as a way of contentious politics, *direct action* was first used by the Industrial Workers of the World Union to refer to a Chicago strike conducted in 1910. Although *direct action* has been used differently by different political actors, anarchism has been the ideology that has given *direct action* its significant meaning.

In this chapter I intend to present a synchronic analysis of contemporary anarchism in Egypt through the study of a group called al-Harakah al-Ishtirakiyya al-Taharruriyya (Libertarian Socialist Movement-LSM)[3] founded in May 2011 after the downfall of Mubarak's regime and other Internet-based anarchist groups in Egypt. Its members, free to organize themselves politically, presented their project as a libertarian alternative in the political spectrum in post-Mubarak Egypt. Former members of the LSM will also appear in this study, as well as founders and other activists who have had an active role in the development of anarchist thought in Egypt and who identify themselves as such.

The methodology of this study is based on participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and text analysis. First, participant observation wasconducted from March to June 2013 in Cairo. Semi-structured interviews were taken of members of the LSM, former members, founders, and other activists (not related to the LSM) and who had a direct role in the configuration of the anarchist political culture[4] in contemporary Egypt. Third, for textual analysis, as recommended by Uri Gordon,[5] texts were chosen that were written and produced in Arab countries, mainly Egypt, of two different types: those on theory and the history of anarchism, and official LSM documents (newsletters, pamphlets, and bulletins).[6] All of this help us to answer the following questions: What are the main discourses, direct action, and group dynamics of contentious politics of anarchism in Egypt?

NEW FORMS OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: A REVIVAL OF ANARCHISM, NOT JUST IN THE WEST!

The past 20 years have seen a revival of anarchism as a "global, social movement and coherent set of political discourses, on a scale and to levels of unity and diversity unseen since the 1930s."[7] This rebirth of anarchism on a global scale has not been unique or exclusive to Western contexts, which have historically received the attention of the Eurocentric historiography of anarchism. There are very few researchers and scholars dedicated to analyzing the

development of this ideology in non-Western contexts: few of them are Jasom Adams (2003), Roger White (2004), Süriyya Evren (2006), Michael Schmidt and Lucien Van der Valt (2009), Maia Ramnath (2011). Despite the importance of anarchist thought and anarchist movements during the decolonization struggles in postcolonial countries, historians have not paid necessary attention to this ideology and its set of political expressions.

In Southern Mediterranean countries, and specifically in Egypt, anarchism, as a libertarian, socialist, and internationalist thought,[8] first appeared in Alexandria at the end of the nineteenth century in the Italian, Greek, and Jewish communities through the development of the press, cultural clubs, and educational institutions. The reemergence of anarchism in the Middle East happened around the time of the so-called Arab Spring in 2010 and 2011 (of which some movements are still in process). The revolutionary context and the sit-ins in Tahrir and other squares around Egypt have given an opportunity for the rise of self-defined anarchist movements. These contributions have been made by anarchist organizations internationally as acts of solidarity among members of similar groups. Also, attention has sprung up as a result of the Black Bloc protest tactic on the political scene in Egypt during the second-year anniversary of the protests of January 25th Revolution.[9] Western media and some anarchist and activists circles have started to debate the existence of anarchist movements in Egypt. Can we actually talk about new repertoires of contentious politics[10] in Egypt that can be framed within what we know as "anarchism"?

WHERE ARE WE IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ANARCHISM?

Anarchism has a long tradition as an academic discipline. Although it is not the purpose of this chapter to go through the history of anarchist studies, it is important to clarify where we stand within its historiography. Contemporary anarchist studies have been greatly influenced by French structuralism. The emergence of horizontal movements, mainly after the events of Seattle 1999 and the appearance of the Zapatista movement, drove the development of post-anarchist studies. The re-readings of authors such as Foucault, Deluze, Lyotard, Derrida, and Lacan have led to coining terms such as "poststructuralist anarchism," "post-anarchism," and "postmodern anarchism."[11]

> Anarchists have been particularly influenced in recent years by post-structuralism, post-modernism, new developments in feminism, radical

> anti-racist politics such as "Race Traitor," radical queer theories, environ- mentalism(s), and animal liberationism, as well as anarchist practices emerging from post-colonial states and indigenous populations who, at times, might not even articulate their practices as "anarchist."[12]

Post-anarchism, as we can deduce from the quote, does not indicate a philosophical trend that comes after anarchism. However, it refers to the disruption of accepted suppositions within the theoretical frameworks that emerged during the Enlightenment. Therefore, it rejects the epistemological foundations of classical anarchist theories and contains a heterogeneous multiplicity of theories: poststructuralism, postmodernism, postfeminism, and postcolonialism. Süriyya Evren, an anarchist researcher, claims that post-anarchist studies have not paid sufficient attention to the modern history of anarchism in the "Third World" and postcolonial countries. Some scholars, such as Lewis Call, Sall Newman, and Todd May, forget to mention in their works, according to Evren, anarchist authors from postcolonial contexts.[13]However, Jason Adams, in his attempt to decolonize the history of anarchism, traces the Eurocentric elements in its historiography:

> Since there was virtually no real subversion of the Eurocentric understanding of anarchism until the 1990s, the vast majority of literature available that purports to deliver an "overview" of anarchism is written in such a way that one is led to believe that anarchism has existed solely within this context, and rarely, if ever, outside of it.[14]

Adams understands anarchism as a theoretical choice for oppressed people around the world "[…] in those societies whose primarily feudal nature writes them out of historical agency in the Marxist understanding of the world."[15].

Under this point of view, Lucien Van der Walt and Michael Schmidt (2009) have tried to write the history of African anarchism. Even though their expertise is on sub-Saharan social and anarchist movements, they have written articles on anarchist movements in some Arab countries of North Africa, including Egypt.[16] However, the only researchers who have extensively written about anarchism in Egypt, Ilham Khury Makdisi (2010) and Anthony Gorman (2005, 2008, 2010), have analyzed extensively the development of a radical left thought in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century in Cairo and Alexandria, as part of

the structural social and economic changes taking place in the South of the Mediterranean. On one hand, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi (2010) establishes ideological links and activist networks between Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria and demonstrates how socialist, communist, and anarchist ideas were discussed and disseminated among intellectuals, workers, and dramatists at the time. On the other hand, the work of Anthony Gorman (2005, 2008, 2010), more focused on the labor movements (2005), explains the role of the first trade unions in the transmission of the anarchist thought. Furthermore, he dedicates an article (2008) to one of the most ambitious projects of anarchism in Egypt at the moment, L'Università Popolare Libera (UPL). The work of both authors were finalized after World War I. Therefore, it is necessary to revise the history of Egypt to understand what happened to this radical, leftist, and libertarian thought in Egypt and how it influenced the construction of Egypt as an independent nation-state.

ANARCHISM, IMMIGRATION, AND THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IDEA

The transmission and spread of libertarian ideologies outside European contexts is linked to the process of globalization that took place in the late nineteenth century. In 1870, anarchism was already a potent ideological current, mainly in Italy and Spain. Due to the control and oppression that activists in these countries were subjected to at the time, many of them had to flee to Southern Mediterranean, South American, and Southeast Asian countries:

> By the late nineteenth century anarchists and anarchist ideas were to be found, in different shades and degrees, in many parts of the world due to the strong connection between migration and anarchism.[17]

The causes for the spread of anarchism differ according to the context. Its development in North Africa and the Middle East is due to the immigration of European workers—mainly Italian, Greek, and Spanish—to the port cities of the Mediterranean, such as Beirut, Alexandria, Tunis, and Oran. In Egypt, Muhammad Ali's reforms (1805–1949) attracted a great deal of European workers to transform the infrastructure of the State. These workers were already aware of labor movement activism in their countries and were familiar with or belonged to anarchist organizations. Furthermore, Errico Malatesta, one of the most important anarchist thinkers and activists of that time, was exiled to

Alexandria in 1878 and he had to leave Naples. He was accused of attempting to kill King Umberto I, with the help of other Italian activists: Alvino Luigi (1847–1889) and Ugo Parrini (1850–1906)[18]. Malatesta came back to Egypt in 1882 to take part in the Orabi Revolution for national independence against the British occupation. Therefore, the history of anarchism in Egypt is linked to the national and ethnic debate. In this regard, some contemporary anarchists interviewed for this study criticize Gorman's work because of the importance he gives to identity issues at the time, since many of the activists were born in Egypt, spoke Egyptian Arabic, and were members of Egyptian society. Despite the criticism leveled by these activists, I do believe that identity is an important element that must be subjected to analysis within the nineteenth-century anarchist context in Egypt, given that language barriers and community belonging were important issues for anarchists at the time, who were mostly worried about the problems that nationalist sentiment and language might have on the development of an anarchist ideology within the Egyptian social context.

This is why the first trade union founded in Egypt—La Società Operia Italiana (Italian Workers Society)—originated within the Italian community in 1860.[19] It was not until 1908, however, when a trade union that unified all Egyptian workers regardless of their nationality or qualifications was formed in what was called the Ligue Internationale des Ouviers Cigarettiers et Papetiers du Caire (International League of Tobacco Workers and Paper Rollers of Cairo). According to Gorman: "By the end of the first decade of the century, the anarcho-syndicalist international union had emerged as a significant industrial and indeed moral force."[20]

Another way in which anarchists spread their principles was through "propaganda by the word," meaning newspapers, cultural clubs, theater plays, and educational institutions. Also, as in the trade union case, the first newspapers were published in Italian in Alexandria: *Il Lavoratore* and *L'Operaio* with an anarcho-syndicalist approach. However, the first periodicals that published articles about anarchism in Arabic (although they were not anarchist publications) were *al-Muqtataf* (Alexandria, 1876) and *al-Hilāl* (El Cairo, 1892).

In the cultural arena, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi affirms that theater served

> [...] as a tool to express radical ideas and disseminate them to society, particularly to the masses and working classes; it also provided a necessary forum for the conceptualization, articulation, and internalization of such ideas and hence played a vital role in the making of a radical middle class.[21]

One of the most important theater plays was dedicated to Francisco Ferrer, a Spanish anarchist who was sentenced to death after being falsely accused of participating in a terrorist attack in 1901 in Beirut.[22] Also, inspired by *La Escuela Moderna* (The Modern School) founded by Ferrer to disseminate radical social values in children, education was one of the main priorities of anarchists of Egypt. One of the most ambitious projects was the Università Popolare Libera (Free Popular University) founded in 1901 in Alexandria. Its main goal was to give free education to the popular classes and therefore was a major focal point for dissemination of libertarians and anarchist ideas and the development of the workers' movement in Egypt.[23] Even if it was inspired by the European model, the FPU developed its own curriculum adapted to local needs. There were courses on humanities, sciences, women's rights, labor movement, etc. The FPU lasted for just one year but it was without doubt a reference point for the Nadi al- madaris al-'ulya (1905) and the later Cairo University (known at the time as the Egyptian University in 1908).

ANARCHISM AFTER WWI: DISAPPEARANCE OR OVERSIGHT?

The history of anarchism in Egypt after WWI is yet unwritten. The absence of these narratives is due to two factors: one historical and one historiographical. If we attend to the historical factor, anarchism and other libertarian ideologies coexisted and competed with the nationalist discourse and other anticolonial movements that were emerging against British colonialism at the time. The foundation of Hizb al-ishtiraki al-misri (Egyptian Socialist Party) in 1921 and the Hizb al-shuyi' al-misri (Communist Party of Egypt) in 1922, which were ideologically much influenced by anarchists at the time, absorbed many of these Egyptian activists.[24] Furthermore, the increase of surveillance, control of borders, and immigration laws in the Mediterranean affected the dissemination of a radical leftist thought in the 1920s and later.[25]

At the historiographical level, academy has not bothered to write the history of anarchism in the Middle East and North African countries. As I previously said, anarchism was understood as a fundamentally Western phenomenon. This is why there is a big gap in the literature of the history of anarchism in non-Western contexts. In the last decade, the revisionist trend, post-anarchism, has denounced the existence of a predominantly Eurocentric historiography of anarchism. Nonetheless, the history of anarchism in Egypt after 1920s is yet to be written.

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS OF ANARCHISM IN CONTEMPORARY EGYPT: *AL-ANĀRKIYAH BI-L-'ARABIYAH*

According to Sidney Tarrow, language is a key factor in the construction of contentious politics.[26] This is why, one of the first problems that we face, as nonnative speakers of Arabic, is that there are three terms used in this language to refer to anarchism: *fawdawiyah*, *lāsultawiyah,* and *anārkiyah*. Even if the three expressions are used with no difference, an examination of some Arabic texts will give us a hint of the semantic meaning that their authors bestow them in their use. The first term used for anarchism, of which we have a record, is *fawdawiyah*, which comes from *fawdā* (disorder, disarray, confusion).[27] It was used in Egyptian newspapers at the end of the nineteenth century to refer to the anarchist and the general socialist movements that were taking place in Europe.[28] The term *anārkiyah*, however, is the Arabic transcription of the word anarchism. Lastly, we find the term *lāsultawiyah,* which is the result of joining two words, the negative pronoun *lā* (no) and the word *sulta* (authority), which means, the negation of authority or "no to authority," the literal translation of the root of the etymological meaning of anarchism in ancient Greek.[29]

In contemporary times, Egyptian and Arab anarchists recognize the three words as terms to refer to the same ideology, as we can see from the description of the blog al-Anārkiyah bi-l-'arabiyah:[30]

> Anarchism [*al-anārkiyah*]: it's a way of life.
> Anarchism [*al-anārkiyah—al-lāsultawiyah—al- fawdawiyah*] (in its common translation) is not a closed ideological model. It is neither a static doctrine that imposes on its followers some initiation rituals. It is more of a libertarian way of life. It substitutes the system imposed by oppression, by a voluntary system that emanates from respect and mutual understanding. It substitutes the current relations among human beings, regulated by losses and profits, by free and voluntary relations based on mutual help among the members of a given society. The State is substituted by a self-organized society governed by it. Anarchism [*al-anārkiyah*] is a life opened to the libertarian principles and values.

However, the author ends up using more often the term *anārkiyah*. On the other hand, political tendencies against this kind of ideology use the term *fawdawiyah* more commonly. In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood

in Egypt, their online encyclopedia dedicates an entry to "anarchism." In the entry, *anārkiyah, fawdawiyah, al-ishtirākiyah al-thawriyah* (revolutionary socialism), *fawdawiyat al-dawla* (State chaos) and communism are used equally, and the entry explain that this is a political ideology that arrived in Egypt through "foreigners and Jews."[31]

At the iconographic level, anarchism in Arabic has also created its own logo. The picture used by some anarchist groups on the Internet have the main motifs of the European anarchist iconography: red and black colors and the circle. However, the famous A of "anarchism" is transformed into *la* (no) of *lāsultawiyah* (no authority).[32]

WHO ARE THE "NEW ANARCHISTS"?[33]

Jason Adams (2003) points out that in the Middle East today, "anarchism has grown especially in those countries where relatively small movements had emerged in the early 20th Century, largely among immigrants."[34] In the 1980s, especially in the port cities of Turkey and Lebanon, it has spread rapidly to the local population through punk culture.[35] In the mid 1990s, a Lebanese anarchist group called *al-Badil al-taharruri* (Libertarian Alternative) sent representatives to international anarchist meetings and translated several anarchist books into Arabic. Also, in Turkey, among the Italian anarchist communities, anarchism has grown as a recognized form since the appearance of anarchist flags and contingents in May Day celebrations and international meetings. Furthermore, Tunis and Algeria had representatives in the Situationist International, represented by Mustapha Khayati and Abdelhafid Khatib.[36]

In the Egyptian case, contemporary anarchism has reemerged particularly after the incorporation of Egypt to the global market. Since the liberal policies of Sadat—*infitah*—in the 1970s, Egypt has adhered to a system that made the country more dependent on the United States, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB). Later, Mubarak carried out a number of policies that strengthened the power of the economic elites inside and outside Egypt. These new economic policies resulted in an expansion of the bourgeois class and of some elites associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1990s.[37]

Even if the Zapatista movement in Mexico and the events of Seattle in 1999 were the starting points of worldwide antiglobalization struggles, the effect of these anticapitalist and anti-imperialist discourses did not arrive in Egypt until the Second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 and the beginning of the

War in Iraq in 2003. For Kamil Khalil (2003) the social and solidarity committees in Egypt developed in three waves: The first wave lasted from September 28, 2000 to September 10, 2001. During this year a series of protests were held by university and high school students to show support to the Second Palestinian Intifada and to protest against American imperialism. The second wave started against the American aggression in Afghanistan; however, after the siege in Ramallah and the battle of Jenin in 2002, a series of committees appeared and they united more than a thousand protesters near Cairo University against American imperialism in the Middle East. The third wave was of March 20 and 21, 2003, gathered solidarity committees to protest against Iraq's invasion by the United States. For the protesters, the Palestinian and the Iraqi conflict were just one, and so was their struggle against imperialism. Out of this context the first antiglobalization Egyptian committee was formed and a series of political conferences and talks were organized. At the same time, the first international conference against American hegemony and antiglobalization was held in Cairo.

Yasir 'Abd Allah, an anarchist activist and a freelance translator from Egypt, considers that al-Lajnah al-sha'biyah al-misriyah li-l-tadamun ma' intifada al-sha'b al-filistini (The Popular Egyptian Committee with the Palestinian People Uprising) that emerged after the Second Palestinian Intifada was a turning point in the formation of an internationalist and local consciousness. These movements increased after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, as well as led to the formation of another movement called Harakah 20 mars min ajil al-taghjir (20th March Movement for Change). From here onward, different groups and leftist parties unified in a movement called Kifaya (Enough), and a less known group named al-Hamla al-sha'biyah min ajil al-taghjir al-Hurriyah al-an (Popular Campaign for Change—Freedom Now).

Prior to the emergence of these new social movements, some activists had stated previously the need for collective and self-organized societies as alternatives to the current one. This was the case of Samih 'Abbud, an Egyptian anarchist and researcher. Samih had been very involved in Marxist groups in the 1980s and 1990s, until he revised Leninist theory and some of its assumptions: "All of this took me to the relation between the modern State with the salvation of the capitalist project, from Bismark's Germany to Meji's Japan, and also with Muhammad 'Ali and Nasser in Egypt."[38] In 1998 he created a website known as al-Taharruriyah al-jami'yah (libertarian collectivism), which he used to spread the ideas of collectivism and self-organized societies.

TAHRIR AND THE LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

Changing political opportunities, discusses Sidney Tarrow, creates the most important incentives for initiating new phases of contention.[39] This is why it was not until the 2011 Revolution that anarchist practices and ideas made it to the streets of Egypt. On the one hand, many activists and nonactivists have seen in the 25th January Revolution, in its structure and content, an anarchist experience. On the other hand, occupied spaces during the Revolution, such as Tahrir Square, served as a meeting point for activists who previously did not know each other and whose contact with anarchism was limited to what they had seen on the Internet, or was in some cases nonexistent.[40]

This gathering of activists related to anarchism culminated in the formation of a group called al-Harakah al-ishtirakiyah al-tahrruriyah (Libertarian Socialist Movement) (LSM), currently the main anarchist group in Egypt. It was founded in May 2011, with members from Cairo and Alexandria and then joined by others. Although it was localized in Cairo and Alexandria at the beginning, later other members joined from other regions in Egypt. The initial goal was to spread anarchist ideas, to build an anarchist movement, and to push the revolution in a more radical direction. The group defines itself in its webpage as:

> An organization of anarcho-communists who believe in class struggle as the only way to finish with Capitalism and the State power of repression. It adopts the aspirations and demands of the working classes: industrial workers, farmers, peasants, proletarians, and those who just have the power of their work to sell, without the control of the production process.[41]

According to Sidney Tarrow, the most common denominator of social movements is the participants' recognition of their common interest and how it translates into action.[42] This is why the official statements published by the Libertarian Socialist Movement express the main principles into which anarchist thought is divided and forms the identity of the group and its "discursive repertoires":

1. *Rejection of any form of domination*: The two main forms of domination of the LSM are the State and Capital. The State helps in the Capitalist system project and at the same time, the domination of

Capital is embodied by the local regimes: the National Democratic Party run by Husni Mubarak; and, at the time the study was conducted, by the Muslim Brotherhood and Muhammad Mursi as the head of the State.[43]

2. *Direct action and modes of collective resistance*: Most of the action of the LSM is directed toward the improvement of workers' rights. Most of the collective resistance is in form of general strikes and the formation of trade unions in different companies throughout Egypt.[44]
3. *Future society*: The main goal of the LSM is the establishment of a class-free socialist society, which is anti-authoritarian and free of the repressive apparatus of the State and Capital. Companies would be cooperatives managed by its members and workers. All of it would exist under a Constitution that guarantees all forms of human freedom, such as freedom of belief, association, and thought.

Due to ideological differences, the group is currently divided into two branches in Alexandria. The first rupture was produced in January 2012 because of some differences among its members on how to manage the group. Some of them wanted *platformism* of the *makhnovist* tradition as the way to organize themselves, while others considered *specifism*, which means the specialization of activists into different areas as the most productive method of spreading the ideology.

The relationship established among its members can be framed in what Uri Gordon has named as *local milieu*: "The local milieu is a context in which most but not all participants are closely familiar to one another, and may include participants who are also organized as collectives among themselves."[45] The LSM is organized at a local level, where the participants know each other and mingle with other actors of the local civil society. Even its adherence to the movements is not formal—there is no formal membership. The movement has active members currently in Cairo, Alexandria, and Mansura.[46]

NEW REPERTOIRES OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN EGYPT: PROPAGANDA BY THE WORD

Production, translation, and diffusion of anarchist books into Arabic is a way of direct action in the contemporary anarchist movement in Egypt. Ahmad Zāki is the only Egyptian author who has published a book on

anarchism—although there are other authors, they mostly present their work online. In 2011 he published the book *al-Anarkiyahh: al-madrasah al-thawriyha allati lam na'rifu-ha* (Anarchism: The Revolutionary School that we did not know). In his book, Ahmad Zāki summarizes the main theories and practices of the classical history of anarchism through the works of theorists such as Michael Bakunin, Nestor Majno, David Graeber, and others. Futhermore, he revises the most important experiences of classical anarchism such as: Paris Communeg, the Spanish Civil War, New Anarchism, and the differences between Anarchism and Marxism.

The book became popular during the weeks of the Revolutions in many cafeterias in Downtown Cairo. At that moment, the author understood that title did not justify the reality. So, in the second edition of the book, he changed the title to *al-Anarkiyah: al-madrasah al-thawriyha allati na'rifu-ha* (Anarchism: The Revolutionary School that we know). Despite the change in the title, the content of the book remained exactly the same:

> What was taking place in Egypt at that moment was the modern edition of some of the ideas of the revolutionary school of the twentieth first century: dozens of people without a common ideology, a wide range of social groups without hierarchical leaders, no professional politics to organize the waves of the protests.[47]

Sāmih `Abbud is another prolific author. He has published two important texts about the theory and history of anarchism: Mabadi' al-la sultawiyah" (Principles of Anarchism) and "al-Ishtirakiyah al-taharruriyah: kurrāsah ta`rifiyah" (Libertarian Socialism: Introductory Notes); both of them summarize the theoretical principles of anarchism. Meanwhile, Yasir `Abd Allāh, from a post-leftist point of view, has published some articles in an attempt to criticize the Eurocentrism of classical anarchism. In "Kayfa yumkin ta`rifal-ishtirakiyah al-taharruriyah? "(How to define libertarian socialism?) he tries to define "libertarian socialism" by liberating it and disassociating it from the dominant definition of what anarchism is, which is by itself authoritarian. In another article "al-Anarkiyah fawqa-l-nil" (Anarchism on the Nile), Yasir traces the history of anarchism in Egypt from the mid-nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century.[49]

Most anarchist contributions are open-access sources on the Internet—can be read and downloaded for free. The same is with translations, which for Muhammad 'Izz, a member of the LSM, "are a way to break the barriers

of language and distance."[50] On the Internet there are numerous pages where anarchists translators upload their translations, most of them from famous books of classical and contemporary writers such as Mijail Bakunin, Nestor Majno, David Guerin, etc. They also translate statements of other anarchists groups, pamphlets, and news. Most of them can be found mainly in the following blogs al-Anārkiyah bi-l-ʿarabiyah (2008), Musāfir ʿabr kalimāti (2011), and al-Arshif al-anārki al-ʿarabi (2004).[51] The LSM uses the anarchist texts that are available online for their weekly "reading session," where they read and discuss anarchist texts among their members. However, the social impact of these translations is not yet known, but we do believe readers and adherents to the ideology have increased in the last year due to the proliferation of Facebook groups and other blogs related to Anarchism in the Middle East, and also to the increase of the anarchist "A" among the graffiti in the streets of Cairo and their presence in protests in 2012 and 2013.

The Internet and the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) provide new spaces for the organization and for the work of anarchist movements. These groups can be incorporated into what Jeffre S. Juris (2004) defines as new social movements on the Internet:

4. *They are global*: They participate in other group causes. For example, the LSM has covered broadly the events in Taksim Square, or in Brazil during the 2013 riots initiated by the Movimento Passe Livre (Free Fare Movement).
5. *They inform and perform*: They produce images for mass media; share information, produce their own iconography, and promote individual direct action. An example is the manual made by the group Anārkiyun al-ʿArab—Anarchists of Arabs (2012) on how to manually fabricate a Molotov cocktail, for the 30th June demonstration.[52]
6. *They organize*: The social networks turn out to be ideal platforms for the political culture of anarchism: "They give rise to new decentralized forms of doing politics and to exercise direct democracy, and therefore reflect, the traditional principles of anarchism."[53]

Just to mention some of these new social movements on the Internet related to anarchism in Egypt: Anārkiyyun al-ʿArab—Anarchists of

Arabs (2013), Tahrir INC—International Collective Network (2012), and al-Anārkiyah al-Misriyah (2011).

The LSM does not have a stable structure of international connections, although they are aware and in touch with other anarchist groups in the Middle East and other parts of the world—mostly on a personal level rather than on a group level. These transnational connections are mainly to show solidarity with comrades abroad who suffer from repression or to make statements regarding the situation of other struggles.

PROPAGANDA BY THE DEED

Anarcho-syndicalism and the Black Bloc are the two main tactics of "propaganda by the deed" in contemporary anarchism in Egypt. Since 1957 the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF)—al-Ittihsd al-'amm li-naqabat 'ummal Misr—has been the only trade union legalized in the country. Created to control the dissemination and contestation of workers, the ETUF has not been able to prevent the dissent of workers in Egypt. Joel Beinin (2012) awards a great importance to workers' movements and trade unions in the 25th January Revolution and the consequent downfall of Mubarak's regime.[54] For the author, the strikes that were taking place since 1998 eventually delegitimized the image of the regime and increasingly incorporated political demands in their speech and these were definitely decisive for the popular uprising in 2011.[55]

In 2011, workers' movements challenged not just the Mubarak's regime, but also the dominant role of ETUF. Jano Charbel, an anarcho-syndicalist from Egypt, affirms that without the working class during the days of the uprising, the Revolution would not have succeeded (Solidarity Federation 2011). On January 30, 2011, independent trade unions unified to establish the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU)—al-Ittihad al-misri li-naqabat al-'ummaliyah al-mustaqilla—that announced its solidarity with the Egyptian revolution and challenged the ETUF. Yasir 'Abd al-Qawi, one of the founders of the Libertarian Socialist Movement, declared:

> Old state trade unions have existed always with its bureaucracy, its corruption and have lost all its influence. Despite all this, the old ETUF, dissolved in January 2011, has rebirth by decree and the new EFITU, founded in Tahrir Square is a copy of the old government trade union, with a pyramidal hierarchy and with a bureaucratic system.[56]

February 8, 2011, was the first day of the revolution that unified the workers of the key sectors of the Egyptian economy and " [...] put more pressure on the regime than anything else—you can handle street protests, but when you have massive street protests and workers' strikes combined, you're in deep shit."[57] However, we are not aware whether the actions of the new EFITU have been influenced by anarcho-syndicalism.

Most direct actions of the LSM are directed to workers of the industrial sector in Alexandria. As explained by Muhammad 'Izz (2013): "We meet with the workers to talk about syndicalism and discuss these ideas, although at the end it is just the workers who finally decide if they participate actively." LSM activities are mainly focused on workers of Alexandria Tire Company—Pirelly and Alexandria Container Cargo Handling Company.

However, anarcho-syndicalist activities are not the only tactics of contemporary anarchism in Egypt. Recently, we have seen, on the occasion of the celebration of second anniversary of the 2011 Revolution, the appearance of the Black Bloc tactic. In its first statement on Youtube, the members of the group declared that their main goal was to overthrow the "fascist government of the Muslim Brotherhood and its armed forces."[58] Since then, they have been accused of attacking the MB headquarters and of blocking the tramway in Alexandria and the metro lines in Cairo. A defamation and prosecution campaign started since then, many people related to this have been arrested, and many webpages closed down.

On the international level, media has linked the appearance of the Black Bloc in the revolutionary scene in Egypt to the existence of anarchism in the region. However, the contradictory discourse of the multiple modes of communication of Black Bloc Egypt have led writers like Joshua Stephens (2013) to criticize the wide coverage of anarchist activists internationally, in what he has coined as a "new Orientalist representation." It is difficult then to determined the ideology of the group since on one hand, its members are in favor of political reforms within a participatory democracy, and on the other hand, the nationalist discourse of the group moves it away from its connection to anarchism.[59] I do believe, nonetheless, that it is still too soon to analyze objectively the Egyptian Black Bloc, and that there is a need for a more detailed investigation of this tactic in Egypt. This, however, is not the purpose of this chapter.

In any case, Black Bloc Egypt has brought back the debate on the necessity of violence and its role in revolutionary processes. Philip Rizk (2013)

and Samir Na'im (in El Guindy 2013) agree that the Black Bloc in Egypt has emerged as a reaction to the systemic violence of the Modern State by its security forces, its judicial insecurity, and its neoliberal economy. Anarchism, as an ideology that has been reviled and slandered along its history, and whose discourse has been delegitimized due to its link to terrorist attacks, makes it more necessary than ever to answer the question of the necessity of violence by Egyptian anarchist groups, which as far as we know, have not officially stated anything to this respect. However, some people interviewed for this study and also the LSM consider that violence can be used only to defend oneself from the direct attack of the State. The LSM have not published any statement concerning the role of violence, and as far as I know, have not had a debate either on the legitimacy of violence in a Revolutionary context. Nevertheless, some anarchist groups on the Internet have also prepared its followers on how to react to attacks and on how to prepare Molotov cocktails in the context of a protest. Still, the debate is ongoing and the answer is still insufficient given the new direction of the Egyptian politics after the coup d'état of the armed forces on the 3rd of July 2013.

CONCLUSIONS

The new social movements in Egypt and the new antiglobalization discourses that emerged globally with the Zapatista movement in Mexico and the events of Seattle in 1999 were the starting points of the antiglobalization struggles. However, these anticapitalist and anti-imperialist discourses did not arrive in or affect Egypt until the emergence of the solidarity committees created in support of the Second Palestinian Intifada, against the Iraq War, and above all, with the 25th January Revolution in Egypt. The emergence of these new social movements and their common repertoires, their lack of leadership, and their antihierarchical structure have been pivotal in creating repertoires of contentious politics related to anarchism. However, this ideology and its political expressions are not new in Egypt. Anarchism first appeared at the end of the nineteenth century due to the immigration of Europeans workers and activists to the Southern Mediterranean, where a radical leftist thought flourished across it. Even if it is impossible right now to trace the history of anarchism and its practices during the twentieth century due to the lack of literature, in the 1980s and 1990s we find individual activists who worked on spreading anarchist ideas by translating and producing texts and helping workers' movements with anarcho-syndicalist practices.

The occupied spaces during the Revolution, such as Tahrir Square, symbolized an anarchist experience in theory and practice, and thanks to it, many activists encountered anarchism. This experience and the political opportunity created by the downfall of Mubarak regime ended up with the foundation of the Libertarian Socialist Movement months later. It expresses the basics principles of anarcho-communism, and this is why many of its repertoires of collective actions do not differ much from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' anarchism in Egypt, although they adapt to the new spaces of diffusion and dissemination such as the Internet and the ICTs.

On the same lines, they have created their own language and iconography, which eventually became less bizarre in the political panorama in Egypt. Furthermore, this revolutionary culture was stimulated by the appearance of the Black Bloc tactic, which differs greatly from the classical modes of collective action of the LSM, even if as a group the Black Bloc has a heterogeneous discourse, which makes it difficult to affirm whether it can be framed as anarchist.

These repertoires of contentious politics have helped in the construction of libertarian alternatives and brought about the renaissance of a revolutionary and radical leftist culture. It has also challenged the traditional Arab left discourse, leaving behind the idea of the necessity of a leader and a hierarchical party to pursue a free-class socialist society. However, anarchism in Egypt has to face the challenge of redefining its discourse and strategies to adapt to the recent events after 3rd July 2013: in a more polarized society between the Muslim Brotherhood supporters and the new role of the army, and in an increase of violence by the institutions of the state.

NOTES

1. P. H. Marshall,*Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Harper Collins, 2008), 14.
2. R. Amster, A. DeLeon, L. A. Fernandez, A. J. Nocella, and D. Shannon, *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy* (London: Routledge, 2009), 3.
3. All the translations are made by the author of this study.
4. We apply the term "political culture" as stated by Uri Gordon: "What animates these rhizomatic networks, and infuses them with content, is anarchism as a political culture, a shared orientation towards ways of 'doing politics' that is manifest in common forms of organization (anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, consensus-based); in a common repertoire of political expression (direct action, constructing alternatives, community outreach, confrontation); in a common discourse (keywords, narratives, arguments and myths); and in more broadly 'cultural' shared features (dress, music, diet)." See U. Gordon, *Anarchism and Political Theory: Comtemporary Problems* (Oxford: University of Oxford, Department of Politics and International Relations, 2007), 9.

5. Gordon, (*Anarchism and Political Theory*, 33.
6. All of these documents are available on the LSM webpage. Accessed at: http://lsm-egypt.blogspot.com/.
7. Ibid, 29.
8. In this chapter we describe "anarchism" as a "libertarian, socialist, and internationalist thought" for the following reasons: The term "libertarian" describes all those people who, within the spectrum of socialism, do work in a nonauthoritarian and a nonhierarchical way. The split between Marx and Bakunin in the First International (1864–1876) was mainly (simplifying the discussion) a dissension in methodology, not in scope: one of the clearest differences between the groups was Bakunin's idea of direct interference in economic and politics against the Marxist thinking, focused on parliamentary activity. After Bakunin's criticism of communism as an authoritarian ideology, anarchism has also been called "libertarian socialism" or the libertarian branch of socialism.
9. We use the term "Revolution" or "25th January Revolution" in this study to refer to the events that ended to the overthrow of Mubarak's regime in 2011, since it is the terminology used by the activists who were interviewed for this study.
10. "Repertoires of contentious politics" refers, in the social movement theory, to a set of various forms, tools, and actions of people engaged in a conflict in a specific time and place. The term "repertoires of contention" was first used by Charles Tilly in his major work *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834* and by "repertoire" he meant a set of routines that are "learned, shared and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice" (cited in S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7. For Tarrow (1998) the "repertoire" is "at once a structural and a cultural concept, involving not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others but what they *know how to do* and what others *expect* them to do" (ibid., 30). This set of practices changes over time and place and depends on interests, opportunities, and organization.
11. E. Süreyyya, 'Postanarchism and the '3rd World,'" *56th Annual Conference of Political Studies Association* (Berkshire, CA: University of Reading, 2006), 4.
12. R. Amster et al., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies,* 5.
13. Süreyyya, "Postanarchism and the '3rd World,'" 6–7.
14. J. Adams, *Non-Western Anarchism: Rethinking the Global Context* (Johannesburg: Zabalaza Books, 2003), 3. Accessed at: http://zabalazabooks.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/non_western_anarchisms_rethinking_the_global_context_adams.pdf.
15. Ibid.
16. L. Van Der Walt and M. Schmidt, "The Anarchist Movement in North Africa: 1877–1951," *ZABALAZA: A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism* 10 (2009):18–21; and S. Hirsch and L. Van Der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010).
17. I. Khuri- Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism 1860–1914* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 18.
18. For further information concerning Italian anarchists in Egypt see: L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo: periodici e numeri unici anarchici in lingua italiana pubblicati all'estero, 1872–1971* (Florence: Crescita política editrice, 1976).
19. A. Gorman, "Socialism en Ègypte avant la Première Guerre mondiale: la contribution des anarchistes," *Cahiers d'histoire: Revue d'histoire critique* 105–106, (2008): 48.
20. A. Gorman, "'Diverse in Race, Religion and Nationality…But United in Aspirations of Civil Progress": The Anarchist Movement in Egypt 1860–1940," in *Anarchism and*

Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940, ed. S. Hirsch and L. Van der Walt, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 23.

21. I. Khuri- Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism 1860–1914* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 92.
22. Francisco Ferrer was a Catalonian freethinker and anarchist. In 1901 he opened the Escuela Moderna (The Modern School) to teach children radical social values. He also published a book titled *The Origins and Ideals of the Modern School*. He was arrested and was accused of being the instigator of the revolt known as the Tragic Week (an anti-clerical uprising in Barcelona) at Montjuich Fortress in Barcelona and after a lengthy trial, executed. Many of his supporters in the United States formed Modern Schools or Ferrer Schools after him.
23. A. Gorman, "Anarchists in Education: The Free Popular University in Egypt (1901)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 3 (2005): 303–20, 304.
24. Gorman, "Diverse in Race," 27.
25. Khuri- Makdisi, *Eastern Mediterranean,* 171.
26. See T. Sidney, *The Language of Contention: Revolutions in Words, 1688–2012* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
27. H. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic,* ed. J. Milton Cowan, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, Inc. 1976).
28. Gorman, "Diverse in Race," 16.
29. "The word 'anarchy' comes from the ancient Greek word ἀναρχία in which ἀν meant 'without' and αρχία meant first military 'leader' then 'ruler.' In medieval Latin, the word became anarchia. During the Middle Ages this was used to describe God being 'without a beginning'; only later did it recapture its earlier Greek political definition. Today it has come to describe the condition of people living without any constituted authority or government," Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 3.
30. The blog *al-anarkiyah bil-arabiyha* is a collective work of anarchist activists founded in 2008 with the goal of being an archive of translations of anarchist texts of different types and authors. See: *"al-anārkiyah bil 'arabiyah.*" Accessed at: http://anarchisminarabic.blogspot.com.es/.
31. See Ikhwan Wiki, "al-Anārkiyah (al-ishtirākiyin al-tawriyin) wa fawdawiyat al-dawlah," *Ikhwan Wiki.* Accessed at: http://www.ikhwanwiki.com/.
32. Picture taken from: *Al-Anārkiyah Al-Misriyah*, "Al-Anārkiyah Al-Misriyah." Accessed at: https://www.facebook.com/Egy.Anarchism on June 23, 2013.
33. See David Graeber, "The New Anarchists," *New Left Review* 13 (2002): 61–63.
34. Adams, *Non-Western Anarchism*, 28.
35. Ibid., 6–7.
36. Ibid., 28.
37. M. LeVine, "The Revolution, Black in Black," *Al-Jazeera.* (2013). Accessed at http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/02/201322103219816676.html, on June 12, 2013.
38. M. Faraj, "Arrab al-anarkiyah al-misriyah: 'a-tawra tanhatu,'" *Correspondents.org.* (2013). Accessed at: http://www.correspondents.org/ar/node/2043, on June 10, 2013.
39. Tarrow, *Power in Movement,* 7.
40. Yasir `Abd Allah. Interviewed in Cairo on May 23, 2013, by the author of this study.
41. See al-Harakah al-ishtirākiyah al-taharruriyah, *al-Harakah al-ishtirakiyah al-taharuriyah.* (2012) Accessed at: http://lsmegypt.blogspot.com.es/, on June 25, 2013.
42. Tarrow, *Power in Movement,* 6.

43. al-Harakah al-ishtirākiyah al-taharruriyah, "Mursi yu'lin al-harb 'alà al-sha'b," in *al-Harakah al-ishtirākiyah al-taharruriyah* (2012). Accessed at: http://lsmegypt.blogspot.com.es/2012/12/blog-post_11.html, on June 12, 2013.
44. al-Haraka al-ishtirākiyah al-taharruriyah, "Idrāb 'amm um khida 'amm?," *al-Haraka al-ishtirakiyah al-taharuriyah*. (2012). Accessed at: http://lsmegypt.blogspot.com.es/2012/02/blog-post.html, on June 13, 2013.
45. U. Gordon, "Anarchism Reloaded," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12 no. 1(2007b): 29–48, 33.
46. There are activists who just participate occasionally within the movements and who are related to the ideology of the movement or its members (many of them are even family members and relatives) who do not belong to the movement (since they do not feel it as such) but who agree on specific actions and mobilizations.
47. A. Zāki, *al-Anarkiyah: al-madrasah al-zawriyah allati na'rifuha* (al-Qahira: Dar al-Jamasin, 2012), 7.
48. See Y. 'Abd Allah, "Kayfa yumkin ta'arif al-ishtirakiyah al-taharruriyah?" (2011). Accessed at: http://anarchisminarabic.blogspot.com.es/2011/10/blog-post_22.html, on June 26, 2013.
49. Y. 'Abd Allah, "al-Anarkiyah fawqa-l-nil," (2013). Accessed at: https://docs.google.com/file/d/18EIN4fUE13dr1JujjA4yFAMbb_9MD5nBp1HnRQBI7XV4siXhHYE14yF3qT8U/edit, on June 26, 2013.
50. M. 'Izzinterviewed by the author of this study in Alexandria in the year 2013.
51. This blog has been deleted recently by unknown reasons.
52. Anārkiyyun al-'arab [Anarchists of Arabs], "al-Mulutuf—nasaih min anārkiyun al-'arab," (2013). Accessed at: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=353087871484367&set=a.211807092279113.45163.211801622279660&type=1, on June 26, 2013.
53. J. S. Juris, "Movimientos sociales en Red: Movimientos globales por una justicia global," in *Una sociedad Red: Una visión global*, ed. Manuel Castells (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2004), 422.
54. J. Beinin, *The Rise of Egypt's Workers* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), 3.
55. Ibid., 4.
56. "Entretien. Dossier Printemps arabe: Egypte: Yasser Andelkawi (Movement socialiste libertaire), "La population est en colère de voir la révolution trahie»," *Alternative Libertaire*. (2012). Accessed at: http://www.alternativelibertaire.org/spip.php?article4739, on June 26, 2013.
57. "Revolution in Egypt: Interview with Jano Charbel," *Solidarity Federation* (2011). Accessed at: http://www.solfed.org.uk/revolution-in-egypt-interview-with-an-egyptian-anarcho-syndicalist, on June 26, 2013.
58. See: A. Ibrahim, "Black Bloc Egypt," *Youtube* (2013). Accessed at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Avv1zV5Cqs, on June 25, 2013.
59. See "The Black Bloc Myth," *Libcom.org*. (2013). Accessed at: http://libcom.org/forums/africa/egypt-black-bloc-myth-26022013, on June 26, 2013.

15

MUSLIM GROUPS IN THE GEZI PARK PROTESTS: IDENTITY POLITICS AND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS UNDER AUTHORITARIAN NEOLIBERALISM

Ayşe Dursun

INTRODUCTION*

"I heard a voice [from the crowd] saying that we will also build a mosque [in Taksim]. Yes, we will also build a mosque. Yes, we will also build a mosque. I will of course not ask the leader of CHP [Republican People's Party, main opposition party] for his permission and a couple of *çapulcus*[1] for their permission. Those who voted for us have already given us their permission."[2]

By the time the then prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdo an[3] made this resolute statement, Gezi Park protesters had already delayed the planned demolition of the park for a week. When the bulldozers arrived at the Gezi Park in Taksim, Istanbul, and uprooted the first trees on May 27, 2013, a small of group of activists from Taksim Solidarity[4] (*Taksim Dayanışması*) occupied the park and pitched their tents to keep watch over the park at night. Two days later, the police attacked the sleeping protesters early in the morning and removed their tents. Within days the protests spread to the rest of the country. Over 2 million people were mobilized in 79 out of 81 Turkish cities.[5]

The police responded brutally to the protests. Turkish Medical Association (*Türk Tapipler Birliği*) reported 5 deaths, 11 cases of permanent eyesight loss, and 8,163 injuries, 63 of them severe, and one life-threatening, between May 31 and August 1, 2013.[6] Police violence was accompanied by large-scale media censorship. Mainstream news channels such as CNNTurk and NTV did not broadcast the protests in the first few days. Newspapers with close ties to the government prevented information flow. Freelance journalists had

to do so at the risk of being blacklisted or fired. Turkish Journalists Union (*Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası*) reported that 59 journalists were fired and 14 were sent on compulsory leave between May and July 2013.[7]

Despite dissuasive government measures an increasing number of people gathered in the Gezi Park forming a unique oppositional block comprising diverse social movement activists and organizations among others such as socialist, Kurdish, feminist, and LGBT activists. However, the assembly exceeded what may be called a secular left-wing coalition and encompassed Turkish nationalists, football fans, and Muslim groups, as well as formerly unorganized individuals.

This chapter shows that populist identity politics was used by the government as a strategy to polarize and fragment opposition during the protests that targeted government policies in numerous interlinked policy areas ranging from urban gentrification to censorship and women's issues. It also shows that contentious politics in some cases helped the protesters overcome the populist identity trap.

I begin by discussing the paradigm shift in social movement literature from class-based to identity-based politics in postindustrial welfare states. I argue with Nancy Fraser that a narrow understanding of identity (politics) runs the risk of marginalizing redistribution claims. The "recognition versus redistribution" antithesis is a wrong one, and contentious politics, for a certain time and space, may offer an exit out of populist identity politics. Second, I describe the socioeconomic background against which Gezi Park protests erupted. The neoliberal urban policies of the government, accompanied by police brutality, censorship, and a conservative-religious gender regime, have mobilized different groups of the society creating a very heterogeneous oppositional assembly. Third, I analyze the Muslim groups who, in one way or another, were involved in the Gezi Park protests. Muslim groups attracted much attention as opposition toward a government known to have Islamic roots and aspirations, that is, despite the shared Muslim identity. Thus, Muslim groups represent a useful case for analyzing identity politics, claims of redistribution, and contentious politics. I argue that contentious politics helped to suspend some social norms (e.g., by sleeping in a park and disobeying police order) while overemphasizing others (e.g. solidarity) and transformed the public space and social relations for a certain time and space. Finally, I assess the opportunities and limitations of contentious politics in overcoming populist identity politics.

RECOGNITION, REDISTRIBUTION, AND THE "FALSE ANTITHESES"

In a recently published volume on *Marxism and Social Movements*,[8] the authors pointed to the curious development that while capitalism "has spread to nearly every corner of the globe,"[9] it has at the same time strangely disappeared from social movement studies. From the 1970s and 1980s on works on the impact of resources and political structure for movement mobilization[10] became popular while social-psychological collective behavior[11] approaches to protests, riots, panic, and craze became less popular in the field. Hetland and Goodwin[12] note that in the course of the time many scholars, including those who had previously borrowed frameworks from Marxism, abandoned class-based approaches and increasingly focused on cultural framing, networks, and political opportunity. The authors argue that this trend has, among others, obscured how capitalism has influenced the possibilities for protest by shaping political institutions and alliances, social ties, and cultural idioms.[13] In other words, despite the fact that social movements are influenced by capitalism as it provides the sociopolitical setting for production, reproduction, and various other social relations including political struggle, it has increasingly come to be ignored in the study of social movements.

In the 1980s, in continental Europe, a new approach was emerging under the impressions of "new" (e.g., student, antiwar, feminist, environmentalist) movements. Although there have been differences in approach between scholars, the new social movement theor*ies*, in plural, have at least two central claims: First, that new social movements are the outcome of the shift to a postindustrial economy and, second, that they are unique and different from the social movements of the industrial age.[14] Some of them embedded their approach in a Marxist framework as did Manuel Castells in *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (1983). There, he notes that the cities have been transformed, on the one hand, by "the new international and inter-regional spatial division of labor, the growing importance of collective consumption through urban services, and the fact that public goods are most necessary while still being unprofitable for the private capital," and, on the other hand, by "the search for spatial meaningfulness and cultural identity, the demands for social goods and services, and the drift toward local autonomy."[15] Yet others emphasized more strongly that the center of social conflict in postindustrial society has moved away from production as Alain Touraine argues in his *The Return of the Actor* (1985). According

to Touraine, social movement has become "an agent of conflict for the social control of the main cultural patterns"[16] as protest has been displaced from the economic to the cultural realm. It was assumed that as the character of social conflicts changed, class affiliations and identities of the individuals and groups involved in struggles would change, too. Student movements in Europe and in the United States in the 1960s were considered as evidence for this shift.[17] Although this approach has delivered valuable insights on the changing dynamics of social movements in advanced capitalism, its emphasis on claims of identity and recognition has obscured the intimate relationship between recognition and redistribution.

Nancy Fraser calls this the "problem of displacement." She notes that, on the one hand, under expanding capitalism "recognition struggles are serving less to supplement, complicate, and enrich redistribution than to marginalize, eclipse, and displace them."[18] On the other hand, politics of recognition "often take the form of a communitarianism that drastically simplifies and reifies group identity" leading to even more "separatism and group enclaving, chauvinism and intolerance, patriarchalism and authoritarianism."[19] She calls this the "problem of reification." However, rejecting politics of recognition all together, Fraser warns, could mean for some (re)prioritizing class over gender, sexuality, or ethnicity, resurrecting economism, or assimilation to majority norms.[20] She notes elsewhere that we are forced to choose between "false antitheses" such as redistribution or recognition, class politics or identity politics, and multiculturalism or social democracy.[21] Instead, Fraser proposes an approach of nonidentitarian politics, which understands identity as status and captures it in its relation to economic class.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw developed the concept of intersectionality in the 1980s and 1990s to describe the interaction between identity categories such as "race" and gender. Crenshaw argued that the black women's experiences became marginalized because the intersection of gender and "race" was ignored both in feminist theory and in antiracist politics.[22] She notes that identity-based politics has served as "a source of strength, community, and intellectual development" for African Americans, other people of color, and gays and lesbians.[23] Crenshaw disagrees with the mainstream liberal discourse that identity politics leads to the exclusion of those who are different. Instead, she argues that the emphasis on the intersection of different identities, such as in the case of African American women, has been empowering.[24]

The advantages of identity politics for marginalized groups notwithstanding, I argue that identity politics remains ambivalent both in its goal and outcome due to its (in- and out-)group-building capacity. We witness how, for example, right-wing parties use identity politics to bypass claims of social justice by relying on outgroups (e.g., Muslims, asylum seekers) to consolidate the ingroup identity (e.g., European, Christian). In a newspaper column, Fraser delivers a feminist self-criticism:

> Rejecting "economism" and politicising "the personal," feminists broadened the political agenda to challenge status hierarchies premised on cultural constructions of gender difference. The result should have been to expand the struggle for justice to encompass both culture and economics. But the actual result was a one-sided focus on "gender identity" at the expense of bread and butter issues. Worse still, the feminist turn to identity politics dovetailed all too neatly with a rising neoliberalism that wanted nothing more than to repress all memory of social equality. In effect, we absolutised the critique of cultural sexism at precisely the moment when circumstances required redoubled attention to the critique of political economy.[25]

I argue that contentious politics helps, at least for a certain time and space, to overcome identity politics and draft an alternative basis for political organization and mobilization. Charles Tilly and Sydney Tarrow define contentious politics as "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of the shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties" and brings together three elements, namely contention, collective action, and politics.[26] Contentious politics may allow first-time constellations among groups and encourage innovative collective action. Remembering Gezi Park protests an LGBT activist notes:

> The so-called "sissy boys" who carried the wounded ones out of the clash zones, *the previously slanged* transwomen who supplied medicine and food to the barricades, and *"fags"* who apparently showed the courage of sitting in front of the police water cannon trucks like *all those* "*tough guys*," together gave rise to a substantial crack in hate speech, and the homophobic and transphobic collective memory woven by it within and hopefully somewhere out of the space of the resistance.[27]

CONSERVATIVE-RELIGIOUS NEOLIBERALISM, POPULIST IDENTITY POLITICS AND THE PATH TO CONTENTIOUS POLITICS OVER GEZI PARK

After the devastating financial crisis of 2001 none of the former coalition partners was able to pass the 10 percent electoral threshold in the elections the following year. The Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) came out as the clear winner of the elections and formed the first single-party government since 1991. The AKP was advantaged by the national, political, and economic conjuncture at the beginning of the 2000s in two ways.[28] First, economic growth was promoted by postcrisis measures such as the privatization of state enterprises and increasing foreign direct investment. Second, the voters punished the former coalition partners whom they held responsible for the 2001 crisis leaving AKP as the strongest party. Besides the national conjuncture, AKP was elected in a period when growth rates in emerging markets were high worldwide.[29]

Although the neoliberal restructuring in Turkey goes back to the 1980s when the so-called adjustment measures were installed under the supervision of International Monetary Fund (IMF), the AKP has proved to be more devoted to their implementation than its forerunners. In order to break the societal opposition against the privatization of state enterprises, liberalization of trade, and private investment for a better integration into world market, the AKP has relied on the EU-induced discourses of "globalization" and "democratization,"which it embedded into a broader Islamic framework.[30] This way, the AKP could appeal both to liberal democrats and the conservative Muslim population who had accumulated resentments against the secularist state elite.

For the purposes of this chapter in the following I focus on the construction sector viewed as the "locomotive" or "engine" of AKP's economic growth model. This model has encouraged the transformation of the urban space into a profitable enterprise at the expense of poor neighborhoods, the ecosystem, and history. One of the main stimulators of the construction industry has been the Housing Development Administration of Turkey (*Toplu Konut Idaresi Başkanlığı*, TOKI), a public agency established in 1984 to meet the housing needs of the low-income population through mass housing projects as envisaged in Article 57 of the Constitution. The Chamber of Civil Engineers has noted that TOKI has increasingly drifted away from its constitutional responsibility and started providing "smart housing" for the rich.[31] So far TOKI has erected 623,369 houses, which make up

23 cities with a population of 100,000 each, in 81 cities and 800 towns.[32] It has carried out a comprehensive gentrification process, advertised under friendly names such as "urban renewal" or "urban transition" in numerous historical parts of Istanbul, such as Sulukule and Tarlabaşı, replacing poor neighborhoods with shopping malls, residential units, and offices.[33] Besides TOKI, the AKP has stimulated the construction industry with "megaprojects" such as *Kanal Istanbul*, an artificial waterway to connect the Black Sea to the Marmara Sea, or the construction of a third airport with a 150 million passenger capacity. A third Bosporus Bridge is also among the megaprojects. Both the airport's and the bridge's contract for construction have been given to construction firms known to have close ties to the government. City planner and scholar Erbatur Çavuşoğlu points at three dimensions of this ongoing process.[34] First, through these projects formerly uncommodified areas are integrated into the economic cycle. Second, these policies are not implemented to balance societal dissatisfaction but for capital accumulation against the interests of the (dispossessed and displaced) poor population. And third, this accumulation has created a new class of contractors and investors close to the government.

Erdoğan made use of populist identity politics to gain the consent of the low-income and religious-conservative segments of his electorate. It should be noted that past grievances caused by the secular Kemalist ruling elite (from the forced resignation of the democratically elected pro-Islamic prime minister Necmettin Erbakan in 1997 to the headscarf ban at the universities lifted only recently) occupy a significant place in the collective memory of the religious Muslim population. Actually, Erdoğan himself became the target of Kemalist forces when the then Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals filed a party closure appeal to the Constitutional Court against the AKP on grounds that the party had become the "focus of anti-secularist activities" and demanded the ban of 71 AKP members from politics for a period of five years.[35] At a symbolic level, Erdoğan's wife, Emine Erdoğan, was either not invited to or preferred not to attend state protocols because of her headscarf, until recently. Especially in times of political turmoil Erdoğan resorted to using these past grievances to gain the sympathy of his electorate. Erdoğan frequently alludes to the religious-conservative sensibilities of the society as seen in recent debates on the abolition of abortion, purchase of alcoholic drinks, and gender-mixed student flat shares. In all of the mentioned examples Erdoğan employed dichotomies strategically and portrayed a society divided along ethical and moral lines.

When the Turkish actor Mehmet Ali Alabora tweeted, "It is not only about the Gezi Park, my friend, haven't you still understood that? So come on!" on May 30, 2013, and invited people to join the occupation of the Gezi Park, Erdoğan and newspapers close to the government started a verbal lynch on Alabora accusing him of provoking a civil coup against the democratically elected government. It is, however, a matter of fact that Gezi Park issue was the tip of the iceberg and can best be understood when embedded in a socio-political and economic context. The growing dissatisfaction of the people with AKP's policies have been, among others, due to the commercialization of the previously uncommodified areas, the displacement and dispossession of the poor population due to gentrification, clientelism in the assignment of public contracts, nonparticipatory decision-making processes with respect to megaprojects that have increasingly turned a blind eye to expert opinion, and opposition from the civil society. These economic considerations tied to political gains turned AKP into an increasingly authoritarian government that implements its neoliberal project at any cost. Police violence against his critics became commonplace leading to numerous deaths and thousands of injuries during and after Gezi Park protests while impunity has been systematic. Through the strategic sale of newspapers and TV channels to holdings with close ties to the government, information was effectively manipulated in its favor. Recently, when accusations of corruption against Erdoğan and his colleagues were made, the government shut down Twitter to prevent the circulation of audio recordings. Although Twitter was reopened in a couple of weeks, it was a clear sign that arbitrary closure was feasible when social media interfered with the party's political interests. Furthermore, AKP's neoliberal-conservative patriarchy[36] caused resentment among women. Erdoğan's frequent advice to women to bear at least three children and his abortion-massacre analogy caused outrage. Feminists reported that after Erdoğan discredited abortion publicly, access to abortion in public hospitals has become more difficult, and many women have preferred not to consult a doctor in the first place because they fear being blacklisted.[37]

MUSLIM PROTESTERS IN THE GEZI PARK

Based on my online research on homepages, blogs, newspaper columns, interviews, and videos, I identified four Muslim groups who were in one way or another involved in the Gezi Park protests: Two gender-mixed groups, the Anti-Capitalist Muslims (*Antikapitalist Müslümanlar*), and Revolutionary

Muslims (*Devrimci Müslümanlar*) who were present in the park from the first days of the occupation until its evacuation; a very small number of individual activists from the recently established all-female Muslims' Initiative against Violence against Women (*Kadına Şiddete Karşı Müslümanlar Inisiyatifi*); and another gender-mixed group of noted Muslim intellectuals, Labor and Justice (*Emek ve Adalet*), who launched a government-critical online statement.

ANTI-CAPITALIST MUSLIMS AND REVOLUTIONARY MUSLIMS

The first time people heard about the recently established gender-mixed group of Anti-Capitalist Muslims was on May 1, 2012, when group members gathered at the Fatih Mosque to perform *salat*, the ritual Islamic prayer, in commemoration of workers who lost their lives in work accidents. After the prayer, the group marched to Taksim to join the May 1st parade for "labor, bread, elbow grease, and rights; to break the chain and free the slaves; for justice, freedom, and equality; for the rights of workers, the unemployed, the poor, and the deprived."[38] It was followed by three anti-NATO demonstrations. Özgür Kıvanç, a member of Anti-Capitalist Muslims, notes that these demonstrations "have been meaningful to demonstrate how people with anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, [and] anti-authoritarian incentives from different organizations were able to come together."[39] On another occasion, when Kurdish political prisoners started an infinite hunger strike in 2012, Anti-Capitalist Muslims performed the noon prayer at the Fatih Mosque and marched to Saraçhane to hold a press statement noting that the demands of the prisoners were their demands too.[40] On the death anniversary of the murdered Armenian journalist Hrant Dink on January 19, 2013, Anti-Capitalist Muslims joined the parade with a placard that read: "AKP stands by rent, Muslims stand by Hrant."[41] Their foundation manifesto had previously declared: "Regardless of its religious belief or lack of belief, of race, language, color, [and] ideology, we view every anti-capitalist uproar and discourse as our natural alliance. We would to like share the same platform and settings of struggle with them."[42]

When Anti-Capitalist Muslims found out about the small group of people occupying the Gezi Park to prevent its demolition, they decided to join the protest immediately. On 29th May they arrived in the park with the placard saying: "The estate belongs to *Allah*, capitalists back off."[43] It is difficult to tell how visible Anti-Capitalist Muslims were in the park compared to, for example, socialist feminists, the LGBT activists, or the nationalists. They had their

flags and placards placed around their tent as did other groups. They not only adopted the contents and form of the protest but also reframed these with reference to Islam and made Islamic rituals part of their authentic contentious politics. On *miraj kandil*, an Islamic holy night, Anti-Capitalist Muslims opened a placard reading, "*Kandils* are days of unification, equality, and solidarity for the people."[44] They prayed in the park and distributed *simit*, traditional bagels. While conducting the prayer, Ihsan Eliaçık, theologian and former mentor of Anti-Capitalist Muslims, made a loud call to *Allah* to protect these "young people [Gezi Park protestors] who yell out the truth despite the cruel *Sultan*," referring to Erdoğan.

Yet, the greatest success in transforming religious ritual to contentious politics was the collective evening meals, *iftar*, during Ramadan in July 2013. The Revolutionary Muslims, another anticapitalist gender-mixed Muslim group, made a call to hold daily *iftars* through the Istiklal Street up to Taksim Square and Gezi Park as a demonstration of solidarity among the people.[45] The concept was simple: Everyone would bring food and beverage, put it on the meters-long *yer sofrası*, a low table close to the ground, and share it with others. Emerging in Istanbul, the so-called *yeryüzü iftari*, meaning the "*iftar* on earth," spread across the country. In numerous cities people would gather in the parks, which now had a symbolic meaning for civil resistance, to share their food. The modest meals of ordinary people was conceptualized as an antipode to the extravagant *iftar* dinners held in luxury hotels and restaurants for politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen. These *iftar*s became one of the landmarks of Gezi Park protests and attracted the attention of the secular, nonpracticing Muslims who participated in these street dinners to protest against the government. Besides mobilizing people for a whole month, anticapitalist Muslims were also able to promote their own movement cause (Islamic anticapitalism) by building short-term coalitions with other movement actors and unorganized individuals. After Gezi protests, Anti-Capitalist Muslims opened further bureaus in numerous cities, which indicates an increased public interest in their movement.

Although anticapitalist Muslim protesters were mixing identity politics with class-based contentious politics, they also sought to circumvent Erdoğan's attempts to criminalize and discredit the protesters. Erdoğan postulated conspiracy theories that the protestors were puppets of imperial powers and lobbies, infidels who entered mosques with their shoes, and drank beer in there. He manipulated identity politics in a way that resonated with

established religious-conservative values in the society as a strategy to turn the crisis to his advantage. Erdoğan implied a "clash of cultures/world views" (believers vs. infidels). The active engagement of anticapitalist Muslims in the protests, however, helped to blur these clichés.

MUSLIMS' INITIATIVE AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Muslim's Initiative against Violence against Women is a recently formed Muslim women's initiative working toward awareness raising against violence against women. Their gatherings take the form of reading groups where religious texts are discussed and the historical roots of misogynist practices within the Muslim community are explored. The group has visibility on social media and uses email groups to coordinate and organize public statements, meetings, and (rarely) demonstrations. They submitted a Friday sermon draft to the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet Işleri Başkanlığı*), the official institution to regulate religious affairs in Turkey, which informs the male listeners on the religious dictates against violence against women. A few of the members participated in the Gezi Park protests in its first days individually rather than in the name of the initiative.

On the first days of the protests, an incident was reported where a headscarved woman, Z.D., and her baby were, according to Z.D.'s own statements, exposed to violence by a crowded group of men in Kabataş, one of the busy spots in Istanbul, in the daytime. Z.D. told Elif Çakır, a columnist for the daily *Star,* which had close ties to the government, that the men first assaulted her verbally saying that "whatever happened to this country is because of the headscarf" and then kicked and hit her.[46] Çakır concluded from her interview with Z.D. that the Gezi Parks protests had lost their innocence because no park could justify this barbarity. Erdoğan fed on this incident in his rallies saying that "they [Gezi Park protesters] attacked my headscarved daughters, [and] my headscarved sisters." While Erdoğan was too hasty to declare Gezi protesters to be the perpetrators of the incident, his opponents were too hasty to doubt that the incident had taken place at all.[47] Feminists were cautious not to jump to conclusions and followed the "woman's statement is essential" principle. Muslim's Initiative against Violence against Women responded by two online notices via their blog. It condemned violence against women on grounds of their belief and clothing and the racist and sexist language employed in the treatment of women: "We do not accept that this mass movement [Gezi protests] is tried to be pulled to a simple secular-religious conflict

line and find it to be at odds with the spirit of the [Gezi Park] resistance. Thus, we will not allow mainstream media and others turn us against each other. As women who wish to live side-by-side, although we come from different colors and ideologies and vote differently, we emphasize that the streets of this country are common places for all women from all parts of the society. The Gezi Park belongs to us all. Stop the harassment, go on with the resistance!"[48]

Although the text did not implied any doubts concerning the actuality of Z.D.'s statement, it made a call to the government to investigate the incident instead of taking political advantage of it. In a second press release, the Muslims' Initiative against Violence against Women elaborated: "]his incident is being used as a tool for propaganda and for election rallies by the ruling party, state officials, and some conservative columnists. While headscarved women [still] cannot work in the public sector, [or] be represented by a headscarved deputy, and the politicians in question do not have any agenda concerning this [headscarf ban],[49] we object that the headscarf is exploited to fire polarization."[50]

The third attempt of the initiative to address the incident was a call for a woman's march from Kabataş to Gezi Park to condemn both violence against women and its exploitation by the government. On June 7, 2013, a group of women gathered in Kabataş and walked to Taksim. Besides Muslim women, the Socialist Feminist Collective (one of the very actively engaged groups in the Gezi Park protests) and two other unions attended the march. Women carried placards saying: "The streets are ours" and "Don't touch my headscarf."

This example demonstrates how identity politics are manipulated to obscure not only redistribution claims but also claims of gender equality. Erdoğan's emphasis on "my headscarved daughters, and sisters" served to position himself as the father and brother of those women who wear the Islamic head covering in times of political turmoil. In this case, fatherhood and brotherhood signified more than kinship, especially because there was none. They rather inform on the status and function of and the relationship between the parties (Erdoğan and Muslim women) in that particular setting. Erdoğan represented the woman in question, Z.D., as less strong and in need of protection by figurative fathers and brothers (male Muslim citizens) and as the carrier of the visible Islamic symbol and thus morally superior. Nowhere in his speeches did Erdoğan refer to women's rights and the laws that protect women's physical and psychological integrity or identified the incident as "violence against woman." Instead he made reference to the

religious-conservative values anchored in the society and both exploited and consolidated them.

Muslim women's strategy was to frame the incident as violence against women rather than a clash of secular versus religious identities or worldviews. By giving the incident its proper name, Muslim women gendered the debate. They, however, also framed the incident as an assault against the headscarf pointing at the intersectionality between being a woman and wearing a headscarf.

LABOR AND JUSTICE PLATFORM'S ONLINE STATEMENT

On June 13, 2013, in the midst of Gezi Park protests, the Labor and Justice Platform organized a consultation. Based on the discussions and consensus in the meeting, members of the Labor and Justice Platform drafted a statement that was signed by 38 renowned Muslim intellectuals, 15 of them women. It was later published on the homepage of the platform in Turkish, English, and Arabic.

Although the notice published on the homepage of the Labor and Justice Platform did not have a contentious dimension, it backed the protests by establishing causal relationships that built on social injustice rather than a "clash of cultures/worldviews," although the Muslim identity of both the authors and the target audience is underlined. The content of the statement is organized into two main parts. In the first part, the process of gentrification, which displaces the poor to make room for an elite, modern, and partly conservative lifestyle, and the violent oppression of those against the gentrification are diagnosed as the main problem. It promotes reader empathy by giving examples of the repressive policies of the perpetrators of the "28 February coup" against Muslims and that this tyranny endures in the hands of the current ruling party. It criticizes thus:

> This country has not made justice to Kurds yet; neither Alevites have found peace, nor are the workers and the poor taken care of; people are still dying in labor accidents; while a small minority is becoming increasingly rich with the support of the state's invisible hand, millions are growing poorer.[51]

After declaring this economic growth model to be in conflict with the ethics of Islam, in the second part the authors address their Muslim fellows by

reflecting on the harm that consumerism and selfish individualism has done to the Muslim community. They pointed at a deepening class divide among Muslims who almost come to pray in separate mosques depending on their social background. Once again, reference is made to the past experiences of Muslims in the aftermath of the 28 February coup and point to a continuation rather than a break with the past:

> We, as Muslims, have not forgotten how media abused the whole country, and sullied the innocent fifteen years ago. Today, conservative and mainstream media is using the same language to terrorize a certain part of the population—what has changed then? Have we forgotten what police forces had done to our kids?"

The authors then remind the (Muslim) readers of their responsibility to watch their neighbors and defend the rights "of those who do not resemble or think like us". They seek to convince the readers of the prophet, "who spoke softly to everyone" alluding to the contrast in Erdoğan's aggressive and uncompromising manners. The statement concludes by saying that the demands of the protesters need to be heard. The recognition of these legitimate demands would contribute to "the transition to a more democratic and free Turkey."

Similar to the Anti-Capitalist Muslims and the Revolutionary Muslims, the Labor and Justice Platform did not abandon identity politics completely. On the contrary, they unmistakably identified both themselves and their addressees as Muslims. What they did, however, is to bring demands of redistribution and recognition to the fore. The statement suggests a natural link between being a Muslim and standing on the side of the poor and the oppressed against the rich and the cruel. It not only serves to question the compatibility of Erdoğan's policies with Islam but also promotes the movement's goal (Islamic anticapitalism).

CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS UNDER AUTHORITARIAN NEOLIBERALISM

This chapter has discussed the implications of Muslim engagement in Gezi Park protests for identity politics and contentious politics. It has argued that although identity politics were frequently employed to promote movement

goals during the protests by Muslim groups, demands of redistribution and democracy came to the fore. Anticapitalist Muslim groups developed forms of contentious politics that combined their Muslim identity with demands for social justice and recognition. Their increased visibility during Gezi Park protests suggests that dissatisfaction with the neoliberal transition of the city has been decisive for mobilization and for the emergence of contentious politics.

Based on the analysis made here, Gezi Park protests help assess the opportunities and limitations of contentious politics, which has taken different forms from the occupation of a public space to the composition and invention of new songs, slogans, and symbols, and the creation of an alternative communal economy within the occupied area. These should not be reduced to an emotional outburst due to the culmination of resentment on the part of the citizens but must be understood as a means of influencing and changing government policies. This form of politics has not only allowed the protesters to amend the rules of the game but also quit the game for a certain time and space by violating established norms, for example, by sleeping in tents in a public park or disobeying police orders. Transforming the place of contention further enabled the formation of unique constellations of individuals and groups, who are otherwise separated by the state, market, or value systems. Although these constellations do not have to bring about desirable outcomes immediately or at all from the perspective of the protesters, it made up a very heterogeneous group with varying aspirations, having the potential to recognize the common mechanisms of exploitation and oppression among different groups and work out temporary or permanent means to resist these collectively. For example, although initially the Gezi Park was occupied to rescue the trees, soon other demands (stop the gentrification of the city, lift on censorship, respect for different lifestyles, and others) started being articulated. Although none of these demands were new, they were not articulated by a unique oppositional block like the one in Gezi Park before.

Contentious politics also harbors some limitations. As was already mentioned, contention is limited to a certain time and space. Whereas the government and market forces have the capacity and means to infiltrate almost every socioeconomic structure and relationship, the protesters are mostly deprived of such. Besides, the government has used increasingly dissuasive methods against the protesters such as physical violence, domiciliary visits, and arrests. Some women even reported cases of harassment by the police. Some of the protesters had to invest considerable time and energy in keeping track of

human rights violations. These measures were not unsuccessful. When the price of attending the protests became too high, the middle-class left the movement and the protests lost momentum.[52]

With respect to its original concern, however, the Gezi Park protests ended with the achievement of the protesters against the government. The protestors managed to prevent the replacement of the Gezi Park with a shopping mall through collective and organized action outside established lines of doing politics.

NOTES

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1. The Turkish word for "plunderer." Erdoğan used it to describe Gezi Park protesters. The protesters followed the strategy of adopting and redefining *çapulcu* as someone who fights for his or her rights. See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapulling.
2. Erdoğan on the Taksim Pedestrianization Project and Gezi Park protests at an opening in June 2013.
3. Erdoğan was elected the president of the Republic on August 10, 2014.
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16

CLAIMING "MARGINAL SPACE": THE CONTENTIOUS POLITICS OF "CITIZENSHIP" AMONG PALESTINIAN FEMINISTS IN ISRAEL

Kim Jezabel Zinngrebe

INTRODUCTION

Palestinian[1] feminists' political activities in Israel frequently draw on manifold spatialities including scale, place, networks, positionality, and mobility at once. This phenomenon has been emphasized by the flourishing scholarship that interrogates the spatial nature of contentious politics.[2] As the contentious politics of "citizenship" examined here include both real and imagined conceptualizations of citizenship' the notion of "contentious politics" employed in this study departs from traditional definitions[3] that refer to it as "concerted, counter-hegemonic social and political action in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge dominant systems of authority in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries."[4] In the context of Palestinian feminists' in Israel, this action is, among other things, expressed in the form of citizenship practices that aim to contest patriarchal, racist, and colonial hegemonic systems. Depending on the positioning of the woman, these frameworks may include the nuclear and extended family, a specific community, the nation, and the state. While these authoritarian systems often reinforce each other's discrimination and domination of Palestinian women, it will be demonstrated here that feminists frequently draw upon a specific system to resist oppressive forces produced by another.

The following chapter is presented in two sections: it begins with a discussion of the existing scholarship on Palestinian women in Israel and argues for the need to not only contextualize women's experiences of citizenship within

wider institutionalized frameworks such as the family, the nation, and the state, but also to allow for the possibility that some of these gendered frameworks may act as both forces of "oppression" *and* "facilitation." This review also aims to identify and explore the need for a de-orientalized and feminist notion of citizenship as *practice* rather than *status* and as a contentious type of politics that, in the case of Palestinian women in Israel, continues to be hastily classified as a particular form of "resistance" or "women's activism." The chapter then sets out to reflect on the potential contribution of the black feminist concept of "marginal space" as a theoretical tool to illuminate different ways in which Palestinian feminists oftentimes use, perform, and conceptualize citizenship as a sociopolitical resistance to, as well as a bargaining tool with, hegemonic systems. Finally, the chapter will briefly touch upon examples of practices of contentious citizenship from the margin.

This research is based on the author's preliminary PhD fieldwork conducted within the 1948 borders of Israel between September 2011 and February 2012. Based ethnographic research methods this study includes Palestinian women who outspokenly support the "feminist project"[5] but who belong to and identify with various ethnic, religious, sexual, cultural, regional, class, educational, and professional backgrounds. The women are resident in Nazareth, villages in the Galilee, Bi'r al-Sab' (Beersheba), Lakiya, surrounding unnamed villages in the Naqab (Negev) desert, and "mixed cities"[6] such as Haifa and Jerusalem. Drawing on more than 20 in-depth interviews, 75 questionnaires, and one extensive focus group conducted with a group of local women activists in Sulam, this chapter offers an insight into the complex strategies that Palestinian women use in Israel to resist both patriarchal and state systems that interplay and often reinforce each other at the expense of women's political participation. A further crucial source of knowledge for this study was the author's own personal and political involvement in a Palestinian feminist organization at the time.

BACKGROUND

Defining itself as a "Jewish and democratic state"[7] in its *Basic Laws,* Israel constitutes a setting in which "citizenship" is subject to various contradictory forces and in which inequality among citizen groups takes on many forms along intersectional categories including race, gender, religion, class, and physical ability. Comprising about 20 percent of Israel's total population, the Palestinian minority is not officially recognized as a national minority

within Israel's *Basic Laws*. Moreover, the absence of a written constitution that explicitly guarantees the right to equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel allows the government to carry out an arbitrary policy of "reasonable discrimination" against some of its citizens.[8]

The alienation and marginalization of Palestinian citizens in Israel who are connected to a nation that stretches across two or more states yet remain "trapped within their homeland" has led to their depiction as a "trapped minority."[9] In order to fully understand the processes of this development, one needs to carefully contextualize them historically. This consideration includes a recognition of the enormous impact of the Nakba[10] on the Palestinian people and Israel's emergence as a colonial-settler state that has embedded Orthodox Judaism deeply within its legal, governmental, and institutional structures since its establishment in 1948. Nevertheless, it is dangerous to consider the Nakba a one-time historical "event" or "episode" rather than an ongoing process: Israel's ongoing conduction of forceful displacement and dispossession, the imposition of military rule until 1966, and the killing of some of its own "Arab citizens" have left crucial marks on Palestinian daily lives in the country until today. Furthermore, the state's comprehensive military industrial complex continues to serve as a crucial decision-making mechanism regarding the question of who belongs to "the nation" and who does not.[11] In this regard, Israeli citizens' military service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) constitutes a crucial national identity "melting pot," whose priority is the production of ideal "nationals" rather than "citizens" while also acting as a major reproducer of the gendered division of roles within Israeli society.[12]

Palestinian women face some of the severest consequences of Israel's differential treatment of its Palestinian citizens, particularly in areas such as protection against violence, political underrepresentation and participation, employment, education, health, issues relating to personal status, and socioeconomic benefits. Even though Palestinian women in Israel have progressed significantly within the field of education, this progress has, so far, not translated into an enhancement of their political participation.[13] Adding to this, the central role of institutionalized religion within the state has an imminent influence on women's everyday lives due to its paternalistic if not patriarchal nature. This is most apparent in the form of the current state of two overlapping and sometimes competing family court systems—civil and religious—which persistently act to the detriment of women.

The effects of legislative discriminations against Palestinian citizens in Israel are not only racialized but also gendered. This includes, for instance, the

so-called Citizenship Law that prohibits Palestinians from marrying Israelis (including Palestinians carrying Israeli "citizenship") and from living with their spouses and family within the borders of Israel. Based on Palestinian women's "belonging" to one or more distinct subgroups, often marked by patently patriarchal structures, they face what has been dubbed "compound discrimination." This discrimination converges in various forms of differential treatment meted out to Palestinian women in a political context in which the status of women frequently serves the purpose of collective (self)identification and the marking of societal boundaries.

Despite the fact that Israel has some of the most progressive and forward-thinking legislation and policies with regard to some marginalized groups, including women, Palestinian women citizens do not receive the full benefit of such protections and, instead, are discriminated against on the basis of laws and government policies, as well as social norms and customs. For instance, ordinary domestic law that protects women's equality such as the *Women's Equal Rights Law 1951* (which prohibits all forms of discrimination against women) or the 1993 and 2000 amendments to the *Government Companies Law 1975* are not effectively implemented with regard to Palestinian women.

Even though there are specific legislative equality measures to guarantee fair representation of Palestinian women in the civil service and on the boards of directors of government companies, the state does not provide sufficient and special affirmative action to protect Palestinian women citizens as an explicit subgroup with distinct needs as demanded by many women's rights activists.[14] This request is based on the interplay of various intersectional categories that translate into the differential discrimination of distinct groups of women: within Israel's economy, for instance, Mizrahi women[15] occupy a lower position than Mizrahi men and Ashkenazi women—a situation that is based on the legacy of their ethnic/racial and gender discrimination stemming from the early decades of their immigration. Due to their "non-Jewish status" Palestinian women continue to have the lowest economic status of all of Israel's citizens as only 21 percent of Palestinian women participate in Israel's workforce.[16]

PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S "CITIZENSHIP" IN ISRAEL: A CONTESTED CONCEPT?

While contributions from Palestinian academics and Palestinian women academics, in particular, continue to remain marginal,[17] existing feminist

scholarship about Palestinian women in Israel covers a wide array of topics ranging from women's negotiation of conflicting identities, their participation in the Israeli educational system and workforce, and the different forms of political activities they are involved in.

This chapter argues that any discussion of Palestinian women's citizenship in Israel raises four central concerns: first, the widely accepted notion of Palestinian women experiencing a form of "double discrimination," which can be a partial and problematic point of departure. Second, it will be claimed that women's daily experiences of citizenship need to be linked to wider frameworks such as the family, the nation, and the state in order for them to fully understand those experiences. Third, a reflection will follow regarding the scholarly preoccupation with the notions of resistance and women's activism, which are well justified given the discrimination of Palestinian women in Israel, yet have the potential to miss out on other activities such as women's *conscious* decision to participate in "conventional political practices" as expressions of contentious politics, or indeed simply a way to realize their individual and group interests. Finally, it will be argued that a critical reflection or deconstruction of citizenship at the conceptual level is required not only in order to investigate Palestinian women's citizenship not only with regard to their status and experiences of citizenship, but also in order to identify contentious practices of citizenship as performed by many women activists in a more nuanced and holistic manner.

Palestinian women citizens have often been portrayed as experiencing "double discrimination" based on their membership in both the Palestinian national minority in a Jewish state as well as in patriarchal communities within that national minority—sometimes referred to as being "a minority within a minority." This framework employed by the majority of studies on Palestinian women in Israel[18] has become a vastly accepted point of departure. At times the "two layers of oppression" are extended to three, including that of being women in an overall patriarchal state.[19] The common usage of this assumption as a starting point for most discussions on Palestinian women citizens is precarious as it can provide a flawed picture of women's daily experiences and practices on at least two levels.

First, without further explanation the double discrimination model runs the danger of portraying Palestinian women as situated within two discriminatory layers that are simply added one on top of the other. While they do share a patriarchal nature, the two forms of discrimination are also

fundamentally different in terms of how they relate to Palestinian women's politics of "belonging" and "identity." Moreover, these women's daily lives in Israel are positioned in a much more complex setting of "chosen" and "un-chosen" belongings and community memberships to not only a Jewish state' on the one hand, and a 'alestinian society' on the other, but also to religious and ethnic communities, class, and educational backgrounds, physical ability, family relations and circles of acquaintances, sexual orientations, geographic location, to name but a few other categories. It follows that by using the constantly recurring dual theme of "oppressive state" and "patriarchal society" as a point of departure, most studies marginalize the intersectional nature of manifold categories of oppression.[20]

Another significant point often undermined by the portrayal of a two-fold layer of oppression is that some of these categories serve as both forces of oppression and also facilitation.. Unchosen factors such as class, sexual orientation, and others, as well as consciously chosen factors such as ideological orientation, membership in organizations or parties—though they are not always as clear-cut—can constitute powerful trajectories for political participation, personal fulfilment, and the general structuring of women's daily lives. However, the first genuine attempts to explore how Palestinian women's experiences of "oppression" and "resistance" interrelate have been made within the last few years, when research paid more attention to the structural tensions *within* and *between* various patriarchal systems. As a result, these studies argue that it is indeed the shared patriarchal nature and the competition between those regimes that allow women some very important latitude.[21]

Amalia Sa'ar's article "Contradictory Location," for instance, constitutes a departure from previous approaches in three ways. First, by including the institution of the family, she accounts for gender orders other than state and nation. Second, the author sheds light on institutions such as family and state for the first time as not only sources of subordination but also as potential and important sources of support while emphasizing the contradictory developments within the existing gender regimes; finally, she takes a further step by critically suggesting that most existing feminist studies "in their rejection of the idea of Israel as a modern Western state that liberates Palestinian women, have not been able to accommodate the possibility that the system is not unilaterally oppressive."[22]

This leads on to the second concern: the denial of the central role that the state plays in shaping, reshaping, preventing, and facilitating the daily lives of

Palestinian women. In light of the "two layers of oppression" argument, the claim that the role of the state has been neglected in present scholarship may seem a paradox. However, as has been noted by some feminist scholars,[23] the majority of feminist writings have refrained from contextualizing their analyses and, hence, from identifying local or state systems as problematic. Instead, scholars have tended to focus on specific "gender regimes,", "gender orders," and "gender hierarchies"[24] as isolated debates and without necessarily linking them to each other or embedding them in other spheres of inequality, such as 'ace and class.

The works that focus on "gender regimes," for instance, concentrate on major social, cultural, or religious institutions, such as the family,[25] institutions of higher education,[26] or political institutions;[27] works on wider "gender orders" look at the gendered forms of labor,[28] power,[29] and personal, intimate, and sexual relationships.[30] Some authors also look at specific dynamics within "gender hierarchies"[31] and the challenges and changes of "gender roles."[32] However, unless there is an obvious connection to the state, for example, when looking at Muslim family law in Israel,[33] only few studies connect the issue at stake directly to wider state and citizenship dynamics.[34] Yet, developments within the family, the Arab local municipality, the labor market, and so on are tightly connected to larger socioeconomic and political developments.

States, including Israel, have played a significant role in affecting the status of women. The right to vote, be elected, participate in free compulsory education, and partake in subsidized health care and welfare benefits make a difference to Palestinian women citizens in Israel even though, in practice, many women continue to have limited access and face discrimination in the distribution of these entitlements.[35] The institution of the state as a body that serves as a mechanism of both oppression and support is in Israel's case based on an ongoing attempt by the state to control and manipulate its Palestinian citizens not only by oppressing them but also by bargaining with them. As a consequence, Palestinian women do not entirely lack some measure of autonomy, despite their extensive marginalization. Throughout the interviews conducted for this paper, research participants made clear that not only are Palestinian women willing to bargain with the state to realize their interests, but indeed at times they are outspoken in their request to the state to get involved, especially in cases in which formal rights provided by the state should serve their purposeas women within other frameworks, such as family or community.

Feeding into the argument that "layers of oppression" are deeply intertwined with each other in the context of Israel, gender rules are commonly used to promote racialization, while racist policies have the effect of perpetuating sexism.[36] Thus, to be fully understood, gendered and racialized regimes need to be considered in relation to each other. This dynamic interplay requires particular attention in occupied countries such as Palestine, in which colonial governments commonly manipulate gender systems "through selectively upholding and disrupting social norms and practices."[37] Moreover, gender regimes and gender orders are not always clearly distinguishable from one another: local patriarchy needs to be linked to national patriarchy and vice versa.

A third difficulty that can be identified in existing discussions on Palestinian women in Israel is a scholarly preoccupation with the concepts of resistance and alternative politics.[38] This is comprehensible based on the peculiar positioning of women in a context in which multiple forms of oppression interplay in a complex and at times contradictory manner. Nevertheless, the possibility that different systems of oppression are not, in fact, uniformly oppressive is usually not considered to begin with. This is problematic in the sense that some very real and political activities by women are often hastily classified as forms of activism, alternative politics, or as a contribution to Jewish Arab peace movements.

These depictions can thereby distract from other developments in Palestinian women's participation and representation at the local and national level in Israel today. A lot of attention has been paid to the stigmatization and the sacrifices of women who decide to become politically active as social workers, activists, teachers, and the like. Less attention is given to the criticisms received (often stemming from within feminist camps themselves) and the sacrifices made by Palestinian women who decide to participate in conventional forms of politics and even less so to those who do not have the opportunity to participate in either form of politics.

What the above approach neglects entirely is the prospect of (1) women using citizenship as a means of personal or political resistance (citizenship practice tends to be dismissed as a possible tool for resistance) and (2) women buying into citizenship simply in order to realize personal interests—both motivations can, of course, overlap.

The political activities of Bedouin women in Israel, in particular, tend to be explored and presented with certain limitations by feminist scholars who by and large concentrate on Bedouin women's activism within local NGOs.[39]

Naturally, this occurs to the detriment of capturing women's daily experiences and activities outside of the NGO environment, especially concerning those women who are not members of any kind of NGO. The "NGO-ization" of women's voices often leads to the tarring of all Palestinian women's political activities with the same brush. Bedouin women's organizations in the Naqab, for instance, are often praised as being on par with other feminist NGOs in northern Israel. Thereby, the very particular nature of Bedouin women's local dialects[40] of feminism or, in fact, the voices of those who engage in improving the status of women while refusing to identify as feminists are sidelined.

The NGO-ization of Palestinian women's activities in the fields of health, education, legal literacy, income generation, and rights advocacy is not necessarily, as is often assumed, a sign of a healthy civil society or bottom-up democracy. It is also a real and meaningful indicator of the failings of the state to provide certain benefits and entitlements to its citizens on the one hand, and a possible growing dependency on the West (particularly in terms of financial support) on the other.[41] Two concerns arise here. The first is whether, in this context, any kind of Bedouin feminism would be able to develop independently from Western notions and ideals. The second concern brings into question the meanings and effects of NGO-izing Bedouin women's activities and narratives, in terms of both women's political practices and scholarship.

This paper argues for a more critical approach to conceptualizing resistance. This entails de-romanticizing resistance and, in line with Foucault's claim that "where there is power, there is resistance,"[42] conceiving resistance also as a diagnostic of power.[43] Such an effort requires regarding different acts of resistance as valuable in revealing the historically changing relations of power in which they are embedded and as something that not only takes on the shape of negative actions (such as denying, restricting, repressing, boycotting, provoking, and so on) but also produces forms of pleasure, systems of knowledge, and discourses.[44] It is particularly in the context of Bedouin women that the author has observed acts of resistance that demonstrate that resistance, not uncommonly, mimics power. These actions of contentious citizenship include, for instance, women rebuilding houses that have been demolished again and again, demolishing houses themselves when the state threatens to do so (in order to avoid having to pay the costs of house destructions conducted by the government), and claiming social benefits that the women are not always entitled to such as claiming widow allowance despite having re-married (which is against the law).

As Abu-Lughod notes, "The problem has been that those of us who have sensed that there is something admirable about resistance have tended to look to it for hopeful confirmation of the failure or partial failure of systems of oppression."[45] Only a few authors have clearly pointed out that even though women recognize and resist their exclusion and marginalization in Israel, they frequently use the very same systems by which they are subjugated and the tools and concepts of the dominant culture (particularly the language of the "Other") to challenge it.[46]

Which activities of Palestinian women activists can carry the label citizenship or, more generally, political are two closely intertwined questions central to my research project. My working notions of the political and citizenship depart from conventional definitions of citizenship that are firmly anchored within male experiences. These notions challenge the sharp distinction between public and private made by some citizenship theorizations such as civic republican approaches; I share the emphasis made by civic republican theories of citizenship on active participation.[47]

In accordance with proponents of participatory democracy, this research aims to broaden the sphere of the political beyond that pertaining to the general government of a society and the bourgeois public sphere (as envisioned by Habermas) to embrace other formal and informal institutions and to extend the locus of political action. While being aware of the fact that women's politics cut across both women's public and private lives, this chapter defines politics as the capacity of social actors, agencies, and institutions to maintain or transform their environment, social or physical, as expressed in "the activities of cooperation, negotiation, and struggle over the use and distribution of resources."[48]

Thus, while sharing a broad feminist conceptualization of citizenship politics, this chapter will not, for now, share the distinction made between citizenship practices taking place exclusively within the public sphere and personal politics taking place within the private or intimate sphere made by some feminist approaches to citizenship.[49] Instead, this study works with a broad notion of political citizenship participation that is not bound to an abstract political sphere, a specific site, institution, or space, but instead one that comes into existence whenever people engage in political dialogue, so that there "may be as many publics as there are controversial general debates [...] a plurality of public spaces [...] around contested issues of general concern."[50]

Practices of citizenship to be explored at this stage include not only conventional forms of citizen participation such as electoral politics like voting,

boycotting elections, running for political office, but also paying tax, holding a passport, holding a set of rights and duties, and so on. This study particularly concentrates on practices of citizenship from the margin such as active expressions of contestation against official policies, dissension, opposition, or disagreement within a specific polity of which the marginal citizen is a member. Thereby, marginalized citizens publicly contest prevailing arrangements of power by means of oppositional democratic opposition when those channels are inadequate or unavailable. Instead of voting, lobbying, or petitioning, contentious citizens constitute alternative public spaces through practices such as marches, protests, strikes, speeches, and so on. As will be explored further in the chapter, contentious citizenship frequently encompasses the often creative oppositional practices of citizens who, either by choice or, much more commonly, by forceful exclusion from the institutionalized means of opposition contest current arrangements of power from the margins of the polity.

"MARGINAL SPACE": PLACING PALESTINIAN FEMINISTS' EXPERIENCES OF "CITIZENSHIP" IN ISRAEL

This paper considers Palestinian feminists' political, intellectual, and everyday lives as located "at the margin" of various real and imagined communities, institutions, and localities. Drawing on bell hooks's[51] theorization of "marginal space," this section aims to demonstrate how Palestinian feminists in Israel understand this margin as much more than a site of deprivation imposed by oppressive structures. In lieu, thereof, marginal space as it is defined here, refers to this marginality as an opportunity to produce a counterhegemonic discourse expressed verbally, in habits of being and in the way one lives.[52] It enables women to refuse downpressors and colonizers. Overall, there is a definite distinction between the marginality imposed upon Palestinian women by oppressive structures and the one they choose as a site of resistance, that is, holding on to their identity as "Palestinian" and "women" as well as other categories. This political awareness is not always easy and involves a struggle on the personal, community, and national level. On the one hand, marginal space thereby has the ability to create a space of radical openness and political possibility in which to build not only communities of resistance but also enable political renewal across the boundaries of various Othering categories such as race, gender, and class.[53] One the other hand, it also raises the question of what it means to struggle to maintain one's marginal identity even as one works, produces, and lives at the center, the place where power resides.[54]

Palestinian feminists in Israel, individually and collectively, choose not to surrender as part of moving into the "center" but rather to hold on to the margin as a radical, nourishing, and creative space from which to claim the right to subjectivity and from which to imagine alternative and new worlds. Even though its shape differs from traditional concepts of social movements, this feminist movement not only thwarts the binary hierarchy of center and margin but also decenters the oppressive hegemonic power that produces and reproduces difference as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division. It is only from this location that Palestinian women can construct and discuss alternative and "imagined" concepts of citizenship and, moreover, practice them in Israel.

When being asked "What is your citizenship?" the initial reactions of women ranged from "Israeli," "Palestinian holding an Israeli passport," "Palestinian Communist feminist," "Bedouin feminist with an Israeli ID," to "Muslim." All of them rushed to ask for a clarification of what I meant by citizenship'(seemingly to provide me with the "correct" answer for my research) or clarified what they had meant by their answer. It quickly became clear that despite a very conscious awareness of their formal "Israeli citizenship," it was important to them to emphasize that things are complicated and that they do not feel that they "belong to" the State of Israel or identified with the symbols of Israeli citizenship, which was often depicted as nothing more than a passport, simply an ID, or just paper.

The complex experiences of location and belonging of Palestinian women in Israel were commonly described as feeling like "a foreigner on her homeland" or "displaced at home." The women did not deny that what they many times referred to as "just a paper" simultaneously had a crucial impact on their lives in that it constitutes not only a constant reminder of their occupation and oppression as unwanted Palestinian citizens in a Jewish state, but also a physical and emotional barrier between them and Palestinian refugees, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and Palestinians in various exiles. Some examples of how this separation manifests itself include the embarrassment the women described about holding an Israeli passport at the airport, especially in front of other Arabs. Many women also shared their stories of painful experiences of being accused of "treason" and "cursed" as Israelis or Jews by other Palestinians for living within the borders of 1948. While the feminists often mentioned that they felt treated as if they were an inner enemy in Israel despite their citizenship status, they frequently mentioned that they not only felt marginalized within the borders of Israel, but also excluded from

the Palestinian nation as well as the larger Arab world.[55] One feminist, whose husband, a human rights activist, was sentenced to nine years imprisonment for communicating with other Arabs abroad, described this as "you feel like you belong but you can't."

In a similar context, the women stressed the pain and confusion caused by raising the questions of "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" These questions were not only described as the root of the so-called identity crisis that many Palestinians in Israel confront but, moreover, this kind of inward reflection usually constituted the first closer examination of existing boundaries that Palestinian women activists become aware of and scrutinize as they attempt to engage with political and historical issues as young adults at home.

It is in this homespace that their parents, many of whom experienced the harsh rule of Israeli military law up until 1966, did their best to prevent their children from discussing politics inside or outside of the home or, worse, getting politically involved. Some of the women included in this study experienced and described forms of spatial segregation (similar to that described in bell hooks's personal account of the railroad tracks that she crossed in her small Kentucky hometown) that acted as daily reminders of what the women called their "second (if not third) class citizenship" or "Type C citizenship." Most women confronted the bearing of their marginal citizenship status for the first time at university in cities such as Jerusalem, Haifa, Bi'r al-Sab, or Tel Aviv. It was here, in "the center," where they became aware of and attached more meaning to their nationality by being constructed as the Other and where they developed a strong Palestinian national and political identity.

Palestinian feminists included in this study "moved out of their place"[56] on two levels: for almost all of them the first boundary they questioned and contested was that of being women in families of which many considered it inappropriate for women to leave the home, the town, the community—spaces in which they were commonly expected to fulfill traditional gender roles—in order to study or work. Thus, the expectations toward Palestinian women, which they started to resist included those of being good daughters, good wives, good mothers, *and* good citizens: good, quiet Arabs.

Though I remain wary of the 'two layers of subordination" argument, it is indeed in terms of both incomplete memberships—Palestinian women's membership of the patriarchal community and membership of the State of Israel—that many feminists started and continued to contest the boundaries via which their marginalities were defined and imposed. In the context of this

interplay of oppressive layers, their feminism(s), though not always termed as such, empowered this group of Palestinian women to take on their marginalities as a political stance and identity:

> I had to be a "good mother" and a "good housekeeper" at home, then a "good Arab" at university; Feminism empowered me to overcome all of these boundaries without losing my identity. I know many Arabs who didn't act this way. Who didn't ask themselves uncomfortable questions like "who am I?" and "where do I belong?" [...] when my sisters didn't ask these questions at home but instead chose to be "good and obeying women" you can say that it was like the Palestinian citizens who don't want to deal with questions of identity in Israel. (Yasmin)[57]

Having chosen to move out of one's place (for instance out of the home, the hometown, the community), marginal space for Palestinian women activists becomes a space in which they can not only face the realities of choice and location but also a space, which, through the processes of their becoming aware of and struggling against the interconnectedness between forces of oppression, can be turned into a site of resistance and opportunity. As emphasized by hooks, this site cannot be romanticized as "pure"[58] as the struggle to claim subjectivity starts, often uncomfortably, with oneself and one's immediate environment:

> It is here in that space of collective despair that one's creativity, one's imagination is at risk, there that one's mind is fully colonised, there that the freedom one longs for is lost. Truly the mind that resists colonisation struggles for freedom of expression. The struggle may not even begin with the coloniser; it may begin within one's segregated, colonised, community and family.[59]

The claim that national liberation cannot be separated from women's liberation marks a fundamental distinction between the Palestinian women's movement in Israel and the Palestinian women's movement in the Occupied Territories, where many women continue to prioritize the former over the latter. The struggle of Palestinian feminists in Israel entails three inextricably linked elements: it is a personal struggle, a women's struggle, and a struggle for Palestinian national liberation. Based on the fact that all of these levels are emotionally, politically, and intellectually inseparable, a successful struggle

against the occupation requires a "decolonisation of the mind" as referred to by Huda, the director of a Palestinian organization that works on issues concerning sexuality, education, and health:

> You cannot be liberated only on the national level without the social level and the other way around. You cannot divide. It is an essential part of our liberation process as a nation. Both elements run parallel in the personal liberation process. So when we talk about sexuality this is a contribution to the process of liberating the mind and the oppression that mostly you put on yourself by yourself but you can also liberate yourself from this. [. . .] challenging yourself is more difficult than challenging the occupier and that's what I tell others. How can you explain that a prisoner can stand hundreds of days of investigation but he cannot stand up to his father and tell him he shouldn't marry his daughter to someone she doesn't like? Are you telling me you cannot challenge your father? But here's the thing: we're not used to thinking like that because we're occupied. Sometimes even our minds are occupied. We think that our souls are occupied. And then we realise: "No, they're not! *We* have the power over our souls!" (Huda)

Citizenship as practiced from this margin is not some kind of mythic notion but is based on lived everyday practices revolving around the question of what it means "to struggle to maintain that marginality even as one works, produces, lives at the centre."[60] Centers in this context are considered spaces that are characterized and dominated by hegemonic racialized, gendered, or classist structures and may include the mixed city, the university, the office, the Knesset, nongovernmental organizations, and the like. My research participants described their conventional practices of citizenship activities as that of paying taxes, not breaking the law, and generally not causing any harm. They were very much aware of when they consciously bought into their Israeli citizenship and were not shy to admit that they not only use but also often feel that they rely on the Israeli legal system *as women*: "At times I *want* the state to intervene. At times, as a woman, I *need* the state to intervene! At times, I don't want to solve problems 'internally.'" (Nijmeh)

Even though almost all of the women boycott or refrain from participating in elections, their frustration with conventional politics concerns not only Israeli national politics (e.g., the lack of Palestinian citizens' ability to shape, participate, and be represented in the Knesset), but also and equally so

Palestinian politics at the local level, such as the politics of Arab local councils and municipalities. Many women were convinced that this form of politics is merely sustained by the state to keep up its pretense of providing its Arab citizens some kind of political autonomy while its main purpose is to keep these citizens under surveillance. The women argued that this form of political agency provided to Palestinians is deeply flawed, for example, in the way in which the patriarchal "hamula," a traditional kinship social structure, continues to maintain tight and vastly undemocratic control over local politics while limiting the chances of women becoming politically involved.

Since the 1980s Palestinian feminists in Israel regard the struggle for national liberation as tantamount to the struggle of women's and personal liberation. Their contentious politics thus involves practices as contending citizens as well as contending women. Palestinian feminists in Israel have complex experiences and sophisticated conceptions of citizenship. According to all of my interviewees, any project of national liberation, struggle for equality, or definition of citizenship is inherently a project that is inclusive of women. Thus, the contentious politics of the Palestinian women's movement in Israel essentially involves a break with orthodoxy, with tradition, and with the conventions upheld by patriarchal structures.

The navigation of their interests between several discriminatory layers means that women are constantly involved in contentious politics either on the personal, the community, or the state level. Women navigate their interests through these fields via strategies of bargaining with patriarchy[61] and using the formal rights that they have been granted as citizens in Israel. They speak the language of the oppressor not only to gain access to attend school, university, and work but also to, at a later stage, speak *to* oppression[62] by taking on jobs as teachers, academics, community organizers, social workers, lawyers, and sometimes local politicians. At the same stage most of the women consider themselves as good citizens on two levels: they believe that they have never offended the state or other citizens despite the fact that while they feel that they are fulfilling their part of the citizenship contract, the state either often fails to honor its part of this contract, or else it expects something of them as citizens, which they cannot give: 'I am quiet, I obey the law, I look "white"—often they do not recognise that I'm Arab. I speak Hebrew—I fulfil my part of the contract but what does the State do while I take on this burden? When I obey the law I act against my own belonging – I'm not allowed to go to the West Bank even if I have relatives there. It is a high price to pay for an unequal citizenship" (Shada).

Practices of contentious citizenship from the margin among Palestinian feminists are characterized by the women's radical notion of political participation "as a right" rather than based on a formal right offered from above. Participation in this case is based on a radical notion of not only "being equal," that is being allocated an equal share of rights, but being part of the production and shaping of rights. When asked about whether and how she practices of "citizenship" in Israel, one Palestinian feminist and candidate to the October 2013 elections to the Knesset said: "I participate—but as a right! This idea is also reflected in the notion of rights claims that remain an important mobilizing tool for social movements. In contrast to political claims for specific resources, these rights claims concern a specific set of resources and access that is involved in the practice of citizenship and is closely related to the phenomenon of "self-made citizens."

Throughout the fieldwork of this study the following contentious citizenship practices have been identified; however, based on the limitations of this paper, not all of them can be explored in detail here: (1) deliberately choosing silence, inaction, or boycott rather than being nonvoters, BDS participants, and being involved in other forms of nonparticipation; (2) exiting the polity (i.e., Israel) as emigrants; (3) using conventional and institutionalized channels of democratic contestation to challenge power arrangements; (4) using organized but marginalized channels of democratic contestation for instance as members of NGOs or youth movements; and (5) using the noninstitutionalized and marginalized channels of democratic contestation that address both the state and wider polity as demonstrators, artists, or civil disobedients.[63]

Particular the latter two have deep historical roots in regards to the Palestinian women's movement that emerged in the 1920s in the context of a complex intersection of feminism, nationalism, and colonialism, which in many ways persists even today. The initially charitable and reformist agendas of the Palestinian women's movement that were officially launched at the Palestine Arab Women's Congress in 1929 (explicitly using the phrase "women's movement"—"al-haraka al-nisa'iyya") turned increasingly political following events in the 1930s, first and foremost the 1929 Wailing Wall riots that unleashed an unprecedented mobilization of women.[64] Through a growing nationwide network of charitable organizations, mainly upper class women aimed to fill gaps within the social services left by colonial governments, whose main political concerns failed to include the well-being of the indigenous population.

It remains true today that most women active within organized and institutionalized settings come from educated and economically well-off background;, however, it is ultimately the national issue that successfully unites and continues to unite women from all social strata during times of protest, for instance when women demonstrated during the 1936–39 Arab strike and revolt. Under the organizational umbrella of the Arab Women's Association (AWA) educated Palestinian women resisted colonialism by sending and supporting Palestinian delegations abroad to raise awareness of the Palestinian issue, and intervening on behalf of political prisoners and their families. Nevertheless, peasant women played just as much a crucial role in the women's resistance movement against Zionist and British forces, especially during its slightly latter and more militant phase, primarily by smuggling arms and attacking British officers. While today Palestinian feminists strongly adhere to pacifist means, international fundraising, the protection and defense of political prisoners, and raising awareness continue to remain at the very core of their political activities. The most recent example of how the national issue continues to unite women from different socioeconomic backgrounds were the successful demonstrations against the Prawer Plan[65] in November 2013 during which a great number of Palestinian women from various ethnic, socioeconomic, regional, and religious backgrounds mobilized in unison.

As noted by Rosemary Sayigh "a great deal for women's political action is spontaneous and takes place outside of an organisation."[66] Two common practices of citizenship from the margins this paper would like to touch upon are the claims for space and language. The former includes occupying and creating real and imagined spaces in order to gather and make political decisions. Such spaces may range from the Knesset, Arab local councils, Israeli-Palestinian NGOs to local women's meeting spaces in small Arab villages such as Sulam or Nahef. On a larger scale this practice is also a quest for living spaces, buildings, plots of land, or neighborhoods that have been absorbed and reserved for Jewish citizens by "the center." Collective claims for space also refer to a historical space, a struggle of memory against forgetting:[67] a memory and preservation of Palestinian history and narratives, for instance via the establishment of so-called alternative schools, which lay emphasis on Arabic literature and language as well as on Palestinian history. Everyday practices also include women recording TV and radio documentaries for their children and passing on family documents and stories in order to preserve alternative historical archives.

As emphasized by "marginal space" theory, language is also a struggle:[68] Palestinian women's collective claim for a language is most apparent in the efforts made to maintain Arabic as an official spoken language and as a language taught at schools and universities, importing literature and scholarship in Arabic, and keeping Arabic street, town, village, and city names and their signets. For many women language is "the first means to resist" using different strategies such as holding on to local village dialects (despite of moving to and living in cities) or making an effort not to mix Hebrew and Arabic. Language also involves being able to create and claim a cultural and political discourse and the power to construct one's subjectivity outside of the settler-colonialist context. At times, these political discourses also include discussions of "citizenship."

CONCLUSION

Contrary to traditional conceptualizations of "contentious politics," which claim that "reporting for military service, registering to vote, paying taxes, attending associational meetings, implementing policies, enforcing laws, performing administrative work, reading newspapers, asking officials for favours, and similar actions constitute the bulk of political life (but) usually involve little if any collective contention,"[69] this paper has argued the case for Palestinian feminists' perceptions and practices of citizenship in Israel to be considered as a form of contentious politics from the margins. More specifically, this study has sought to establish that based on their marginalization as Palestinian women it is only through these women's reclaimed marginal space that a radical form of politics can be realized as one that cuts through various Othering categories and renders citizenship possible as conceptualized and practiced by Palestinian feminists despite their marginalized status.

In an attempt to understand the factors around why, when, and how Palestinian women's feminist and contentious practices of citizenship occur, both real and imagined spatial dimensions must be taken into account. These politics include collective and individual claims to rights, political participation, and representation and permeate through various and inherently intertwined frameworks including family, religious, local, national, and international institutions. The concept of marginal space serves to shine a light on how Palestinian feminists negotiate the tensions between those institutions by exposing how spatialities in form of real material, imagined, and discursive processes play significantly into the emergence and shaping of dynamic

practices of political contention.[70] At present, these practices of contentious citizenship are inextricably linked to Palestinian women's counterhegemonic perceptions and imaginaries of citizenship as both acts of political resistance against as well as bargaining with hegemonic systems:

> I will always be a citizen wherever I live. I will never hurt anyone. I will also act according to the rules that I consider good for humanity. I don't know what Israel wants me to be but I cannot obey to its symbols. I'm living here because I was born here. Yes, I'm connected to the land and I want justice. I don't know what good a definition of citizenship that is. (Mariam)

Palestinian feminists in Israel have widely different views on how to go about their struggles for the elimination of intersecting forms of discrimination that Palestinian women experience within the state's boundaries. However, by claiming rights and political participation as *Palestinian women* from the margin all of their practices of citizenship demonstrate processes of moving into not only the various centers of political decision making but also into the contentious processes of decentering and contesting the very boundaries of those centers through an insistence on their right for marginal space. While explorations of Palestinian women's mobilization since the early twentieth century by and large failed to be recorded at the time, this chapter hopes to constitute a fruitful feminist contribution to identifying some of the contemporary forms of contentious politics among Palestinians feminists who live inside the 1948 borders of Israel.

NOTES

1. The choice to use the term "Palestinian" or "Palestinian Arab" women rather than "Israeli Arab," "Arab-Israeli," or "Israeli-Palestinian" is a political one that emphasizes the fact that Palestinians are an indigenous population on their homeland. It also counters hegemonic Zionist discourses, which, by not referring to Palestinians as "Palestinians," continue to detach Palestinian citizens in Israel from the Palestinian national collective and their historical entitlement to the land of Palestine.
2. See B. A. Miller, *Geography and Social Movements: Comparing Anti-nuclear Activism in the Boston Area* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); W. H. Sewell Jr., "Space in Contentious Politics," in *Silence and Voice in Contentious Politics*, ed. R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. R. Perry, W. H. Sewell Jr., S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 51–88; D. G. Martin and B. Miller, "Space and Contentious Politics," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 8, no. 2 (2003): 143–56; H. Leitner, E. Sheppard, and K. M. Sziarto, "The Spatialities of Contentious Politics," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33, no. 2 (2008): 157–72.
3. D. McAdam, S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

4. Leitner et al., "Spatialities of Contentious Politics," 157.
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6. Though disputed among academics, in Israel the term "mixed city" usually refers to cities such as Akko, Haifa, Jaffa, Lod, and Ramle, where large communities of both Jewish and Palestinian citizens reside.
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52. bell hooks, *Yearning* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 149.
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57. All names have been changed to maintain anonymity.
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17

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROLONGED SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE CASE OF GEZI PARK PROTESTS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to providea theoretical perspective to the fluctuating levels of intensive collective action during contentious social movements. While in some cases there is a gradual decline of protests, in others there is fluctuation and a re-kindling of the protests. This chapter seeks to understand why the Gezi Park protests in Turkey prolonged. The main argument we put forth deals with the temporal dimension of social movements. Specifically, it problematizes the sequential variance of intensity and patterns of escalation and moderation within a social movement.

The conceptual suggestion presented in this chapter contributes to the existing literature on contentious politics in terms of understanding the effect of different control models in relation to protest intensity. We examine closely why there is no regular protest intensification with a single climax by providing qualitative as well as quantitative empirical evidence from the Gezi Park protests. In the following section, the theoretical suggestion presents the effect of different protest-control mechanisms on prolongation and on the temporal dimension of protest movements. The subsequent part focuses on describing the case of Gezi Park protests and presents findings from it. Descriptive quantitative time-series data precede the qualitative findings. In the findings section, the relation between prolongation to repertoires of action and contextual factors are presented. Concluding remarks and a theoretical discussion follow the findings from the Gezi Park case.

PROLONGED SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: INTERACTION OF TWO MODELS OF PROTEST POLICING AND THEIR OUTCOMES

The literature suggests two models for controlling public order. Both models are ideal types and the typology is based on the level of state intervention in social movements. One of the two models identifies the intervention in less force-oriented political settings. This model is called the "negotiated-management" model, whereas the other one is in the opposite direction, focusing on a high level of intervention. This second model is called the "escalated-force" model.[1] Countries using the escalated-force model do not recognize the right to demonstrate and have no tolerance toward social movements. Interaction between armed forces and protesters are minimal; use of force, detentions, and arrests are frequent. However, the negotiated-management model prioritizes the right to demonstrate peacefully, and communication between state agents and protesters is essential for maintaining peaceful protests[2]. The literature presents theoretical implications of these two models and provides ample empirical evidence for describing the transition from the escalated-force to negotiated-management style in Western European and Northern American countries.[3]

Yet, the literature is silent on countries that attempt to adopt both models simultaneously during periods of transition from one model to another. Based on this gap, it is those countries that lack substantive democratic norms and practices that may adopt a mixture of the two models, with the escalated force doctrine more frequently used. A comparative approach could be useful in understanding the theoretical argument on the relationship between consolidated democracies and policing of social protests. The Western examples indicate that the transition from escalated-force to negotiated-management model is a result of the changes in the political crisis management, such as execution of full-fledged investigations of riots and demonstrations, a functioning court system, prioritization of constitutional guarantees for freedom of speech and rights to peacefully assemble (e.g., First Amendment rights in the United States), and new techniques in training and education of police officers.[4] In a study of West Germany's protest policing tactics between 1960 and 1990, Winter presents the shift from a repressive form of policing prioritizing the stability of the state and seeing demonstrations as a threat to the authority and legitimacy of the state, which he calls "*staatspolizei*," toward a more tolerant form of protest policing that aims to protect stability of the civil society, which he calls "*burgerpolizei.*"[5] This transition lay in the police seeing the protests as a legitimate part of the democratic process. In similar

examples, advanced industrial democracies began to acknowledge the role of the civil society as a legitimate actor during the 1980s. As the literature on democratization indicates, these are also some of the main elements of substantively liberal democratic regimes that internalize tools of accountability, an independent media and judiciary, guaranteed protections for minorities, checks and balances, as well as civil liberties.[6] In substantively liberal democracies, the state does not perceive protesters as an existential threat and it uses force "economically" differentiating those who are considered as "accepted/moderate groups" and others who use noninstitutional, confrontational tactics or pursue more revolutionary or radical goals through violence.[7] In contrast, some democracies are defined in minimalist terms by free and fair elections without any substantive liberal outcome such as the definition suggested by Schumpeter.[8] These minimal democracies are characterized by competition. Respect for human rights and liberal rights do not form a necessary component of a minimalist democracy. "Citizenship" is defined by participation in traditional political processes. Compared with regimes that tolerate nontraditional mechanisms for political participation, these illiberal democratic regimes are more inclined to adopt coercive mechanisms against social protests.[9] Based on this framework, this chapter expects to observe both forceful and soft responses in countries that experienced a prolonged period of democratization without much substantial outcome, such as Turkey.

SIMULTANEOUS ADOPTION OF ESCALATED-FORCE AND NEGOTIATION-MANAGEMENT MODELS

Different from full-fledged liberal democracies, semi-democratic and minimalist regimes can adopt both escalated-force and negotiated-management models simultaneously. Although these countries may have procedural elements like significant amount of political freedom, regular elections, and alternation of power, some of these premises remain shallow and troubled like that of free media, protection of human rights, efficient procedural law system, accountability, and so on.[10] The literature on the transition toward a negotiated management model is still developing and it focuses retrospectively on Western democracies. This research aims to contribute to this new literature by suggesting a causal process about the way other regime types deal with wide-scale protests and how it affects the protests in turn.

This chapter departs from prior work that analyzes policing of the public protests as part of a transitional trend. It underlines the fact that the two

models are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rafail et al. underline the overall decline in coercive policing of the American protests between 1960 and 1995, yet they also argue that the transition process is nonlinear and it is not monotonic. [11] Unlike America, in cases of democratizing states where there is no clear trend of transition to a negotiation model, state actors may simultaneously adopt both models with stronger emphasis given to the escalated-force model. This does not hinder police and other law-enforcement officers as well as the political elite from adopting some elements of the negotiation-management model.

When both the models are adopted simultaneously, authorizing a forceful intervention with the aim of ending the protests leads the negotiated-control model to lose its legitimacy and consistency. Protesters observe this discrepancy since no substantive outcome emerges from negotiations. By being aware that the government's plan is not to negotiate sincerely but to end the protests forcefully, the protesters might adopt different opportunistic tactics in addition to their already existing repertoires of contention. As a result, the government's plan to end the protests immediately fails because the state agents send mixed signals to the protesters. The protesters interpret these mixed signals as a sign of state weakness. In fact, state actors' insincere maneuvering might explain why in some instances the social protests re-intensify when there are notable signals of decline. As a result, the life of the social movement might prolong.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROLONGATION OF THE PROTESTS

States try to contain contentious movements as soon as possible given that they are perceived as a threat. Therefore, in a case of a social uprising in which a state adopts both models of force and negotiation-based control and management, an inverse effect of containing policy can occur ending up in the opposite direction of what the state expects: protests continue with a new pace. Yet, this inverse effect depends on the protesters' ability to benefit from structural circumstances and how they turn opportunities into incentives for further organizing and mobilizing.[12]

The underlying logic of this inverse effect due to the simultaneous adoption of both models can also be described as a dilemma in using both carrot-and-stick tactics. The main objective of the stick tactic surfaces as the escalated-force model aims to achieve immediate social control. Yet, it carries

the risk of backfiring when certain conditions are absorbed and reflected by the protesters. In this carrot-stick diplomacy, the carrot side of the approach (the negotiated-management model) can be a camouflage to contain the protests. The escalated-force model absorbs the negotiated-management model in itself, because there is no viable outcome available as a result of the negotiation-management model. Lack of any substantive outcome from the negotiations is a necessary condition for the escalated-model to nullify the negotiation-management model. Additionally, the state can choose to adopt both models in different sequences and the protesters might continue to choose participating in the negotiations with the hope of achieving at least some of their goals and to buy more time to reorganize and strengthen their position. So, on the one hand, signals for negotiation and viable concessions from the contended side are a mechanism for protesters to be heard by the state. On the other hand, if the negotiations bring no substantive outcome, then the protesters might choose to reverse this failure of negotiations into an opportunity by reorganizing themselves. This reorganization is followed by a possible re-intensification of the collective action. Since the expectations are not fulfilled and the state sends mixed signals of both negotiation and forceful intervention, the collective action is likely to prolong and it may show signs of wavering sequences. Here, the political opportunity structure argument is extended to each model's outcome and also their interaction.[13] This extension suggests a relational and causal link between the interaction of these two different models for both the contentious and the contended parties and their overall effect on the temporal dimension of the collective action.

As the negotiated-management model yields no result and the escalated-force model continues to be part of the protest control, the way protesters reconfigure themselves to these failed negotiations could take different forms. They can be examined, first, by looking at the transition periods between the models, such as a closer examination of the protests right after the negotiations. The failed negotiations are likely to affect support for further protests which can be tracked by looking at how the protesters re-organize themselves in terms of numbers, protests, and the media materials they use to communicate. Second, it can be traced by analyzing the protesters' method of how they build on the existing repertoire of actions and discursive tactics. A change in tactics can be observed by looking at the changes in the rhetoric, symbols, slogans, and other media-related materials that suggest hints and cues about the effect of the protest's changing dynamics. In order to do so, this study takes

cognitive mechanisms as a constructive tool and analyzes how individual and collective perceptions alter throughout the social protest.[14] One way of examining protesters' cognitive attitudes and their perceptions in the streets is to look at their use of technology. Sharing of ideas and informing one another create a tactical power to reconfigure the protest's direction. Ahead in the chapter, the role of technology is discussed contributing to the qualitative findings of this research in understanding the prolongation and intensification of the protests. As a result, different levels of intensity in the sequence of the social movement can be detected in parallel to the adoption of different forms and discursive tactics.

Progressive changes technology, like the increasing usage of smart phones with 3G technology and the growing accessibility of people to social media like Twitter, YouTube, and online video broadcasting like Ustream, create new spaces and challenges to our understanding of collective actions. The available technology has a more direct role in transmitting the message of the protests and facilitating its effects.

The immense acceleration in the transmission of information has affected the nature of protests. An example of this can be the leadership of protests. Contemporary demonstrations do not have to be planned in advance with the help of various national and international organizations. In cases of global activism, Bennett's study indicates the lessening role of central planning by coordinating organizations such as unions or NGOs.[15] As the tools of communications diversify, messages can be sent easily from numerous channels. An important effect of this on the nature of protest is the change in the rigid character of protests such as a shift from organized violent action to a softened form of protest using the power of words, sarcasm, and witty humor. Protesters record their own videos, alter culturally meaningful materials, compose protest songs, and so on. Most importantly, this cultural material is ready for consumption in minutes. These messages can then be easily sent across the world using the various social media; Hick and McNutt use the term "electoral advocacy" referring to "the use of high technology to influence the decision-making process, or to the use of technology in an effort to support policy-change efforts."[16] When this material is out online through electoral advocacy, not only do the supporters of the contentious movement, but also other segments of the society, which may not support the protests, have instant access. One consequence, Bennett argues, is that the Internet makes the campaigns last longer, less centrally controlled, more difficult to turn on

and off, and forever mutable in terms of networks and goals.[17] The communication material is made available from the source without any filter or censorship and that influences the dynamics of social movements. The protesters' ability and capacity to make use of the available technology as a tool has an effect on wider mobilization and it also influences the level of material and nonmaterial support that they are able to garner. In this respect, online media is crucial for re-intensification of the protests. In fact, this is exactly what happened in the Turkish case.

This chapter focuses on the recent protest movement in Turkey. During the summer of 2013, numerous mass protests occurred across the country. The Gezi Park protest is a critical case to study prolongation and the temporal dimension in social movements for several reasons. First of all, Turkey is relatively one of the most consolidated democratic regimes in the Middle East, along with Israel. There is a high level of responsiveness and policy congruence between political parties and the electorate.[18] Different groups are able to represent their interests and there are no formal or legal restrictions in the country's electoral system. Elections are held in a free and fair manner. However, Turkey is a case of prolonged democratization. Substantive liberal outcomes have been limited at best. Currently Turkey has predominant party system (under the Justice and Development Party—AKP). In this political environment, the Gezi Park protests signaled a shift in the Turkish protest culture. It started with environmentalist and liberal concerns different from the traditional economic agenda of previous mass protests. Additionally, technological advancements and novel means of communication played an important role during the protests. Most importantly, state actors tried to use both escalated-force and negotiation-management models simultaneously. The reasoning thereof asserts that these factors interacted and created important political opportunities for protesters and, consequently, led to the revitalization and prolongation of this protest.

THE CASE OF GEZI PARK PROTESTS

Gezi Park is one of the few remaining green areas located at the heart of Istanbul, next to Taksim Square. The neighborhood is the most central area in downtown Istanbul and it witnessed numerous demonstrations in the past decades. The Gezi Park Protests started on May 28, 2013, in Taksim by a small group of environmentalists, protesting against the urban development plan of the government, which involved demolishing of the trees in Gezi Park. In

turn, the police responded harshly and the constabulary set the protesters' tents on fire. Following that incident, which can be considered as the starting point for the protest's temporal dimension, the size of the protests grew over time, the protesters occupied the park, and protests spread throughout the country, from Istanbul to other cities.

During the protests, participants used social media in an effective manner to spread their message. Even if there was no specific leadership cadre, protesters worked harmoniously to raise their voices. At the same time, political elites in the ruling AKP were trying to solve the crisis as it was threatening their political status as well as the economic productivity and foreign direct investment to Turkey. In the post–Arab Spring period, Turkey was considered as a democratic "model" to other countries in the region. Protests were also covered extensively in the international media and, therefore, these protests were also an important setback for Turkey's regional and international status. All in all, these reasons forced the government to try to end the protests as soon as possible. The AKP government decided to use both the carrot and the stick. It is debatable whether they were successful in responding to the protests in line with a democratic approach. However, the government successfully ended the protests. This does not mean that the Gezi Park protests were not an important milestone for the Turkish politics but the internal dynamics of the protest came to an end after several eruptions. Our findings indicate that these several fluctuation periods within the protest period went in parallel with the state's reaction against the protests.

PROLONGATION AND THE TEMPORAL DIMENSION OF THE GEZI PARK PROTESTS

In order to describe the intensity of the protests, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the Gezi Park protests. The protests started on May 28, 2013, with few activists and spread across the country in a very short time. The fluctuating intensity of the protests is operationalized by analyzing the coverage of the protests in the international and social media. To do so, the data utilize the Global Database of Events, Language and Tone (GDELT) dataset, and Twitter usage patterns. GDELT data content analyzes online news articles from numerous sources including local and international media.[19] The content is categorized according to the main action in the article. From this dataset, the number of news articles was extracted about the protest action in Turkey from April 1 until July 25, 2013. Similarly, all the tweets sent from

Turkey were collected at the same period with selected hashtags.[20] Tweets were lagged one day since online news stories appear later in the day, especially in the international media. International news stories and tweets were used as a proxy for the intensity of protests. Additionally, data for the two-month period before the Gezi Park protests were analyzed in order to compare this previous relatively stable period with the Gezi protest period. But most importantly, this chapter focuses on the protest period to show how the intensity fluctuated.

As a result, a final dataset for the Gezi Park protest intensity was created with 10,561,119 tweets sent from Turkey and 3,210 news articles that mentioned protests during the same period. Throughout the period from April 1 to July 25, the total number of news articles involving Turkey was 53,611. Of these stories, 28 percent included a violent action and 6 percent were articles about three different protests. These different actions were categorized using the GDELT's Conflict and Mediation Event Observations (CAMEO) scheme.[21] Majority of these protest articles were about the Gezi Park protests, while the rest were either about the May Day protests on 1 May or the Reyhanlı bombings and related local protests in Hatay Province.

Figure 17.1 summarizes the descriptive findings and presents the reasoning why the data can be used as a proxy indicator of the intensity of protests. The scale of coverage for the May Day protests in which excessive police

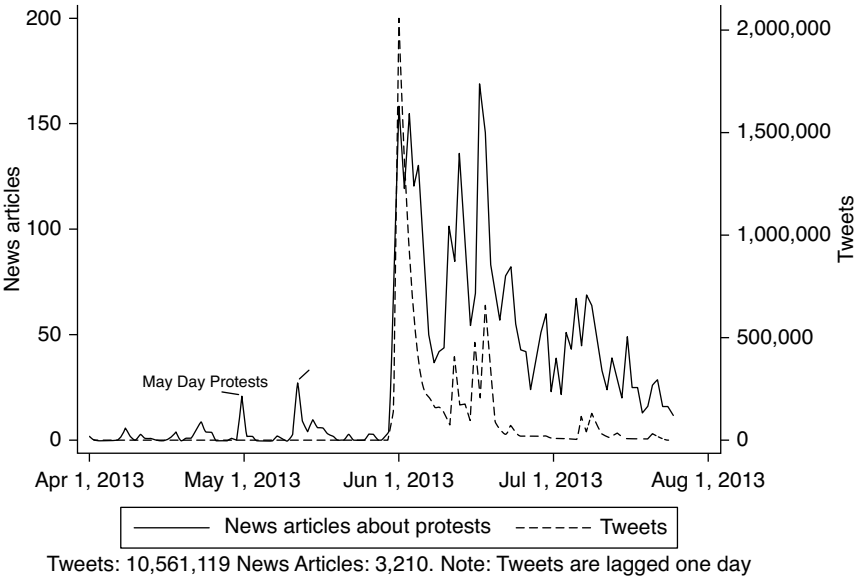

Figure 17.1 Data used as proxy indicator of the intensity of protests.

violence was well documented and the protests following the terrorist attacks in Reyhanlı, a small town in Hatay province, reveal that Gezi Park protests were extensively covered in the international media. Similarly, the news stories overlap with the number of tweets sent during the previous day. Tweets and international news articles were significantly correlated.[22] Protests peaked from May 31 to June 5. This peak was followed by a substantive decrease for a ten-day period. However, in the middle of June, protests re-intensified. Figure 17.1 suggests that the conflict prolonged in an unexpected manner. Why did the protests re-intensify on June 15, and what caused this prolongation? In the following section, the theoretical explanation is substantiated by the qualitative findings from the protests. The following section suggests four related factors. First of all, the political elites' attitude and discourse were critical in protesters' reaction. Second, police intervention in the protest created a "common enemy" for the protesters, and they were able to crystallize their target toward the police and the political elites in the higher echelons of the government. Third, hesitant crisis management sent mixed signals to the protesters, which produced new ideational opportunities. Last, advanced communication technologies and extensive usage of social media channels provided the protesters with the necessary space for rapid communication and reorganization. All these four factors together determined the pace of the protests, and their interaction caused the prolongation of the social protests with the opportunistic role taken by the protesters.

THE GEZI PARK PROTESTS AS A CASE OF PROLONGED SOCIAL MOVEMENT

There is a highly centralized state tradition in Turkey. Different interest groups are bound to the existing historical relations dominated by a strong state.[23] When analyzed within the context of history of social movements in Turkey, the response given by the state to the Gezi Park protests was somewhat parallel to the already existing authoritarian, statist tradition. Framing of the protesters in the mainstream media and by the ruling politicians as well as the tools of repression used by the state were consistent with Turkey's experience with its past social movements, albeit with some important differences. First of all, this movement did not have a clear leadership. It was neither leftist nor rightist groups that started the protests with their ideologically loaded, organized action. This does not mean that the protests were apolitical or ideology free. It was not in the traditional sense of ideological stand fed by the nationalist or

socialist fronts. In addition, Inglehart's post-materialism thesis has important implications for this new protest movement.[24] Post-materialism indicates that individuals are becoming more concerned with the quality of their lives and nonmaterial agendas, and they substitute material concerns as the country develops economically. In this respect, Turkey's economic development was very influential for the rise of a new attitude. Protesters mobilized individually against an urban renewal project with environmental concerns. Later on, as the protests intensified, the collective action spread across Turkey. In different locations, there were different protest agendas against the government that has been ruling the country since 2002. The AKP was the main target of the protests due to its various policies in different domains. Some heated debates were on urban renewal and gentrification as well as lack of care for the environment. Additionally, laws limiting alcohol use and laws against abortion aroused secularist concerns that have been at the forefront for groups who staunchly oppose the AKP government and its Islamist discourse. These policies were not a direct threat to the economic well-being of the public. Material incentives were minimal during the protests and post-materialist concerns came forth. In this context, the protest started with an environmentalist agenda and the protesters adopted various modern repertoires of collective action with an unpredicted acceleration in making sense of their contention.[25]

The Gezi Park protests fit Sidney Tarrow's definition of contentious collective action. These actions emerged from ordinary people who have no regular access to the political institutions and who acted in the name of new claims against the powerful state.[26] However, even if the literature on contentious politics of collective action can explain many of the dynamics on how the Gezi Park movement emerged and evolved, the protests had four specific characteristics. One was Prime Minister Erdo an's rigid and paternalistic approach against the protests. Erdo an is a powerful charismatic figure. He has been the prime minister of a single party government for 11 years. His way of interpreting the protests directly intensified the contention. His effect was direct in the sense that he influenced the intensity of the protests and the protesters' discourse, evident from the protesters' tweets, posters, and slogans. The provocative tone against the protesters' claim in the prime minister's speeches also had an indirect effect in galvanizing his own supporters.

The prime minister chose to organize his own rallies in major cities like Istanbul and the capital, Ankara. He mobilized AKP partisans against the Gezi

Park protests and he vilified the protesters. He basically resisted the protests by claiming that their intent was to disrupt economic well-being of the country, therefore he secured his political position among his constituents. Further polarization was also a strategic choice for flexing the state's muscles and sending signals to the protesters. In the counter rallies organized by the AKP, there was a populist discourse against the protests. In fact, these rallies encouraged violence against the protesters. People with sticks, clubs, and blades appeared on the streets of Istanbul in order to "save their streets" from the protesters. The police mostly ignored these illegal and violent attacks. In some instances, the police also joined these "vigilantes". Prime Minister Erdo an triggered this polarization and his strategic choices led to further intensification of the protests. Additionally, he stressed the importance of elections in his majoritarian discourse rather than highlight deliberative mechanisms and procedures as a negotiated solution. This was a typical case of government perceiving protests as a threat to its understanding of democracy. In this respect, political elite discourse of democracy was based on a minimal definition in which election results were the only means through which people determined the fate of the country for four years.

More importantly, this "Erdo an effect" had visible repercussions on the second factor to explain why protests prolonged. This second factor involved the policing of the protests, a crucial part of the escalated-force model. Police handling of the protests revealed the clear relationship between the social movement and the state.[27] Under the authority of governors, the police represent the "street-level bureaucrats."[28] Tilly emphasizes the degree of repression for categorizing different regime types.[29] One of the pioneers in placing the police under the direct control of the central government is the French model, traditionally known as the "king's police."[30] Yet, a progressive shift has occurred in European models of policing toward a more tranquil and softer intervention in the protests. Unlike these cases, the Turkish police continues its coercive tradition.

The main motivation behind police intervention during the protests was to discourage activists. For the activists, state reactions via policing were perceived as a sign of fascism.[31] Yet, the policing had a major internal inconsistency, which strengthened the hands of the protesters. People were protesting brutality by the police, and protests intensified as police reacted more harshly to the protesters, creating a vicious cycle. Protesters were demanding a more substantive, outcome-oriented democracy, transparency and respect for their

rights, in addition to their environmental concerns and defending their right to protest. Yet, the way police handled the protests substantiated the protesters' arguments and demands with a high level of injustice and rights violations. In the protest discourse, police intervention was further evidence of the legitimacy of the protesters' demands. This created a vicious circle. As protesters demanded an immediate stop to police violence, police continued oppressing the protests more forcefully, refueling the protesters again. In this respect, one major triggering effect of the protests and their expansion was the setting the activists' tents on fire by the constabulary organized under the metropolitan municipality. This illegitimate intervention received wide disapproval. The day the tents were set on fire, the social media saw a huge reaction. The number of individuals deciding to join the protests increased tremendously. That day, the police forces emptied the park and blocked every path leading to the park and to Taksim Square. Considering the historically symbolic importance of Taksim Square and its strategic location at the heart of the city, the literature suggests that the situation becomes "particularly tense when the territory in a protest has a particular symbolic and strategic value."[32] Reaching the square from different alleyways and avenues, protesters wanted to enter the park. Yet the police shot thousands of tear gas canisters at them. Dozens of protesters were wounded as the police directly targeted them. This was a turning point for the following days. The collective action, which started as a protest against the destruction of a park, suddenly erupted into something larger as police intervention persisted. This was a sign of the government's inability to permit dissident voices. The government used heavy police intervention against peaceful protesters who were united against the police. Police forces changed their strategy against protesters over time. After two days of massive police violence, the police left the Gezi Park and its vicinity to the protesters. This kind of tactical change created a wavering effect on the political sequence, which played a role in prolonging the conflict.

Meanwhile, the protests spread to other cities around Turkey and "*her yer Taksim, her yer direni* " ("everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance") became the main slogan of the protests all across Turkey. The protesters at ground zero, the Gezi Park, settled into the park and occupied it for 15 days without any intervention. For some commentators, it was the "Free Republic of Gezi Park." This occupation delegitimized the political elite's discourse in some parts of the society as it showed the possibility of an alternative social and political setting. For some, it was an "outdoor museum" because it

attracted a lot of curious, ordinary people who had been following the police violence on the social media for couple of days. As the police retreated and the park was occupied, transition from an escalated-force model to a negotiated-management model took place. This period is exactly the days of decline in intensity, which is observed in figure 17.1 (June 3 to June 15). Protesters were a "few looters" according to the state in the beginning of the protests, but, toward mid-June, the state started to ask for representatives from the protesters for negotiation and a peaceful political solution. Representatives from the Taksim Solidarity Platform were selected in addition to some popular figures, and on 13 June, they went to Ankara on the prime minister's request. These representatives had five demands: the park should stay as it is, the use of tear gas should be banned, those responsible for the police violence should be discharged, including the governor, chief of police, and others, protesters under custody should be released immediately, and finally, prohibitions against the right to protest and assembly in public spaces should end. Yet, none of these claims were fulfilled. The government met with the representatives to show that they listened to them and reminded them that it was now time to evacuate the park. The statist, paternal tradition was visible during the negotiation period. Meanwhile, the governor of Istanbul, Hüseyin Avni Mutlu, tried to appease the protesters. He was an active Twitter user and personally met with the protesters as the chief bureaucrat of the state. He listened to and answered protesters' questions for five hours in a café close to Taksim. The day after, the protesters decided to continue their protests as no substantive outcome emerged from the negotiations with the prime minister or from the meeting they had with Governor Mutlu.

Two days after the negotiations, on June 15, the government decided to evacuate the park, and after few warnings, the police started to put on their gas masks and vests at around 9 pm. Protesters were sending tweets to the governor and he underlined that there would not be any intervention. Yet, the police evacuated the park by force that night, and later on, sarcastic and witty comments about the governor's clear discrepancy became part of the protesters' discourse on the "Janus-faced government."

Figure 17.1 shows that the June 15th intervention skyrocketed the number of tweets as well as the international reports on the Gezi Park protests. Reactions against this intervention were more intense than the reactions at the beginning of the protests. Meanwhile, Erdo an continued using his power to suppress the protesters by holding grand rallies in major cities. He was resolute on ending the occupation of the Gezi Park.

As the mass protests continued, the police shot and killed an unarmed demonstrator, Ethem Sarısülük, in Ankara on July 1. The autopsy report, which said that he was killed by a police bullet, was published on June 15, the day the police evacuated the park. During the Gezi Park protests, many of the policemen targeted protesters with tear gas canisters instead of aiming downward at a 45-degree angle. This kind of violent targeting caused brain injuries and deaths.[33] So the policing of the protests signaled in many cases a deliberate enmity against the protesters instead of providing safety for the general public. Additionally, the state was not accountable. Government favored impunity throughout the protests and no high-level bureaucrats were tried or discharged. Erdo an defended the policing activities and his bureaucrats by saying, "How dare you tell me to dismiss this governor and that police chief? Know your place,"[34] and in some cases he argued with a threatening tone that "this country's security forces know how to evacuate it [Taksim Square and the park]."[35]

Consequently, two models of collective action were adopted by the state at the same time. Yet, the more the government oscillated between the two models, the more the protests intensified. In addition to the other two, the third factor establishes the main connection to our theoretical suggestion. That is the learning experience for both the state and the protesters. Gezi Park became a symbolic space, which the police evacuated and closed numerous times; and the protesters kept entering and resisting. As negotiations took place for the park's control, adoption of both negotiated-management and escalated-force models at the same time created inconsistencies, and the protesters absorbed these inconsistencies and used them as a way of reorganizing and re-making sense of their protests.

The Gezi Park protests emerged and evolved as a new phenomenon with distinct characteristics compared to the existing protest culture in Turkey. These qualities include its peacefulness, creativity, insistency, sense of humor, peaceful resistance, and sudden expansion. As the collective action evolved, it spread to broader groups of contention. Together, their goals were an indirect reciprocal interpretation of the protests. By adopting classical repertoires of contentious action, protesters merged their protests with an immense amount of creativity and humor. They managed to prolong the movement while experiencing a protest culture, and they also continued learning from each other.

On the one side, the protesters demanded a liberal, democratic country respecting individual rights and freedoms, sensitive to environmental

degradation and wanted no interference from the government in individual life styles and preferences. On the other side, the state was reluctant to negotiate, and it asserted its stance on the direction of full political, social, and cultural control. The clash between the contender and the contented resulted in mismanagement, some signals of hesitation and a clear oscillation between different response types. Hesitation in adoption of the two models was a signal of the government's misinterpretation of the dynamics of the protests. This misinterpretation indicates that it was not possible for the state to switch from an escalated-force model to a negotiation-model easily. While trying to keep up with the pace of a new type of political activism and social movement, state policies became inconsistent. As the government remained undecided between the two models, collective action gained legitimacy among a segment of the public, thus encouraging the movement to ascend on the stage when it was expected to decline over time.

As the social movement entered into a new phase of intensification, the protests presented new extensions. The Gezi Park protests witnessed interesting forms of protest styles such as that of the "standing man." On June 17, 2013, a man named Erdem Gündüz started standing on his own in the midst of Taksim Square around 6 pm. Against this kind of new protest style, the police did not know what to do. Yet, around 2 am, his protest was ended by the police. He was neither detained nor interrogated by the police but released after his bag was searched. Yet, his way of protesting reverberated through both national and international media, and it triggered new standing men and women protests around Turkey. Protests with such ultra-pacifist elements were a reaction to the heavy police response against the protesters. Yet, in such instances like protesters reading books to the police, or dancing and playing as water cannons approach were some of the moments when the police hesitated and did not know how to respond. Some might consider this continued force as a continuation of state reflexes against the protests, yet it revealed that not only the police but also the ruling party with its executive branches including the governor of Istanbul and the metropolitan municipality had serious setbacks in dealing with the protests. The oscillation and hesitation were also part of a learning process while experiencing this kind of new political activism and novel protests. State reaction changed over time as it learned how to respond in an experimental manner and in turn, it led to the prolongation of the movement. As the state learned to use both models during the protests, protesters also learned to (ab)use the mixed signals sent by

the state. Mixed signals encouraged protesters to increase the intensity of the protests. In other words, the classical reflexes and reactions of the state failed to manage and contain the protests.

Lastly, the protesters had a significant advantage in using cultural elements and technological tools. Most of the participants were educated, middle-class urbanites who were well versed in using state-of-the art-technologies. Throughout the history of activism, protesters have used different means of creative activism. For instance in 1967, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman tried to levitate the Pentagon with other antiwar demonstrators by means of incantations of witches. By doing so, they managed to get the media's attention.[36] Yet, compared to 1967, available information about the protests can be absorbed in minutes when similar protests occur today. This swift consumption makes available technologies more critical especially for mobilizing, organizing, and attracting new participants into a social movement. It also helps the movement to be heard by the international community, as it happened in the Occupy Wall Street and other similar cases around the world.

In the Turkish example, protesters used the protest to their advantage by reinterpreting symbols and elements of popular culture. Some referred to this as the "soft power of humor and subtle mind."[37] For example, stereotypes about protesters are a prevalent tool adopted for stigmatizing the social protests. It can be certain examples of public behavior that disrupt the public order like the terms "soccer hooligans, or gangs."[38] In the Gezi Park protests, Prime Minister Erdo an used the word *çapulcu* (meaning looters, marauders) to describe the protesters. Unexpectedly, the protesters adopted this word and named themselves after it. They created the hybrid word form *chapulling* and redefined the word "to act towards taking the democracy of a nation to the next step by reminding governments of their reason for existence in a peaceful and humorous manner."[39] They created videos about *çapulcu* and rapidly turned them into a motto: "Everyday I'm Chapulling." The sense of humor via adapting the symbols and using Erdo an's rhetoric against the government were some of the powerful tools of resistance with a binding and encouraging role. In order to voice their opposition, protesters used online platforms and latest communication channels. Through the Internet, protesters' humorous and dissident attitude became a part of the Turkish protest culture in a very short period. As a result, the Internet provided a necessary means for the protesters to gain momentum during the re-intensification of the social movement. In the heyday of the protests, around 2 million tweets with selected

hash tags were sent from Turkey in just one day, as figure 17.1 also shows. Protesters were able to use the Internet to their advantage, and this was crucial for creating a protest culture. During the re-intensification of the protests in later days, this technological advantage was indivisible. Protesters were able to gather again in the park quickly as the social media was teeming with calls for further protests.

In summary, the Gezi Park protests prolonged as several factors interacted. The political elite's discourse, heavy policing, a strategic choice by the political elite to further polarize the society, protesters' reinterpretation of the state's hesitant signals, as well as the technological developments were all necessary conditions. If these factors did not interact with each other, the duration of the protest would have been shorter and it would not have extended to a considerable, prolonged period.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Except for the cancellation of the urban renewal project in Taksim, the Gezi Park protests did not have any other substantive outcome. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly categorize possible results of a contentious movement under three headings: constitution of new political actors and identities, polarization of political groups, and scale shift in political contention from local to trans-local (even transnational) arenas.[40] This chapter contends that the signals of polarization among political actors were already present and the protests intensified further political polarization in Turkey. No effective political actor emerged from the Gezi Park protests. Yet, a sense of identity formation occurred due to it and Gezi Park demonstrations have already become part of the larger Turkish political discourse. Commentators and politicians with different ideologies used these protests as a milestone in Turkish politics. It became a critical juncture in the Turkish political discourse. Additionally, the ruling AKP is a successful, predominant catch-all party. It was able to garner votes from many different groups in the Turkish political spectrum. However, recent upheavals caused the party to turn back to its core constituency. In this respect, these protests had an unexpected outcome in changing the trajectory of the Turkish politics under AKP. However, this was an unpredicted outcome. Neither protesters nor the ruling AKP wanted to further polarize the society before these protests.

This chapter has important theoretical implications in addition to its findings from the Turkish case. Most importantly, the progressive shift toward a "softer" protest policing is part of a transition process that requires some

time as the European cases also suggest. This chapter contends that Turkey is in the early process of adapting a similar soft approach by showing preliminary signs of a negotiated-management approach. During this transition, of the use of both the two intervention models during the Gezi Park protests resulted in an unexpected prolongation of the movement. Yet, a genuine negotiation culture necessitates retreat of the government from direct intervention. This was the crucial missing element in the Turkish politics. The prime minister's charismatic leadership and his influence on the protests as well as the violent state response against the protesters suggest that both the Turkish political elite and participants of contentious movements need to accept a substantive, outcome-oriented, liberal understanding of democracy and a culture of negotiation.

This chapter contends that social movements are likely to prolong if the state signals are uncertain. In such cases, prolongation and wavering of the intensity depends on the timing of the state's signals. The empirical findings suggest that the police violence, political elites' inconsistent statements, as well as the state's hesitant strategies can interact to send mixed signals to the protesters. As a result, protests can prolong, with fluctuating levels of intensity. In the Turkish case, this prolongation happened because democratic culture was based on a majoritarian understanding, fixated on electoral outcomes. In relation, political elites' attitudes and discourse, level of police intervention, state hesitancy in crisis management, and technological advancements are conducive to prolongation. The theoretical argument implies that social movements are likely to prolong and re-intensify over time as the state responds with a mixture of the two ideal type models, which are the negotiated-management model and the escalated-force model. Transformation of contentious politics is a complex process and the Gezi Park protests indicate that transitions are prone to reversals and limitations. In this respect, further studies are necessary to test and falsify the theoretical implications of the argument. It is likely that other important factors such as horizontal and vertical divisions of power, institutionalized interest representation mechanisms, and the extent of the liberal, outcome-oriented democratic settings in other countries may be important determinants for peaceful protests with differing temporal characteristics.

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18

REASSEMBLING THE POLITICAL: PLACING CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN JORDAN

Pascal Debruyne
and
Christopher Parker*

INTRODUCTION

On January 14, 2011, *Jayeen*—a front of Jordanian activist groupings (the name means "we are on our way")—called for a day of anger. People of diverse backgrounds and ideological commitments responded to the call, coming out on to the streets to demand the ouster of Prime Minister Samir Rafa'i and his government. The regional context added to the headiness of the moment. Jordan's citizens seemed to be inscribing themselves into the wider upheaval—the global moment—that would soon be known as the Arab Spring.

Watching the news at the time, one might be forgiven for thinking that the call for protest had arrived in Jordan by way of Cairo or Tunis. But the coverage was misleading. Protest had become a regular feature of Jordan's political landscape over the preceding years. This protest was not oriented against the ubiquitous abstraction of the authoritarian regime. Nor was it oriented toward some abstract notion of liberal freedom as such. It was much more situated and—on the surface, at least—much more local than that. The demonstrators were responding to very real changes that had been brought about by more than a decade of rapid and dramatic neoliberal restructuring, changes that dramatically impacted not only upon livelihoods, but also upon peoples' sense of place and community. The fact that they came together and took to the streets in January 2011 was not a spontaneous effect of social media, nor the mirroring of television coverage of distant events. It was the result of

sustained efforts at organizing and of connecting the dots between seemingly diverse and place-bound contexts of interest, identity, and struggle.

It is always difficult to place, or to pin a date on, the start of a trend or movement. But July 31, 2009, when gendarmerie forces in the southern Jordanian city of Aqaba used violence to break up a sit-in by workers at the general cargo port, this might be put forward as the first clear indication of an impending Jordanian Spring.[1] According to a US Embassy wire released by Wikileaks, "The protest is connected to the sale of the land which the port sits on to an Emirati conglomerate (Al Maabar) in 2008. Mismanagement of the sale and its social consequences led to friction between port workers and the government owners of the port." But, while this event was noteworthy for the violence it provoked, it was part of a trend that stretched back several years. As early as 2002, day laborers, factory workers, teachers, public sector employees, and even retired army officers were visibly engaged in the formation of new and increasingly activist affiliations.[2] These new movements were emerging in response to situations similar to those that had obtained in Aqaba. The problem was not so much the abuse of state power as such, but the consequences of its privatization. Government was being articulated (and political economy transformed) through an array of place-making projects and agencies. These included, *inter alia*, special economic zones, megalomaniacal urban regeneration projects, new planning agencies and development authorities, public-private partnerships, and community-based initiatives. These arrangements not only announced new practices and styles of governing, they fundamentally restructured relations between people, between people and the artifacts of their daily experience, and between people and the places they inhabited. In short, protest emerged from within a variegated array of place-making projects, each of which advanced or responded to a market-oriented logic of 'reform," and each of which identified, essentialized, and instrumentalized local difference in the production or management of neoliberal effects.[3] The challenge for protesters was thus to recognize and articulate a critique that transcended the particularism of individual protest actions in diverse locales. This critique did not descend pregiven from the global ether: it is a product of struggle, and it is still in the making in Jordan.

Starting from an account of how neoliberal place-making projects in Amman dis-placed existing relations of government and power—both in the city and beyond—we draw on in-depth interviews with activists, and a critical reading of Jordan's recent political economic past, to show how protesters have struggled to re-place those relations, articulating an alternative platform

from which to make their own political counterclaims intelligible and effective. Place, in our perspective, is not seen as something that is reducible to an endogenous essence: rather, places emerge by virtue of the distinctiveness of the particular connections that meet within and through them ,[4] and by virtue of the dominant paradigms that make place legible and recognizable as such. It is also important to note that the current expressions of protest in Jordan also have a much deeper genealogy, reflecting identities and interests articulated over a longer history of engagement with the forces of capitalism, imperialism, and state-making. Consistent with the point made just earlier to this, the seemingly local places that provide the immediate setting for protest in Jordan are themselves the product of earlier rounds of global engagement.[5] Indeed, place does not simply indicate the arena of social struggle; it is a constituent stake in that struggle.

Nor has protest been located exclusively outside "the state" as traditionally understood: it has also—as we discuss in greater detail later—come from within the army and from the public sector. Neither protest nor the power that it contests can be mapped onto binary schemes of state-society or public-private: the powers of government and those of the governed are spread across overlapping assemblages of (*inter alia*) actors, artifacts, infrastructures, practices, and meanings; the production of claims and effects within these assemblages provide a constitutive stake of political struggle.[6] While a full accounting of this genealogy is beyond the scope of the current chapter, it should be kept in mind while reading what follows.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE: ARTICULATING A LANDSCAPE OF POWER

On September 12, 2006, two Egyptian construction workers were killed and 16 others injured when 3 floors of the Jordan Gate's north tower collapsed during construction.[7] The event galvanized local residents who, backed by protests from within the Engineers Association, began to raise concerns about the project. Critics noted that the land had originally been expropriated under the pretense that it would be used for a public park. The case also demonstrated clear planning deficiencies: consideration had not been given to the extreme traffic congestion that would result; nor had the impact of the towers on local water and sewage infrastructures been taken into account. Finally, there was concern about the Greater Amman Municipality's (GAM) financial stake in the project: How, asked residents, could the GAM be both a financial

stakeholder in the project and represent the concerns of citizens? Questions had been raised about the project from the outset, but were brushed aside—in part because the project had been endorsed by the king, who was eager to see progress on his vision of making Amman a destination city for investment, tourism, and international agencies. In any case, the controversy led the king to dismiss Hadid, who was accused of incompetence and of standing in the way of modernization.[8] He was replaced by Omar Ma'ani, a prominent businessman. Ma'ani represented the business-oriented and managerial approach to government called for by the new vision. The incident also lent urgency to calls for master planning in Amman. At the time of the Jordan Gate incident, nearly 350 plans for high-rise buildings had been submitted to the GAM. The market was overheating, and speculation—fueled by surplus petro-dollars from the Gulf, together with Amman's position as a logistical hub for operations in Iraq—was threatening to spiral out of control.[9]

Ma'ani's appointment was intended to send a signal to serious, long-term investors that Amman was open for business. Master planning was announced as a top priority to ensure order and greater predictability in the real estate market. Ma'ani introduced a "one-stop shop" that would enable investors to bypass the GAM bureaucracy. It was also clear that more weight would be given to bodies like the Amman Commission: institutions that privileged private sector interests and expertise, and which opened the door to selected nongovernmental stakeholders, at the expense of traditional municipal agencies.

But it was the Amman Master Plan itself—funded by USAID and executed by Bearing Point—that would prove to be Ma'ani's most powerful instrument for leveraging change. Funded by USAID and executed by the global development consultancy Bearing Point through its subcontractor, the Canadian firm Planning Alliance, the plan was Ma'ani's first priority upon taking office. The lead planner was Gerry Post, a Canadian planner who had been involved in the urban movements of Toronto in the 1970s before going on to work with Hernando Desoto in Peru in the 1980s, and then in South Asia before coming to Amman. He led a team that included several young Jordanian planners who had recently graduated from elite universities in the United States. The exercise was completed in just seven months. Nevertheless, in spite of this rapid execution, the plan won the "World Leadership Award in Town Planning" in 2007. The award granted the plan a kind of global legitimacy that empowered the mayor vis-à-vis existing GAM institutions. It also

catapulted Gerry Post center stage as a maker of the new order. He became a crucial ally of the new mayor.

Together, they announced the formation of a new agency: The Amman Institute (Ai). Headquartered right next to the mayor's office and the Amman City Council chamber, the Ai positioned itself not only as a planning institution, but also as an agent of governance reform and community empowerment. The Ai translated the book *Corrupt Cities: A Guide to Cure and Prevention*, making it available to a local audience. It invited speakers of international renown to address workshops on community empowerment and the imperatives and methods of social "modernization" and change. And—again preempting and bypassing the existing GAM planning institutions—it took the lead role in designing and promoting dramatic changes to Amman's historic city center. Post proved a dynamic and ambitious leader, ultimately branding the Ai as a "think-and-do tank" positioned to serve not only Amman and Jordan, but the entire region as well. He was also aware of his role in shaking up a municipal bureaucracy that he saw as out of date and paralyzed by the municipal unions and "tribal" interests.

Central to Ma'ani's ability to forward the change agenda was the fact that they were working in an environment that had been rescaled by the Master Plan itself. The Master Plan had increased the area of the Greater Amman Municipality from 668 km^2 to 1,700km^2. The amalgamation was legitimized by discourses of cost-efficiency and rational planning. However the managerial approach collided with the actually existing political structures in the outskirts of the capital Amman that were integrated in the municipality. Gerry Post explained the amalgamation as follows: "It is simple…the local power/tribal elite lost their power to influence decisions. They don't care about level of public service; they care about lining their own pockets and those of their friends." [10] Such attitudes naturally met with resentment. As reforms set apace, frustrations accumulated: GAM employees felt undervalued; the elected members of the GAM Council were bypassed and "hated Ma'ani and the Ai"[11] for it; Ammanis were confronted with the uneven developmental impact of big investment; and the mayors of the amalgamated towns around Amman lost power and saw the transformation of their areas on the basis of good governance-led market-reform. Post countered that the "Ai had a very close working relationship with GAM planning staff."[12] But GAM employees felt like they were left with the difficult work. The Ai knew how to "brand" and sell their products, while the GAM planning staff had to disentangle all the

complex property right structures and solve the political and social conflicts that surfaced.[13] According to Sandra Hiari (ex-Ai):

> The Mayor, with the Ai behind him, declared the GAM incompetent. But they weren't the ones that had to solve the severe land conflicts that were surfacing. They changed the zoning law radically, ignoring the history of existing law and also the existing situation at large. They treated planning as physical and technical and not as "political" [...] they had a sort of colonial approach, detached and uninformed by the local situation with its history and context. When things went wrong, the GAM had to step in and solve the problems on the ground. At the end of the day, it was they who understood the politics and complexity of places, although they had to function within narrowly defined boundaries.[14]

These tensions became politically salient as the Ai pushed for a grand restructuring of the GAM. According to the Ai, the 22,000 employee strong apparatus needed to go "on a diet." The reorganization plan—produced by the consultancy Watson and White Company—put Ma'ani and the Ai on a collision course with GAM employees.[15] From the perspective of Ma'ani and Post, a new global style of governing was bumping up again an "old" Jordanian style.

Key buzzwords in this new style included stakeholder participation and empowerment. Yet the new business-style municipality was experienced by Ammanis as distant from their daily lives. People (or at least selected representatives of populations or communities made visible by the plan) were perhaps being involved in the implementation of policy, but not in its formulation. There are many examples of this, but one of the most salient is with regard to the ways in which the "reform" of rent control laws was used to leverage change in Amman's historic downtown with the aim of creating space there for investment in boutique tourism and high-end leisure activities. In response to the removal of rent controls and the associated plans to "upgrade" Amman's historic center, the downtown merchants initiated their own protests. On March 8, 2011, they closed their shops as a reaction to the new rent law.[16]A week later, on March 15, they were received by the prime minister and the minister of industry and trade, who did not exclude the possibility of changing the rent law. However, the law was kept in effect, angering the merchants.

The merchants weren't the only group feeling excluded from the new Amman anymore. The static focus on "community development" stood in stark contrast to the actual practice of community removal through gentrification or relocation for investor projects, notwithstanding the protests of local communities in front of City Hall.[17] As ex-employees of the Ai admitted:

> Community plans and the community aspect were brought in too late. There never seemed to be time for that. There was a sense of emergency related to planning for tower development and investment pressure. The neighborhood level analysis and "people centered plans" came last. [. . .] By then all the expropriations, which occurred with no discussion about the future livelihoods of those removed, had engendered considerable tensions.[18]

Communities were not merely under threat of transformation by amalgamation and dispossession. The Master Plan also called for a radical restructuring of Amman's public transportation routes and infrastructure [19]. Existing hubs—and the popular markets associated with them—were moved away from the city center (and hence away from the sites slated for high-end business, leisure, and tourism investment). This not only affected the mobility and access of poorer people in the city, but also impacted upon the ways in which Amman was connected to (and available for) populations in the surrounding towns and countryside.

But the "neoliberal" urban project that would have the most impact on the city (and, as we show below, also on the countryside) was one that predated the arrival of Ma'ani and Post: the Abdali Urban Regeneration Project, which promised nothing less than a new downtown for Amman. The Abdali project is in many ways emblematic of the neoliberalization or privatization of the state in Jordan: it shows how a state agency *par excellence*, the army, was transformed into a neoliberal actor invested in partnerships on a global scale. It accomplished this by making military land and property available to private investors at below market prices in exchange for shares in real-estate projects. Abdali—the location of a military installation that had once been on the outskirts of the city but which had long-since been swallowed whole by urban expansion—was one of several sites being transformed into a neoliberal development hub fueled primarily by sovereign wealth emanating from the Gulf (other key sites were located in Aqaba, Zarqa, and the area south of the Dead Sea).

The military established its own development corporation—MAWARED—as well as a planning and design company called The Urban Workshop. High-ranking military personnel sit on the boards of MAWARED and The Urban Workshop together with new investment elites (including "players" loyal to the monarchy, such as spatial planner Akram Abu Hamdan), representatives of Gulf investment agencies, and King Abdullah II himself. The significant profits generated by these arrangements were destined for reinvestment in the army. As such, the army created the image of a self-sufficient modern army that no longer (fully) depends on the state budget. These investments/agencies would contribute to the military pension fun, and also be invested in job-training centers, health-care provision for veterans and their families, and social housing for servicemen and -women.

The specific investment structure and distribution of profits among well-connected investors has been discussed elsewhere, and is beyond the scope of the current paper.[20] Suffice it to say that—consistent with the outcome of similar neoliberal urban megaprojects elsewhere—those who profited were those who already had the wealth and connections that enabled them to do so. To be sure, critics (and the general public) argued that the sale of public land at below market prices was intrinsically corrupt. The huge profits stood in stark contrast to the public costs of government. GAM ultimately paid for the infrastructure and the road development around the project, which amounted to 34 million JD.[21] There was also a glaring disparity between investor profits and the enormous debts incurred by MAWARED. But the project was based on publically traded shares, and transactions were by and large carried within the boundaries of accepted best practice.

We return to the discussion of corruption next. But the main points for the argument here are: (1) the ways in which these projects impacted directly on people's lived experience of the city and its possibilities; and, most importantly, (2) the ways in which these urban projects—via the involvement of traditional state institutions like the army and the Social Security Corporation (SSC), and new institutions like the Ai and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA)—were key nodes in the restructuring of relations between government and the governed across the kingdom as a whole. These issues directly link neoliberal urban projects like Abdali to the wider dynamics of protest. They also force us to consider the broader meaning of Henri Lefebvre's celebrated (but often only partially understood) notion of "the right to the city." For Lefebvre, the right to the city was not simply about access to

urban space or the livelihoods of urban dwellers; it was about the centrality of the city within a wider mode of production, and about the urban as a modality of power.[22] The production of urban space is not something that happens exclusively (or even primarily) within the limits of the city itself, nor are the power relations articulated through the city contained within those limits.

Regarding the first point, it was the GAM that (unwillingly) found itself responsible for clearing out the al-Za'amta neighborhood around Abdali in order to make way for the infrastructure that would service the Abdali site. The law permits the immediate removal of residents by paying low compensations for reasons related to the public interest. Afterward, though, the GAM sold the land to Abdali Investment and Development Corporation (Abdali PSC). It is worth noting that Ma'ani (Amman's mayor) was also on the board of directors of MAWARED. Furthermore, the GAM—pressured by Abdali PSC and MAWARED—intervened to relocate the popular Abdali Market, just as it had previously been made responsible for the relocation of the Abdali bus station to the outskirts of the city. As the Abdali Urban Regeneration Project unfolded, the city of Amman was taken hostage by years of traffic jams because the infrastructure around Abdali was totally unsuitable for this kind of project.[23] Beyond the protest of the downtown merchants mentioned earlier, Amman has also witnessed protests by those who are immediately threatened by displacement and dispossession. Furthermore, as we show in later in the paper, it is no coincidence that the single most noteworthy incident of protest in Amman over the past three years involved the occupation of a traffic intersection/roundabout.

In order to elaborate the second point, we now turn to a more detailed discussion of how the army's involvement in these projects provoked the emergence of a crucial actor within Jordan's protest landscape: the movement of the Army Veterans Association, and the small town and rural constituencies that it in practice represents. We also show how the neoliberal practices of government, and the urban projects associated with it, also gave rise to the 2009 protests by port workers in Aqaba.

THE REBIRTH OF POLITICS: ARTICULATING THE LANDSCAPE OF PROTEST

One of the most remarkable movements to emerge in the course of the Jordanian Spring has been that of the retired army officers and veterans. The army has traditionally been viewed as the backbone of support for the monarchy

in Jordan. And, like armies elsewhere, it has been understood as an intrinsically conservative institution. Active service personnel are forbidden from engaging in political activity. Yet, over the past three years, the movement of the retired officers and veterans has been the source of some of the most scathing critiques of the palace: critiques in which figures associated with the Royal Court (especially the queen) appear as neoliberalism personified. To understand the role of the retired officers in the Jordanian protest movement, it is first necessary to briefly situate the army within the political history and political economy of the kingdom.

First of all, the army is not a homogenous institution. It embodies multiple sequences of ideological mobilization dating back at least to the establishment of the Mandate (e.g., radical and conservative brands of Arab nationalism, left- and right-wing East Bank nationalisms, participation in the social movements of the 1950s, involvements in the Palestinian struggle, the antinormalization movement of the past 20 years, etc.). The army is intersected by a variety of interests that, when examined closely, blur the boundaries between state and society as conventionally understood. This is in no way unique to the Jordanian Army. Furthermore, today, the role of private contractors and other nonstate actors in contemporary warfare challenge the traditional notion of the military as a state institution *par excellence*. There are various perspectives on these issues from within the army, and on the involvement of the army in schemes like the Abdali project (and others sketched later in the chapter). Suffice it to say that the image of the army as politically quietist and uncritically loyal to the monarchy does not square with reality.

Second, the army—together with all those who in some way indirectly depend upon military spending and employment—has been strongly affected by a changing political economy. The army has always been a major employer and provider of social welfare in Jordan. The salience of this role has become more acute in the context widening inequality over the past 30-odd years. More than 25 percent of the government budget goes to military expenditure, of which 85 percent is reserved for wages for the 100,000 active soldiers and for the 65,000 reserve forces in the army. With an average of 5.4 members per Jordanian family, there must be around 890,000 citizens that are directly dependent on the army for their income.[24] Notwithstanding the secrecy of the army budget, most interviewees refer to amounts that range between 400 and 600 million JD for 2006, and up to 1 to 1.9 billion JD for 2012.[25] As such, the army could hardly be immune from pressure for cuts in government spending; however, at the same time, the crucial role of the army in redistribution

and social welfare provision made such cuts politically problematic. The solution was to try and generate revenue by inscribing and integrating military assets into the market: in short, the Jordanian military went into business.

The trend toward privatization within the army was initiated in 1990, shortly after the signing of Jordan's first agreement with the international monetary agencies, when a small garage for repairing vehicles was opened in Mafraq.[26] By 2001 the army had set up a complex web of investment platforms and interconnected entities, operating in different areas. The King Abdullah II Bureau for Design and Development (KADDB), for example, is the military-industrial arm of the Jordanian Armed Forces established by royal decree in 1999 and as such given "a free zone"-status (read "tax-free institution"). The board of directors reports directly to the Private Office of the king through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. KADDB's operations are funded from the defense budget and earned income opportunities.[27] According to KADDB chairman Shadi Ramzi al-Majali the goal of KADDB is to set up a privatization process of the army.[28] At the 2010 SOFEX—a KADDB organized arms industry conference—the bureau signed contracts for about 100 million US dollar worth of exports to Kenya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.[29] KADDB reports a 100 million US dollar turnover per year and building up to 300 or 400 million US dollar.[30] MAWARED and The Urban Workshop are—as noted above—also key assets in the army's portfolio.

The proceeds of these arrangements were supposed to be put in the Armed Forces Investment Fund and reinvested in military hardware, pensions, job-training centers, and wage raises for the broad layers of the army.[31] In fact, however, much of the money went to pay the exorbitant consulting fees of companies that are now under fire[32] and to the inflated wages of army elites associated with the projects. This created different forms of protest both within the army ranks as well as between neoliberal elites, elite soldiers (such as the Darak) and the old guard army agencies. To many, it seemed clear that these arrangements constituted a bubble waiting to pop.[33]

This concern was crucial in provoking protest from within the association of army veterans, an organization numbering some 150,000 members and 150 cooperatives. The army veterans were at the bottom of the early protests.[34] In fact, the problems started around 2002, when the army veterans started calling for improvement to their livelihoods. They demanded three things: (1) increase in pensions, (2) better medical care, and (3) higher social welfare. Some demands were met between 2002 and 2008. But when Samir Rifa'i came to power, this accommodating policy was put aside. Rifa'i championed

neoliberal reforms and was the embodiment of all these techno-managerial interventions that disrespected the historical context and the existing political life on the ground. It is important to stress that many of the ex-generals and veterans live among impoverished groups in society. This makes them particularly sensitive to the "everyday" effects of neoliberal reform. After failed high-level negotiations, about corruption, transparent government, and solving emerging tribal conflicts, they raised the stakes and called for protests from 2009 onward.[35]

The Army Veterans association led by Dr. Ali Habashneh wrote a first manifesto on May 1, 2010, almost a year before the outbreak of the Arab Spring, attacking the monarchy and the Royal NGOs, and demanding a constitutional acknowledgment of the disengagement of the West Bank and stopping the Zionist scheme of "the Alternative Homeland."[36] They also demanded higher wages and pensions, threatening to step up their protests if their demands were not met.[37]After their first manifesto, a second "economic communiqué" followed in the autumn of the same year detailing the privatizations that they thought were corrupt in Jordan. A third manifesto addressed the neoliberalization of the army and the embroilment of the monarchy in capitalist development schemes.[38]

The second manifesto described MAWARED and Abdali as examples of the failure of neoliberal governance, and also pointed to the 40 million JD of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) that was put into this project to save it. Lamia Raië, an independent consultant who had worked on a USAID-funded research about the protests, explained these army conflicts as follows:

> The Ex-generals like Habashneh are not against investments by the Army as such, but they are against the Elitist Darak and the neoliberals in the Army that have taken over and turned the army into an "Al Capone type System." These generals have a Nasserite ideology or Baathist frame of reference, one that has today moderated into a more social-democratic leftist position. For example, Habashneh's PhD dissertation was on the political economy of Jordan from a Marxist perspective.[39]

The veteran's foray into contentious politics would ultimately pay off: they reached an agreement on pension raises,[40] as well as on other demands including the tenure of military retirees working in the public sector, and the annulment of a government decision to deduct 75 percent of salaries of military retirees working in government jobs. This shows "the other face" of

the neoliberal army, which functions as a (social) safe haven for army (ex-) personnel.[41]

The Army Veterans Association also made explicit links between developments in the army and the privatizations of formerly nationalized industries such as the Jordan Potash Company and the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company. This was crucial in connecting their demands to those being made in other arenas of protest. This expressed itself in the formation of a wider movement: in January 2012, the veterans organized themselves into a political party—The National Charter Party—around the figure of Ali Habashneh. Their platform called for the defense of Jordan against the Alternative Homeland and Zionist politics on the one hand, and for the re-nationalization of the economy and industries on the other hand. Soon, however, the party split into smaller groups. Left-nationalists followed Nahed Hattar to form the Social National Liberation Party while the others followed Habashneh.[42]

Nevertheless, this provided a platform enabling the (mostly East Bank) army veterans to connect with other groups such as the Teachers' Association (which originated in Kerak around the figure of Mustapha Rawashdeh),[43] and the "Jayeen movement."[44] Their first joint protest was on January 24, 2011, two weeks after the Dhiban informal workers' strikes. The rise of the independent teachers' union can be traced back to protests against the privatizations within the educational system. This included a scathing critique of Queen Rania's "Madrassiti Initiative," a program that sought to mobilize the private sector to upgrade school infrastructure and create a curricula oriented toward entrepreneurship. The Teachers' Syndicate also goes back to the history of Kerak as a space of resistance.

It is important to note that while these movements each have a history—they emerge within the context of particular places and times—their activities increasingly reflected not only new ways of doing politics, but also new ways of imagining solidarities across cleavages of locality and scale. And even if they emerged outside the given organizational frameworks of political representation and activism (the official unions, the professional associations, tribal affiliations, etc.), they were all the more informed about the stakes of their struggles. Consider the 2009 strike of the Aqaba port workers.

Protesters held signs demanding the company Al Maabar to give back the public money, the Aqaba port, and the privatized lands around it They accused ASEZA and ADC of having sold the land far under the market price. The land (3200 dunums) was sold for a below market price of 500 million US

dollars, in which ASEZA had already invested 150 million US dollar in infrastructure costs, bringing the real price more closely to 350 million US dollar. On top of that ADC/ASEZA has agreed to additional infrastructure costs amounting to 200 million US dollars[45] and agreed to pay enormous fines to the company (548,000 US dollar per day) because the Port relocation slowed down.[46] ASEZA defended itself, saying that the sale price was low, because they needed the money swiftly to pay off a loan to the Club of Paris, and at that time they were offering lucrative interest rates. So they sold the land for 500 million US dollar to the Abu Dhabi government. Although ASEZA chief commissioner, at that time Issa Ayyoub, tried to defend the sale,[47] the Port land became a symbol of the way the government had been privatized under ASEZA and ADC. These new institutions, heavily funded by the international agencies, went against the interests of Aqaba residents. From 2009, tensions were rising, ultimately pushing the Aqabawis, supported by a range of professional associations and leftist parties, to the streets in 2010.

Protestors didn't limit their demands to financial compensation but also demanded the reform of ASEZA and ADC, pushing ASEZA to make some fundamental changes in the way Aqaba was being governed. Aqabites reached several goals from 2010 onward after shutting down ASEZA four times:[48] (1) The commissioners were sent home (all of them for the first time) and they reached an agreement where three commissioners are now of "the community,"[49] that is, they are locals: Dr. Monad Harrara from a Palestinian family ("Harrara"), one of Al-Quwayra family ("Jadaad"), called Saleh Am-Jadaad, and one of Aqaba itself (Yassin's). Also, the wages, which were at 18,000 JD per month, were lowered, and Aqabites pressured ASEZA to install the older local consultative council that would be responsible for local coproduction of policies. (2) ASEZA closed down all the massage parlors (mainly prostitution outlets). (3) As the strikes continued between February and December 2011, ASEZA was forced to extend fixed employment to 757 day laborers who had been employed before October 2006. Also, workers in the water and electricity company got a wage rise. (4) Finally, ASEZA is now also proposing to build new houses for low-wage workers.

But the issue people found most "corrupt" was the governance model of ASEZA itself. ASEZA had been accused of more than 50 cases of corruption, including false bids and skewed contracts as well as the corruption in the quality of the materials used in the Karama project and King's Makrama housing project.[50] While groups of people and neighborhoods were increasingly facing

nights under the open skies and stars, the only stars the commissioners were seeing were the five-star hotels in which they lived during the week. This was uneven development at its most embodied point. The protests paid off in the local struggle against corruption, as the protesters forced parliament to form a special Aqaba Parliamentary Commission to study all the cases of corruption.[51] And, to return to where we started, two other salient victims of popular demands to root out corruption were none other than Omar Ma'ani and Gerry Post, whom the government seemed willing to sacrifice as scapegoats in order to deflect criticism of the wider "process of reform."[52]

CLAIMING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY: ARTICULATING THE CRITIQUE

On March 24, 2011, protesters occupied the Duwwar al-Dakhilliyyeh (the Interior Ministry Circle), a large traffic roundabout at one of Amman's busiest intersections. Nationalist hymns of the 1950s blarred through loudspeakers. Banners hung from bridges and buildings. Thousands of people showed up to participate. The place and the date were chosen deliberately, referring not only to an earlier era of protest in Jordan, but also to the Battle of Karama in 1968, where Jordanian troops joined the PLO "Fedayeen" to repel an Israeli incursion into the kingdom.[53] A range of movements had come together to organize the event, forming what was to become known as "the March 24th Youth Movement platform" or "the March 24th Coalition."[54] Their greivances focused on the effects of economic reform and on what they perceived as the increasing intrusion of the state's security and surveillance apparatus into everyday social and economic life. The platform brought together not only leftist and communist militants but, initially, the youth movement of the Muslim Brotherhood participated as well. The platform was also supported by the "Jayeen."[55] As in the past—with the Jordanian National Movement of the 1950s, for example—the March 24th Youth Movement platform surmounted the traditional fault lines within society [56]. As Mohammed Sneid, a leading member of "Jayeen," said: "Palestinians and East Bankers both suffer from the current parliament, which represents the rich from both sides" [57]. But this claim in and of itself could not erase another pronounced social cleavage in Jordan: that between the city and the country.

While protesters from various neighborhoods in Amman were gathering at the *duwwar*, another group—some 20,000 strong—was gathering on the other side of Amman, in King Hussein Park. These protesters were not

from Amman, but mostly from towns and villages north of the capital. They had come for a to defend the palace. These protesters felt that the palace had already fallen under the sway of a liberal, "Palestinan" elite—an elite who had benefited from privatization and the politics of economic reform more generally. They worried that the demands of these urban protesters might push the balance further toward urban business interests at their expense. About midday, they began to move en masse from King Hussein Park, eventually advancing on the *duwwar.* There were major altercations, and the *Darak* (the elite troops-gendarmerie) appeared to intervene on the side of those who had marched from the park. One man died, and a hundred were wounded.

The day after, the protesters reorganized to express their anger about the violence used by the *Darak.*[58] But dominant voices such as that of Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit reacted swiftly, pointing to the Muslim Brothers and the Jordanian Palestinians as the root cause of the violence. The 24th of March Coalition suddenly became tagged as a Palestinian anti-Royalist movement; the government playing the identity game and pitting Jordanians of East Bank origins against those with roots in Palestine. This played into popular anxieties that go back to the days of "Black September," and have been reinforced by the overrepresentation of East Bankers in the security apparatus and public sector more generally. Also, the Muslim Brotherhood had chanted slogans calling for reform to an electoral system that favored rural constituencies and favored deals based on regional or tribal interests rather than on ideologial affiliations. These events played into local stereotypes (often repeated uncritically by academics and journalists) that pitted traditional East Bank rurals against liberal (or otherwise ideological) urban dwellers. This has been reflected in much of the analysis of the Jordanian Spring. History, however, shows that these groups have in fact often stood side by side, not only in the nationalist heydays of the 1950s, but also in the protest landscape that emerged after 1989.

By zooming in on place-making projects in Amman and Aqaba, we set out to reveal configurations of capital and power hidden within a landscape of government that has become increasingly (or at least differently) variegated over the past 25 years. We also situated groups within the uneven geography of development that can be mapped over and through that landscape. The point was to call attention to the material contexts of meaning and practice within which protest has been situated. Struggles start from particular places, and not in abstract-extended space. Place therefore matters for social

struggles. We traced the agencies and practices implicated in the production of neoliberal urban space/place and showed how these projects impacted upon the lives of both rural and city-dwelling Jordanians. Yet, in spite of this underlying connection, protesters from different parts of the country percieved themselves as having very different stakes in whatever change might coming, and these were expressed in identities that presented themselves not only as essential (urban-Palestinian vs. rural/tribal-Transjordanian), but also seemingly irreconcilable. In the remainder of the paper, we look at the roads traveled by the protesters as they began to challenge these essentialisms and make the connections, developing a critique—and articulating a framework of action—that could build upon and potentially transcend the "militant particularisms" on display in the early days of the Jordanian *hirak*.[59]

It would be easy (indeed, too easy) to look at events in Jordan and suggest that the tranformative potential of the protests had been undermined by such "militant particularism": the particular and place-bound character of claims put forward in the context of the Jordanian Spring seem—at first sight—difficult to reconcile. They provide those in power with a resource that can be manipulated for purposes of divide and rule. Indeed, this particularism and its manipulation have been put forward to explain the relative failure of Jordan's protest movement to effect radical change (and, vice-versa, the apparent stability of "the regime" has been seen as evidence of a fragmented and manipulated population). However, this is a relatively superficial reading, one that evaluates the protests "from above"—from the perspective of a particular notion of the regime—rather than from the lived contexts of the governed. Just as the urban megaprojects in Amman and Aqaba rearticulated not only urban relations, but also relations between the government and the governed inmany rural areas (as described), so too efforts have been made to connect to *hirak* groups in secondary cities and towns across the kingdom (e.g., Kerak, Ma'an, and Tafileh). To be sure, such efforts have faced significant obstacles. But protest has given rise to a critique of current (neoliberal) government practice that transcends boundaries of place and that cuts across ideology.

As the protest of March 24 was put down by the Darak, Jordanian elites thought they had dealt with the upsurge of protest in early 2011. Instead, however, the protests were about to travel. While small-scale protests continued in Amman, demonstrations in Jordan's secondary cities—most notably in Kerak, Tafileh, and Ma'an—increased in number and intensitified laying the foundations of what has become known as "the Southern Movement." The

Southern Movement eventually became the leading bloc within the March 24 Platform and played a key role in articulating movements across the country.[60] The Ammani's lost their leadership position but gained a broader spatial network of activism [61].

The Southern Movement was made up of Popular Youth Movements from Kerak, Mafraq, Jerash, the Free Tafileh Movement, and the Ma'an Popular Movement for Change and Reform—or the so-called *HirakSiyasi.* The HirakSiyasi raised demands for social justice and political reform and against the privatization of government and public resources and against corruption.[62] Most of the interviewees stated that Jordanians are not so much moved by the political reforms as by economic issues. "That's where protesters clash with the King and the Monarchy, [the latter] promise some political reforms, but don't touch the money."[63] Places like Tafileh of Kerak started to play their role in the spatial connections made beyond these bounded spaces. Together with the examples of "corruption" provided here, these "events" began to circulate and mobilize people in different parts of the country. Efforts to cross given boundaries of place and ideology were not always straightforward. For example, when the Muslim Brotherhood took control of the teachers union, leftists organized against them.[64] By contrast, the Southern Movement was particularly successful in mobilizing across ideological lines, bringing Islamists, leftists, and nationalists together under one roof. This in turn facilitated efforts by the movement to reach out to various groups and actors across the kingdom.[65] There are even indications that leaders of the movement in Tafileh reached out to the militant Islamist movement of Abu Sayyaf, which is based in Ma'an.

In May 2011, the formation of "the National Front for Reform" was announced—partly in response to the establishment of a Transjordanian-based political party by Ali al-Habashneh—with Ahmed Obeidat at its helm. The National Front gained supprt from elite circles within Amman, as well as from the more grassroots Muslim Brotherhood. Obeidat is a former prime minister (serving between January 10, 1984, and April 4, 1985) and he headed the General Intelligence Department for almost a decade from 1974 to 1982. He carried with him the image of being one of the last unifiers of Jordan, because of his role in the "national charter." The movement's members include the Democratic People's Party (Hashd), the Communist Party, the Popular Unity Party, the Islamic Action Front, the Baathist Progressive Party, the Socialist Party, the Nation and the Movement of the Social Left, as well as

a number of professional associations and leading labor figures, the Women's Union, and youth bodies.[66]

The National Front for Reform put forward a series of demands, including: (1) constitutional and political reform focused on the rule of law and human rights (including cancellation of illiberal amendments made to the Constitution of 1952); (2) the return to an economic approach that affirms state ownership of public resources and strategic projects, and the adoption of planning as a key political tool to guide the economy and society, taking into consideration market mechanisms and the participation of the productive private sector in a manner that integrates its activities with the national plan for development without the exploitation of workers and consumers; (3) a more optimal allocation of resources, and policies that achieve social justice in the distribution of income and wealth; and (4) the reaffirmation of Jordan's territorial identity and sovereignty, going against Zionist schemes of the Alternative Homeland.

Although this entanglement of movements is precarious, it illustrates that supposedly essential and insurmountable ruptures based on identity are foremost political and not natural givens.[67] As Khalid Kalaldeh asserts: "It's a class issue and it's about capitalism, and not about 'East versus West.' As if Palestinians didn't work in the public sector?"[68] The same happened, Lamis Andoni continued, in Tafileh. "First the Tafileh people carried this East-West Bank identity divide with them, until I wrote a few articles about them, supporting them in their struggle. People who dared to attack me as a Palestinian journalist got in trouble after that. They internally adopted a pro-Palestinian stance throughout time. You need more concrete struggles between groups, where they take these images of each other down. These barriers can be crossed and links are being made. I always tried to integrate similar stories of suppression next to each other, and now my nickname is 'the river Jordan' that connects the two banks."[69]

Where the "moderate urban liberals" pushed for a soft change and reform, the leftist movements and popular *hirak* movements gradually evolved toward a call for radical change, including impeachment of the king (but not overthrow of the monarchy as such) and throwing out what they refer to as "the Mafia", "gang," or "the Clique" seen to dominate his immediate circle. The king was initially held beyond direct criticism. But, this so-called red line was crossed gradually, especially after November 2011 when the price of various petroleum products skyrocketed in the range of 14 to 54 percent.[70] Because

the costs of electricity and transportation are reliant on petroleum derivatives, the increase automatically caused price increases in almost all commodities. This provided enough impetus for protesters from various opposition factions to take to the streets.

In the early months of the protests, charges of corruption were directed primarily toward crony capitalists and "corrupt personalities." Omar Ma'ani, Khalid Shaheen, Akram Abu Hamdan, and others provided lightning rods for public discontent. Yet, while some of these figures were clearly engaged in practices that would be considered corrupt by any standard, the focus on individuals deflected critique away from the broader project of reform. The "offenses" of Ma'ani, for example, were in fact consistent with notions of managerial best practice and market-oriented notions of good governance: Ma'ani was a stand-in—or perhaps better said, a scapegoat—for the failures and contradictions of the neoliberal project as a whole. This emphasis on "crony capitalism" and corruption is, of course, prominent in the analysis about the Arab Spring: the problem, from this mainstream perspective, was not one with neoliberalism or with reform, but with its incomplete or incompetent implementation.[71] Insofar as the spotlight was pointed at individual criminals and scapegoats, the government and the palace took advantage of the space in the shadows to implement measures that would address some concrete and particular demands of protesters without challenging the logic or project of restructuring. The National Dialogue Commission (NDC) was, for example, set up in the summer of 2011 and given the assignment to continue with reform more swiftly and more efficiently. Constitutional reforms were submitted to the National Constitutional Commission (NCC). As the protests continued, they embarked on visits to areas on the outskirts of the cities and to the Badia areas. During a visit to the Kura district (Irbid governorate), the king promised 40 million JD for development projects. In Kerak, 4.7 million JD was promised for poor families, and the Badawi Tribe in Zarqa got more army jobs. Meanwhile, in Ma'an several millions of dollars were promised for infrastructural projects.[72] These are ways to revive the old social contract between the state and several parts of the population.

These piecemeal engineering attempts of "reform" would not hold for long, however. Protesters continued to defy the red lines. Several "tribes," mostly presented as the ideological and sociological pillars of the Hashemite monarchy, started mobilizing. One example is the creation of the Jordanian Tribal Coalition for Reform in November 2011, which called for political and

economic reforms.[73] The members of this group are the Bani Sakhr Tribe Assembly for Reform, and six other tribal committees representing Jordan's largest East-Banker tribes, including Bani Hassan, D'ajaa, Ajarmah, and the National Movement for Reform representing the Northern Badia district. Earlier, in February 2011, several protests had emerged as in Zarqa where the Zawahreh and Khalayleh tribes blocked the highway, and claimed back their "tribal lands," referring to collective ownership patterns from before the Ottoman Tanzimat reform.[74] Whatever the tactics of diversion, it was clear they wouldn't suffice.

CROSSING RED LINES: DIS-PLACING AND RE-PLACING THE POLITICAL

In June 2012, the king paid a visit to Tafileh. He bore the promise of 15 million JD in development funding. However, on his arrival, a scuffle broke out between the demonstrators and the gendarmerie, sparking a riot. The royal motorcade was attacked with stones,[75] and demonstrators shouted, "the people are the red line."[76]

This and other slogans popped up in larger demonstrations, over the ensuing months. Protesters were now openly criticizing the monarchy and its links to investors. On November 13, 2012, more than 2,000 protesters were back at the *duwwar ad-dakhaliyya* chanting "Revolution, revolution, it is a popular revolution" and "Freedom is from God, in spite of you, Abdullah" during an impromptu demonstration sparked by the government's decision to raise fuel prices.[77] Other slogans that were used in were "Either fix it now, or follow Abidine [Ben Ali]," "This Jordan is our Jordan, and the traitor should get away from us," "Freedom, freedom, not royal handouts," "Freedom from God, against your will oh Abdullah," "The people want the fall of the regime" and "Down, down with the rule of the scoundrel."[78]

As the protests spread over the whole of Jordan,[79] Queen Rania came under fire. A range of high-profile tribal figures questioned the role the queen was playing in Jordan's political and economic power structure, pointing specifically to the lavish spending on her birthday party in Wadi Rum. Everything related to her person became a target of critique. Gradually, she was coming to be seen as the personification of everything wrong with neoliberal reform. She was ordered to lay low for a while.[80] Other members of the royal family also became the target of harsh criticism, such as her brother, Majdi Yassin, and Princess Basma's husband, "Walid Kurdi." Kurdi fled to London

for his role in stealing hundreds of millions of JD's from the Jordanian National Phosphate Company, which he managed between 2007 and 2012. It was increasingly becoming clear that the wider circles of the royal family/entourage were benefiting from privatizations schemes. The legitimacy of the monarchy as such could no longer could no longer taken for granted. More recently, in March 2013, during a demonstration in Amman, "harsh slogans were chanted against the Jordanian regime, blasting its reform measures as 'a mere theatrical play,' and warned against repercussions of lack of real reform changes demanded by the people."[81] While the possibility of "regime collapse" is highly unlikely, talk of a so-called "Plan B"—referring to the possibility that Abdullah might be replaced by his brother, Hamza'—was increasingly being aired openly.

Free-wheeling investors and the monarchy were not the only ones under fire. Protesters also condemned the involvement of donors such as USAID in the neoliberal project, rallying in front of the US embassy to decry "Capitalism, global neoliberalism, privatization, and the role of the private sector."[82] As Khalid Kalaldeh notes: "By 2004, there were 24 'independent' agencies supported by USAID. By now, they support another 64 new 'independent' agencies. The loans for those mainly neoliberal governance agencies are 2 billion JD. So, what will we do when that support falls away?"[83] The question remains, whether these efforts are sustainable, and to what extent the mere promise of development, reform, and local participation will contain future protest. The debts of Jordan are rising. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) promised a grant of 5 billion US dollar, but with unclear preconditions.[84] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided a 2 billion US dollar loan, but this was accompanied by austerity conditions. Meanwhile, other USAID loans providing guarantees on Jordanian government bonds for the amount of 1.250 billion US dollar for a period of up to 7 years[85] cannot sufficiently fill up the treasury to address the needs and demands of Jordanians. Also, the interference of these foreign agencies contributes to the all-round dissatisfaction and anger. As we write, petitions are circulating, road blocks are being erected by tribes, calling for a return to "traditional" collective land rights,[86] informal unions are emerging to demand social rights, and youth movement coalitions are claiming not only political rights and "citizenship," but also demanding the nationalization of resources and key industries. Smaller demonstrations continue to surface weekly throughout the country, and—while still dispersed—there is increasing convergence around demands for '"ystemic change."

CONCLUSION

While protest in Jordan has not been revolutionary, the Hashemite Kingdom has undoubtably witnessed a rebirth of the political. In order to understand this rebirth—and to recognize the stakes that are involved in protesters efforts to reassemble the political—the Jordanian protest movement must be situated in a landscape of government and uneven development that has emerged over 25 years of neoliberal reform.

Jordan does not present us with a clear-cut case of protestors confronting a regime. It is not about state power verus people power. Rather, it offers a story about how people struggle (some, by necessity, more than others) to craft and reassemble the relations of place and meaning from which both these modalities of power (and others) emerge, and within which they are deployed. Neoliberalism provides a framework of legibility within which claims about power and meaning might be asserted. It is therefore not simply about the introduction of new practices, but about reinventing the old, inscribing them into new frameworks of calculation, and imbuing them with new meaning (just think about how notions like resilience, empowerment, and community have become buzzwords that naturalize neoliberal agencies and effects). One needs to examine not only neoliberal claims and assumptions, but also actual modalities of neoliberal practice, and the ways in which that practice relates to, and draws power from, practices that do not appear at first glance to have anything at all to do with neoliberalism. And one must start not from abstract claims, but from an awareness of how these practices have impacted upon people's lived experience, and of the ways in which that experience informs perceptions of political and socioeconomic possibility.

In a world where power is diffused through an astonishingly variegated array of sites and agencies, where the local sources of power are difficult to distinguish from the distant, and where the question of "who is really governing" has no clear answer, transformation cannot merely be a matter of attacking a regime or laying claim to a state apparatus.[87] The neoliberal situation thus problematizes efforts at transformational protest. At the same time, however, this might present protestors with a political situation that is as open as it has ever been. People protest not to express a critique, but to find one. It is in the course of protest that the whereabouts of power are revealed and (potentially) held to account. As such, the task of protest is not simply to occupy space, but rearticulate it; and it is not only to inscribe itself into the place of power (and into the world), but to fundamentally remake that place

(and the world). Neoliberalism's stunning success in this regard should suggest that such a constitutive project is not a romantic pipedream: it has been done, and can be done again.

*The authors contributed equally (albeit differently) to making of this chapter. They would like to say a special thanks to Sami Zemni for his helpful feedback on earlier drafts of the chapter, and for his tremendous support during the course of the research that went in to it.

NOTES

* Both authors of this chapters have equally contributed to this chapter and the order of names is immaterial.

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2. F. Adely, "The Emergence of a New Labor Movement in Jordan." *Middle East Report*, 2012, 42. Accessed November 04, 2013, at: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer264/emergence-new-labormovement-jordan.
3. C. Parker, "The Arab Regime as a Liberal Imaginary," 2013. Unpublished Paper.
4. See D. Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005). In this regard, our approach is broadly consistent with assemblage perspectives in critical geography and anthropology. See, for example: I. Farías and T. Bender (eds.), *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies* (London: Routledge, 2009); D. Featherstone, "Towards the Relational Construction of Militant Particularisms: Or Why the Geographies of Past Struggles Matter for Resistance to Neoliberal Globalisation," *Antipode* 37, no. 2 (2005): 250–71; J. Allen, "Powerful Assemblages?" *Area* 43, no. 2 (2011): 154–57.
5. C. Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses and Minarets of Capitalism: Amman as Neoliberal Assemblage," *Political Geography* 28, no. 2 (2009): 110–20.
6. Ibid.
7. The Jordan Gate project consists of two 40-plus story towers with a low-rise shopping complex attached. It is located in a residential area adjacent to one of Amman's busier traffic roundabouts—the "Sixth Circle"—which divides traffic entering West Amman via the main North-South highway in the kingdom, including traffic from the airport.
8. According to Ammar Khammash—who served on the Amman Commission (AC), an "independent" commission originally established under the patronage of Queen Rania oversees interventions in the city and ensures best practices—Hadid also worked against the recommendations of the AC, thereby attracting the disfavor of the queen.
9. This paragraph is adapted from Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses," 116–20. Today, the Jordan Gate's towers remain unfinished and seemingly abandoned. The main investor was hit hard by the financial crisis, and ran out of funds to complete the project.
10. Email correspondence with Gerry Post (AI), May 2012, Debruyne.
11. Interview withTammam Mango (ex-AI), April 2012, Debruyne.
12. Email correspondence with Gerry Post (AI), May 2012, Debruyne.
13. Interviews with Bashar Hadadeen (GAM), RimaOdeh (GAM), and Sandra Hiari (ex-Ai), April 2012, Debruyne.
14. Interview with Sandra Hiari (Ex-AI), April 2012, Debruyne.
15. Interview RawanAtour (ex-Ai), April 2012, Debruyne.

16. M. Frey, "Downtown Traders Close Down Shops, Hold Sit-in," *Jordan Times*, March 9, 2011.
17. Interviews with residents of Qaisiyya, April 2011, Debruyne.
18. Interview with Tammam Mango, April 2012, Debruyne.
19. Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses," 110–20.
20. For a detailed description, See also P. Debruyne, *Spatial Rearticulations of Statehood: Jordan's Geographies of Power under Globalization*. PhD. Defended in December 2013. Ghent University, 2013, chapters 4 and 6. See also Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses," 110–20; D. Summer, "Neoliberalizing the City: The Circulation of City Builders and Urban Images in Beirut and Amman. Unpublished Master Thesis, American University of Beirut, 2005; R. Daher, "Neoliberal Urban Transformations in the Arab City: Meta-narratives, Urban Disparities and the Emergence of Consumerist Utopias and Geographies of Inequalities in Amman," *ENVIRONNEMENT URBAIN/URBAN ENVIRONMENT* 7 (2013): 99–115.
21. Interviews with Mohammed Kalaldeh and Khaled Kalaldeh. Amman, April 2013, Debruyne.
22. K. Bogaert, "The Revolt of Small Towns: The Meaning of Morocco's History and Geography of Social Protests," *Review of African Political Economy* (2013): Under review.
23. Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses," 110–120.
24. N. Tarawnah, "Army: Making Jordan's Mass Employer Pay," February 7, 2012. Accessed at: http://mideastposts.com/middle-east-business/middle-east-economics-analysis/making-jordans-mass-employer-the-army-pay/, on November 4, 2013; and Tarawnah, "Jordan: One of the Most Militarized Nations on Earth," February 6, 2012. Accessed at: http://www.black-iris.com/2012/02/06/jordan-one-of-the-most-militarized-nations-on-earth/#comment-152143, on November 4, 2013.
25. Interviews (anonymous), April 2012, Debruyne. For other numbers on military expenditure: Jordan—Military expenditure. Military expenditure (current LCU). Accessed at: http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/jordan/military-expenditure, on November 4, 2013; and Bonn International Center for Conversion, Annual Report 2012. Accessed at: http://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/annual-report-2012-335/, on November 4, 2013.
26. Interview with Khalid Kalaldeh, April 2012, Debruyne.
27. J. Amara, "Military Industrialization and Economic Development: Jordan's Defense Industry," *Review of Financial Economics* 17 (2008): 130–45.
28. Marshall, S., (2013). Jordan's Military-Industrial Complex and the Middle East's New Model Army, Middle East Report (*Merip)*, Retrieved 04/11/2013 from: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer267/jordans-military-industrial-complex-middle-easts-new-model-army
29. See also: "The Business of War." Accessed at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL_3Qg-SADY, on November 4, 2013.
30. Moayad Samman, Chairman of KADDB and Managing Director of MAWARED, recounts the progress of KADDB: "We only started ten years ago, and the first five years were building infrastructure and turnover was almost nil. Now we're talking about a turnover of over 100 million, and we expect in the coming two years to reach up to 300–400 million US dollars, with two more companies coming on board. We are, for example, considered number one or two when it comes to exporting armored Land Cruisers in the world." Accessed at "macropolis website": http://www.marcopolis.net/Jordan-industry-sector.htm, on November 4, 2013.
31. For the promises about where the money (profits) of the privatization of the army through real estate development was going to go. Accessed at: http://www.allofjo.net/

index.php?page=articleand id=13393 For the wage raises and promises unfulfilled, see http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/10b6c10a-bc02-4ae6-8940-7ea92671a5b0 and http://news-jo.com/news/69-home/3472 ----------25-40-.html and http://www.albosala.com/?id=111and artical=45117.

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33. For a discussion of independence and financial profits. Accessed at: http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=6and article=170012and issueno=8929.
34. Accessed at: http://www.allofjo.net/index.php?page=articleand id=8119; Interviews with Lamia Raei, April 2012 and October 2013, Debruyne.
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39. Interview with Lamia Raei, April 2012, Debruyne.
40. Govt Plans to Amend Retirement Law after Military Retirees Protest, Ammonnews, November 10, 2012. Accessed at: http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=18921#.Uixr3z95cy0, on November 4, 2013.
41. As Dr. Hisham Ghassib stated: "The neoliberalization of the Army led to the loss of their last safe haven of the primitive Welfare State." Interview with Dr. Hisham Ghassib, April 2012, Debruyne.
42. Interviews with Hisham Ghassib, April 2012 and LamiaRaei, April 2012, Debruyne.
43. Interview with Hisham Ghassib, April 2012; interview with Lamis Andoni, April 2012, Debruyne.
44. Interview with Ahmad Awad (director of the Phoenix Center Amman), April 2012, Debruyne; also Ahmad Awad and Khaled Kalaldeh tried to form a new social-democratic party with the connections they had, respectively to the "1952 constitution movement" and to Tafileh and the Social left Forum.
45. The redesign of the Aqaba Port Development was doneby ICON Architects (Jon Lane). See minutes of a meeting in the Intercontinental Hotel in Aqaba, Wednesday, March 1, 2006, organized by Engineer Ghassan Ghannem (in possession of author).
46. Interviews with Khaled Kalaldeh, Mohammed Kalaldeh, and Murad Kalaldeh, April 2010; Interview with Tariq Tell, Debruyne, April 2010. Interview with Khaled Abu Ayshe, Head Planner ASEZA/Masterplan Team, April 2012, Debruyne. See also the op-ed by Murad Kalaldeh, on September 4, 2013. Accessed at: http://www.sawaleif.com/details.aspx?detailsId=79338.
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53. Informal talks during the March 24th protests at Duwwar al-Dakhilliyyeh.
54. Interview with Ahmad Awad (Director Phenix Center), April 2012, Debruyne
55. Interview with Bashar al-Khatib (member of the 1952 constitutiongroup), April 2012; Interview by Pascal Debruyne
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57. Ibid.
58. Debruyne was present at the Professional Associations Head Quarters in Schmeisani, March 25, 2011.
59. See D. Harvey and R. Williams, "Militant Particularism and Global Ambition: The Conceptual Politics of Place, Space, and Environment in the Work of Raymond Williams," *Social Text* (1995): 69–98. Williams appears to suggest that many if not *all* forms of political engagement have their grounding in some form of militant particularlism.…But the difficulty is: 'That because it had begun as local and affirmative, assuming an unproblematic extension from its own local and community experience to a much more general movement, it was always insufficiently aware of the quite systematic obstacles which stood in the way'" (R. Williams, *Resources of Hope* [London: Verso 1989], 115).
60. Interviews with Dr. Hisham Ghassib, Lamis Andoni, Ahmad Awad (Phoenix Center), LamiaRaei, and Bashar Al Khatib, April 2012, Debruyne.
61. International Crisis Group *Popular Protests.*
62. See: T. Tell, "A Rejoinder to the Response of Lama Abu Odeh: On Jordan, the Hashemite Regime, and the Current Mobilizations," *Jaddaliyya*, September 17, 2012. Accessed at: http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/7385/a-rejoinder-to-the-response-of-lama-abu-odeh_on-jo, on November 4, 2013.
63. Interview with HishamGhassib, April 2012, Debruyne
64. Observation during meeting at the offices of the Social Left Movement, Debruyne.
65. Group discussion with leaders of the Hirak in Tafileh, April 2013, Parker (with students).
66. "The Vision of Jordan's National Front for Reform," *Middle East Monitor*, May 25, 2011. Accessed at:: http://www.middleEastmonitor.com/articles/middle-East/2396-the-vision-of-jordans-national-front-for-reform#sthash.7AFikYUh.dpuf, on November 4, 2013.

67. Andoni adds: "If you hear Nahed's [Nahed Hattar, a left-Jordanian nationalist journalist]discourse about the neoliberal Palestinians, and the ways in which, for example Bassem Awadallah b*ecame* the embodiment of neoliberal reform, you can only wonder if Awadallah was really the Palestinian Godfather of neoliberalism. During the '80s and '90s it was also businessmen against each other. It was in these internal bourgeois struggles that Awadallah was taken down. Afterwards, legitimations were made about him being a neoliberal, but those arguments were ex post."
68. Interview with Khalid Kalaldeh, April 2012, Debruyne.
69. Interview with LamisAndoni, April 2012, Debruyne.
70. H. Bustani, "Jordan Protests: Shock Absorbed, the Regime Will Not Fall," *Al Akhbar*, December 6, 2012. Accessed at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/jordan-protests-shock-absorbed-regime-will-not-fall, on November 4, 2013.
71. For example, T. Dodge, *The Middle East after the Arab Spring*, LSE report, 2012, 64–68. Accessed November 4, 2013, at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR011/FINAL_LSE_IDEAS__ConclusionsTheMiddleEastAfterTheArabSpring_Dodge.pdf) writes: "The 'authoritarian upgrading' that Steven Heydemannn identified as a key strategy for regime survival across the Middle East during the 1980s and 1990s placed limited economic reforms at its centre. Using the rhetoric of neoliberalism to ingratiate themselves with the United States and the international community, Middle Eastern dictators sought to jettison the costly developmental promises which had once been key to their legitimation. As the state retreated from the economy, the indigenous bourgeoisie were brought back in; crony capitalists became a crucial, *if junior* member, of the ruling elite."
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PART V

RESISTING NEOLIBERALISM

19

CONTENTIOUS ECONOMICS IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE

Ala'a Tartir

INTRODUCTION

The case of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) constitutes a prime example from which to explore and expand the dynamics of contentious politics and social movement theories, both from a historical and contemporary perspective. As an occupied, fragmented, ethnically cleansed, dispossessed, and resilient nation, Palestinians could be seen as part of a social movement society. By resisting different forms of dominance, military occupations, and repressive authorities for several decades, Palestinians accumulated multiple cycles of contention and engaged in contentious collective actions to give birth to the Palestinian revolution *(Al-Thawra Al-Filstiniya)*. This revolution and its characteristics have changed dramatically over the years, particularly with the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993. At that point, the Palestinian liberation movement declared the beginning of the end for the Palestinian national project.[1] The revolution's institutions transformed gradually into the bureaucracy run by the nascent and nonsovereign governing body, the Palestinian Authority (PA).

These institutions suffered from a profound identity crisis, impacting their functionality. But despite this, their mere existence induced changes to how the colonization of Palestinian land is understood and how social and resistance movements are constructed. The PA's pragmatic political position, the absence of a vision for a self-reliant economy, and the prioritization of the Israeli security demands resulted in a number of outcomes: a gradual erosion of the PA's legitimacy, a complete dependency on international aid, a forced dependency on the Israeli economy, and an authoritarian trend in the PA's character and in the operations of its security forces. Therefore, the authority's institutions became a burden on the Palestinian people and added

another layer of repression. The Palestinian people were further alienated and marginalized from the national decision-making process while a handful élite, largely undemocratic and illegitimate, claimed the representation. A combination of these factors formed a base for cycles of contention over the last two decades.

The process of alienation and marginalization was entrenched in the era of Fayyadism.[2] Fayyadism, in reference to the former Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad, is the term used to describe the style of governance and state building in the West Bank from 2007 until the present time. Fayyadism is a strategy for state building through good governance and an outcome for the status of aid dependency, the weak PA, and the limited political options that Palestinians have. Fayyadism is homegrown, even though it is an externally funded and sponsored paradigm, one which has been deeply influenced by donors' prescriptions and funds.[3] It is aimed at establishing a Weberian monopoly of violence in the security sphere and a post–Washington Consensus neoliberal agenda in the economic sphere. Both are seen as fundamental pillars for the Palestinian state, despite the existence of the Israeli occupation and the intra-Palestinian fragmentation.

The PA, Israel, and the international community have decided that the best and only route for state building is through the four pillars of security sector reform and enforcement of the rule of law; building accountable PA institutions; provision of effective public service delivery; and achievement of private sector–led economic growth in an open and free market economy.[4] In the words of Fayyad himself, Fayyadism is about "focusing on establishing solid institutions, guided by the principles of good governance, respect for human rights, rule of law, and the efficient and effective delivery of public services."[5] Some celebrate Fayyad's reforms and argue that the improved performance of the PA has contributed to peace building and enhancing Palestinians' lives,[6] while others argue that it has sustained the occupation, reengineered parts of the Palestinian society, created a new élite and revised the national goals.[7]

During this Fayyadist era, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, Palestinians have hardly been able to mobilize and act collectively en masse, and in instances where they have been able to do so, their collective actions were unsustainable.[8] This is largely attributed to the authoritarian transformation of the PA's security forces, but is also due to a set of reasons, including the Israeli occupation, the political divide between Gaza and West

Bank, the lack of legitimate representative leadership, the consequences of the neoliberal economic agenda, and the failure of international aid. However, as argued by Adam Hanieh, despite the relative success of the neoliberal Fayyadist project in demobilizing social movements,

> it would be wrong to assume its permanent ability to pacify the Palestinian population. In many ways, these neoliberal structures act to undermine their own conditions of existence. Most notably, they have clarified the role of the PA to a degree not previously witnessed in the West Bank.[9]

The emergence of the youth movement in 2011 is just a case in point that directly confronted the policies of the PA and the dire economic conditions. The exposure of the real roles of the authorities through the collective actions of the opponents is in keeping with the theories of contentious politics.

Multiple common political and economic challenges exist between Palestine and the Arab world. These challenges came to be correlated or causally linked following the 2011 Arab uprisings,[10] but Palestinians remained largely silent and failed to gather in masses against the regime, the layers of oppression and repression, or the neoliberal economic policies. Inspired by the theoretical underpinnings of contentious politics presented next, this chapter therefore argues that in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab uprisings, Palestinian political and/or economic protests constituted cycles of contention, but failed to effectively transform into a social movement. In particular, protests against the economic policies of the PA, the international aid industry, and the economic framework of the Oslo Accords all constitute a form of contentious collective action where different actors join forces to confront and challenge the authorities and the élite around their claims to represent. These contentious collective actions were triggered by political opportunities and constraints or threats that urged those actors lacking in resources to act. However, the actions were not "backed by well-structured social networks [nor] galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols,"[11] and therefore did not allow this form of contention to lead to a sustained interaction with the opponents. In other words, it did not develop into a social movement for political and economic rights.

Consequently, in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab uprisings, the protests against the repressing authorities in the OPT indicated that a movement was in the process of formation; however these protests failed to draw on the social

networks, common purposes, or cultural frameworks,and failed to build solidarity through connective structures and collective identities to sustain the mounting collective challenges and actions. According to the theoretical framework of contentious politics developed by Sidney Tarrow, the protests failed to transform into "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities."[12]

At the theoretical level, this chapter aims to use the case of Palestine to expand the dynamics of the contentious politics theories through engaging with the notion of contentious economics. At the empirical level, this chapter aims to discuss the implications of the neoliberal paradigm during the Fayyadism era and problematize them as root causes for contention. Additionally, this chapter will provide a critique for the international aid industry in the OPT, which forms a source of contention, through engaging with scholarly literature and also through activism at the street level. Finally, this chapter will propose the notion of resistance economy as a model that is based on the concepts of contentious politics and the exercise of the contentious collective actions. It is a model that challenges the repressive authorities and faces the multiple layers of oppression in order to reverse the cycles of de-development and fulfill economic rights in an ultimate expression of self-determination. It is argued here that the marriage of the concepts of contentious politics theories with the empirical dimensions of the resistance economy model constitutes the original contribution of this chapter to scholarly work. This is operationalized through the initial effort, presented here, to engage with the concept of contentious economics.

CONCEPTUALIZING CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

Contentious politics can be defined as "what happens when collective actors join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents around their claims or the claims of those they claim to represent."[13] It is triggered by "changing political opportunities and constraints [which] create incentives to take action for actors who lack resources on their own."[14] Contentious politics occurs "when threats are experienced and opportunities are perceived, when the existence of available allies is demonstrated, and when the vulnerability of opponents is exposed."[15] Repressed people resist and contend through locally built repertoires of contention, which are expanded through innovation and

technologies of networking. Contentious politics, based on these repertoires of contention, lead to sustained interaction with opponents and to social movements when they are "backed by well-structured social networks and galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols."[16]

According to the theories of contentious politics, the basis of social movements, protests, and uprisings/intifadas is contentious collective action. Collective action can be "brief or sustained, institutionalized or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic";[17] however it becomes contentious when "it is used by people who lack regular access to representative institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities."[18] In particular, contentious forms of collective action "bring ordinary people into confrontation with opponents, elites, or authorities."[19] These contentious collective actions could be upgraded to the level of a social movement if they involve mounting collective challenges; drawing on social networks, common purposes, and cultural frameworks; and building solidarity through connective structures and collective identities to sustain collective action.[20]

Therefore, as argued by Sidney Tarrow, "rather than defining social movements as expressions of extremism, violence, and deprivation, they are better defined as collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities."[21] With the change in the political opportunities and constraints or threats, people engage in contentious politics by

> strategically employing a repertoire of collective action, creating new opportunities, which are used by others in widening cycles of contention. When their struggles revolve around broad cleavages in society; when they bring people together around inherited cultural symbols; and when they can build on—or construct—dense social networks and connective structures, these episodes of contention result in sustained interactions with opponents in social movements.[22]

This highlights that contentious politics are "culturally inscribed and socially communicated."[23] It also reflects the centrality of the notion of the repertoire of contention and social movements as repertoires of knowledge of certain routines in a nation's history and traditions.

Other than the way social movements are embedded in the theories of contentious politics, the concept of cycles of contention is another crucial

element and building block. Beinin and Vairel credit Tarrow for inventing this term and define it as "a structured process by which social movements formed, mobilized, and declined due to political opportunities, innovations in forms of contention, successful articulation of collective action frames, coexistence of organized and unorganized activities, and increased interaction between challengers and constituted authority."[24]

However, these concepts of contention are also disputed theoretically and empirically. Most recently by the edited volume *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa* edited by Joel Beinin and Frédéric Vairel. They argue that Tilly's notion of repertories of collective action best links the logics of actions and the logics of context, and they argue that the concept of repertoire "also assumes a universe of shared meaning, prior to mobilization."[25] It includes "routines that are learned, shared and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice."[26] The repertoire is also a "'tool kit' of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems."[27] But perhaps most importantly, Beinin and Vairel argue that "analysing repertories allows us to examine anticipations, perceptions, and self-definitions of contentious actors and how they take up a position in the political field." Finally the notion of repertories leads to a dynamic perspective on collective action and "facilities adopting a relational perspective on contentious politics. It is all the more important in authoritarian situations where activists feel more heavily the authorities' arbitrary behaviour and violence."[28] This is the case in Palestine, particularly in the era of Fayyadism, with the entrenchment of authoritarian transformations in the character, practices, and policies of the Palestinian Authority.[29]

In these authoritarian contexts, it is crucial to look at the "politics under the threshold" as argued by Steven Heydemann.[30] This implies a better understanding of the configurations and transformations of the authoritarian regime and how collective action functions; where "contention faces huge constraints, the collective dimension of protest is far from given, and the security apparatus are omnipresent."[31] This conceptual expansion and critique confirms that "repertoires of contention, social networks, and cultural frames lower the costs of bringing people into collective action, induce confidence that they are not alone, and give broader meaning to their claims."[32]

Beinin and Vairel and the contributing authors to the edited volume mentioned earlier provide a constructive critique to the ideas of and

conceptualization offered by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly. They expand these authors' ideas using empirical evidence from the Middle East in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings. They righty argue that Tarrow,[33] McAdam, and Tilly's revised conceptual model is "far better suited [for] studying social and political mobilizations and contestations in the Middle East and North Africa than classical SMT and PPM [Political Process Model]."[34] Their justification for this overarching conclusion is based on a number of reasons: (1) most of the social movements in the Middle East operate in the interstices of persisting authoritarianism that subjects them to varying degrees of coercion and offers them few openings for mobilization; (2) many of social movements have limited resources and are weak formal organizations; and (3) social movements typically rely on informal networks and innovative repertories to mobilize. These remarks resonate in the case of Palestine, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. This chapter argues that the Palestinian case adds a further dimension to the dynamics of contentious politics theories through the additional particularity and complexity of colonial conditions and the multiple layers of oppression and repression that Palestinians have been, and continue to be, exposed to. Additionally, the case of Palestine emphasizes the importance of a perceived collective threat, rather than an "opportunity," as the impetus for action.[35]

The case of Palestine is positioned within this broader Middle Eastern context and its interaction with contentious politics theories. As Adam Hanieh argued, the question of Palestine "cannot be reduced to a purely 'humanitarian' issue or simply an issue of national liberation; it is an essential component of the broader struggle against the uneven development and control of wealth across the Middle East."[36] The utilization of the classical concepts of the Social Movements Theory (SMT) in the case of Palestine-Israel, can be found in the work of Amal Jamal,[37] Eitan Alimi,[38] Elisabeth Marteu,[39] Julie Norman,[40] and Wendy Pearlman;[41] however their major shortcoming as cited in Beinin and Vairel is their failure to engage critically and take a step back from the classical concepts of the SMT. In addition, the social movements and the movements for self-determination are not homogenous, and their subjugation to a colonial actor adds a further layer of complicity that is still not absorbed sufficiently by the classical dynamics of the SMT.

This chapter argues that the concepts, dynamics, processes, and tools of contentious politics are also applicable to the economic domain. Political protests have their own political economy dynamics, and economic reasons

are often cited for the emergence of political contention. The intrinsic relationship between politics and economics is particularly explicit in the trajectory of the Arab uprisings. Protests based on economic justification also are a contentious form of collective action that principally clashes with the authorities, the elite, and their economic policies, which have political underpinnings and implications that have a profound effect on the everyday lives of people. Changes in the trajectories of repression, rather than opportunities, could trigger the contention. The contentious collective actions that make up a form of resistance are not merely protests against, for instance, privatization policies, tax laws, inflation, or high unemployment. Rather they have their own political bases that challenge, among other issues, the effectiveness of the ruling authorities, and the policy prescriptions proposed or dictated in the majority of the cases by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) through their "reform agendas." The economic neoliberal packages adopted by the Arab governments prior to the Arab uprisings had been one of the major reasons for the emergence of the uprisings themselves with their political, economic, and social demands. Therefore, the centrality of the political economy dimension in the theories of contentious politics sheds light on another form of contention in the economic domain, which I refer to in this chapter as contentious economics.

This chapter uses the case of Palestine, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, to operationalize and expand the notion of contentious economics as an integral but distinctive feature in the theories of contentious politics. It uses existing empirical evidence to contribute to the expansion of the theoretical debates. Therefore, this chapter defines the notion of contentious economics through the concept of resistance and a steadfast economy (resistant and steadfast economy)[42]—an alternative model that is emerging as an output of the cycles of contentions and contentious collective actions.[43] This model, as discussed later in the chapter, is based on confronting neoliberalism as a panacea for solving economic deterioration and de-development.[44] This model advances the concepts of freedom and dignity as integral parts in exercising self-determination and in fulfilling and acquiring economic rights. Therefore, in essence, this model is based on confronting the multiple authorities of repression, oppression, and authoritarianism. This model and the concept of contentious economics are not exclusive or particular to the case of Palestine. In fact, comparable experiences can be found in other parts of the world, for instance the notions of solidarity and self-reliance in

the economies of Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, and even villages in Spain. Of particular interest are the alternative economic models developed by liberation or social movements that demand for political rights. The dynamics and processes of contentious economics are particularly vivid in such settings.

The application of the theories of contentious politics to the Palestinian case in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings can be depicted in figure 19.1 based on the theoretical elaboration developed by Sidney Tarrow. Figure 19.1 visualizes the theoretical framework of this chapter. On the one hand, Palestinian society can be seen as a "social movement society" in a permanent state of confrontation with the authorities and occupying forces lasting for at least the last century. On the other hand, the Palestinian context is characterized by the existence of multiple cycles of contention over the decades. Either way, contentious collective actions were always present in the Palestinian case and were played out in different ways and approaches to express the contentious feature of these collective actions. These cycles of contention and contentious collective actions, however, have to be put into the historical context of the legacy of the Palestinian liberation movement, the ongoing Israeli military occupation, and the colonization of Palestinian land.

As indicated earlier, the accumulation of contentious collective actions and the continuation of cycles of contention lead to the emergence of social

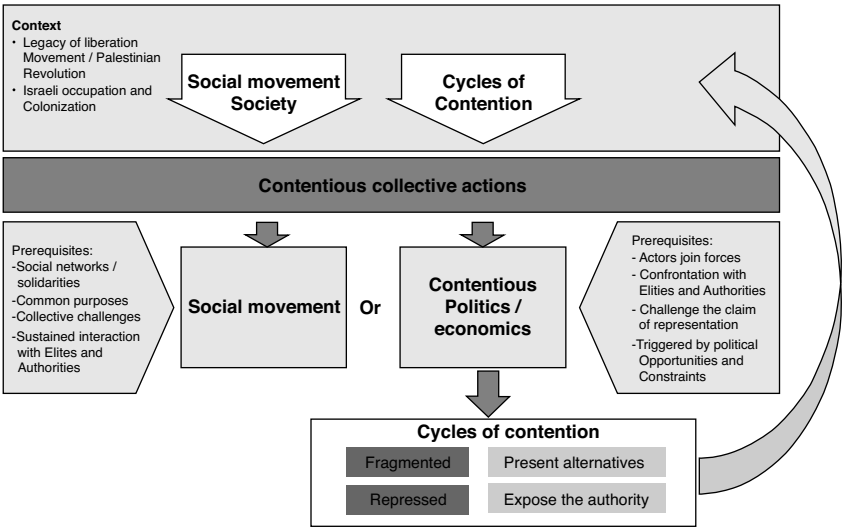

Figure 19.1 Application of the theories of contentious politics.

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the theoretical foundation of Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 2012.

movements or a state where elements of contentious politics are expressed. The latter took place in Palestine in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, when contention in the economic domain was featured. This provides the reasoning for the use of the contentious economics concept. However, the expressions of contention were either repressed or fragmented in Palestine's case and therefore failed to emerge as a social movement, as they did in other parts of the Arab world. Reasons for the failure to create a social movement include a repression by the authoritarian tendencies of the PA and the continuous oppression by Israel. Alternatively, they were fragmented as a result of internal Palestinian politics, lack of leadership, the absence of a unifying strategy, or a bleak horizon for the future, among others. Either way, cycles of contention were the output and result of the fragmentation and repression trajectories and dynamics. This does not mean an absolute negativity or a failure of the opposition front. In fact, and in line with the theoretical underpinnings, the cycles of contention were successful in exposing the vulnerabilities, fragilities, and failures of the authorities and in clashing with them at the intellectual, policy, and strategy levels, as well as at the street level—a clash that illustrated the changing political opportunities and threats. The local-level initiatives on the ground, coupled with the intellectual efforts to develop the notion of a resistance economy, as opposed to neoliberalism, the failed aid industry, and the rejection of the economic policies of the PA are ultimate expressions of contentious economics.

Figure 19.1 depicts the application of the theories of contentious politics to the Palestinian case in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings based on the theoretical elaboration developed by Sidney Tarrow.

EXPLAINING THE ROOTS OF CONTENTIOUS ECONOMICS: NEOLIBERALISM WITH A PALESTINIAN FLAVOR

The signing of the Oslo Peace Accords and the establishment of the PA two decades ago gave rise to the roots of economic neoliberalism as a defining feature of the Palestinian economy and development process. Therefore, the roots of contentious economics in the OPT are political. The Oslo economic framework implied that the PA had to adopt neoliberalism as its leading and defining ideology in both the political and economic spheres.[45] Article 21 of the Palestinian Basic Law specifies that "the economic system in Palestine shall be based on the principles of a free market economy."[46] This secures the leading role of the private sector and the capitalist élite through offering them

monopolies and political influence.[47] In addition, the international community was assured that such an adoption was inherent in the PA's structure and in its state of dependency on aid.

The philosophical rationale of the Oslo economic framework was to improve Palestinians' standard of living, encourage them to participate in the peace process, and to sustain peace by cashing in on peace dividends. The mantra for this model was a linear equation: invest more money to make Palestinians feel better economically to make it easier for them to compromise politically.[48] This notion of peace dividends is a derivative of the economic peace framework that seeks economic solutions for political problems and for normalcy between the colonizers and the colonized through joint ventures, cooperation, and collaboration.[49]

By adopting such a model, the PA failed to play a crucial developmental role as a state-like body and operated within a framework characterized by a complex network of corruption, nepotism, and a personalized style of governance that adopted a rent and rent-seeking economic model.[50] This distorted neoliberal economic model suppressed the indigenous calls that any form of economic thinking must acknowledge that the dynamics of the free market are dictated by the dynamics of the real power. By ignoring this demand, the PA helped, directly and indirectly, in achieving one of the aims of the colonial power through realizing individual richness for few and national impoverishment for all.

The economic neoliberal agendas, as a major root for contention, were further entrenched during the Fayyadism era and gained momentum due to the political transformations in the aftermath of the intra-Palestinian divide between West Bank and Gaza. Under Fayyad's rule, the PA used the neoliberal ideology explicitly for packaging its state-building project and seeking the approval of the international community and a broad segment of Palestinian society.[51] Fayyad was the right person to implement the renewed rules of the game (political conditionality) as dictated by the international community and Israel. The Palestinian economic vision according to Fayyad's plan

> …is to have a diversified and thriving free market economy led by a pioneering private sector that is in harmony with the Arab world, is open to regional and global markets, and that provides the economic basis for a free, democratic and equitable society.[52]

In addition, due to the condition of Israeli settler colonialism, Palestinian neoliberalism has its own flavor. Palestinians do not have basic pillars to implement the one-size-fit-all post–Washington Consensus neoliberal policies since they lack sovereignty, control over borders, national currency, independent trade policy, central bank, protection of property rights or freedom of movement for labor or goods.[53]

Neoliberalism with its Palestinian flavour meant the superiority of the technocratic model over the national one, the accomplishment of the economic peace pillars through the private security led growth, the establishment of bureaucratic institutions for a liberation movement as a prerequisite for independence, the acceptance of normalcy of life under occupation, and the shift toward authoritarianism and securitized-development. In other words, and as was argued by Sobhi Samour,

> The significance of the PA's neoliberalism—be it as an economic doctrine, discursive instrument, class project, or form of social engineering—consists not so much in its failure to build a state and its inability to deliver sustainable economic growth, or in the biting austerity measures that it has imposed and the rising number of indebted households. None of this is an aberration of neoliberalism. Its significance, rather, lies in its political implication in a context of an objective reality that remains an anti-colonial struggle…the outcome of the PA's neoliberalism is to erode further the basis of collective political power, the investment in and reliance on community resources, and the sense of solidarity among a people fighting for their freedom.[54]

The technocratic government model, as opposed to the national one, became the synonym for peace-loving and moderate governments that denounce "terror" and view the world as a small village. They rely on Western governments and the US administration to speak their language, promote the trappings of democracy, and master the jargon of transparency and accountability. These technocratic governments were the panacea for the PA's reform, and they enjoyed the support of Israel as credible partners for peace. All this resulted in a further widening of the legitimacy gap between the Palestinian society and the ruling authority. Eroding legitimacy is a source of contention and a justification for clashing with the élite. Adam Hanieh argues that the term "technocrat" was used to convoy a sense of neutrality, "describing someone allegedly disinterested in 'politics' and therefore a supposedly more

responsible leader."[55] By extension, this meant that the development process had to be an apolitical one, despite Israeli settler-colonialism, which meant that Israeli settler-colonialism was "portrayed as merely a set of administrative regulations that may (or may not) 'hinder' Palestinian development."[56] Therefore, the Israeli military occupation was framed "as a partner of Palestinian development rather than its antithesis."[57]

The prevalence of market dynamics was translated into benefits for the powerful actors, Palestinian capitalists, PA élite, and Israeli firms. These actors engaged in joint businesses either voluntarily or compulsorily as required by the economic peace framework. The rationale was that the economic benefits would trickle down from the stronger economy in Israel to the weaker economy in Palestine; however, the result was a subaltern Palestinian economy forcefully contained by the Israeli one. Therefore, as a consequence of the way the PA and its economic élite intersected and gained their power from the occupation and the Oslo Accords structures, a new élite has emerged. This chapter refers to this new elite as "the new entrepreneurs." With the rapid accumulation of wealth, they transformed into the new rich category as a direct consequence of benefiting from the status quo. The failure of neoliberalism to address the inequality gap meant the rise of a new category in the Palestinian society, referred to as "the new poor." The profits calculus of economic viability, which meant the commodification of resources or services such as agriculture and education, that led the private sector in their operations was in many cases at the expense of the Palestinian national project. Hence, this had implications on the cycles of contention and the clashes with a powerful economic élite covered by the political leadership and peacebuilding arrangements.

In addition to Palestine's complete dependency on international aid, the economic growth achieved during the Fayyadism era was fueled by easier access to credit facilities. The PA, with the support of the donor community, launched credit programs that came to be known locally as the "Americanization of the Palestinian society." In 2010, the overall consumption in the West Bank and Gaza totalled US$7.3 billion, while GDP was merely US$5.7 billon. This meant that consumption as a percentage of GDP was 128 percent, making it one of the highest ratios in the world. Additionally, since 2006 the lending rate increased by 13 percent annually, while the growth in GDP per capita never exceeded 2 percent. Therefore, the ratio of the bank loans to deposits increased from 28 percent in 2008 to 45 percent in 2011. According

to the May 2013 data from Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA), loans to the agriculture sector did not exceed US$10 million, while credit cards loans were around US$45 million, consumption loans totalled US$99 million, and car loans recorded US$239 million.[58]

From 2008 to 2011, the amount of credit extended for real estate, automobile purchases, and credit cards increased by a remarkable 245 percent.[59] Hanieh rightly warns that "these forms of individual consumer and household debt had a deep impact on how people viewed their capacities for social struggle and their relation to society. Increasingly caught in the web of financial relationships, individuals are taught to satisfy needs through the market—usually through borrowing money—rather than through collective struggle for social rights."[60] Therefore, "much of the population became more concerned with 'stability' and the ability to pay off debt rather than the possibility of popular resistance."[61] This implication of neoliberalism accepts the normalcy of life under the military occupation and has a major impact on the social structures, not only in terms of class, but also in terms of enforcing the superiority of individualism over collectivism. If social movements require collective actions, then such neoliberal measures undermine a major pillar for mobility and for sustainable cycles of contention.

Finally, a more stultifying Palestinian authoritarianism was coupled with the execution of economic neoliberalism. Authoritarianism was manifested at the planning and economic thinking level, as well as in its pure (in)security-focused meaning. PA officials during the Fayyadism era were convinced that there was only one right way for economic planning, the one prescribed by the international financial institutions. This resulted in various clashes with the authorities and fueled protests in the West Bank, including those related to the income tax law, early retirement law, and water and electricity meters in 2012. In the pure security-focused sense, the whole development industry was securitized, with more than a third of international aid and governmental spending being allocated to the security sector as a pillar for the securitized-development approach. The operations of the Palestinian security forces and security sector reform, which were implemented as part of the aid conditionality and political decisions, resulted in an authoritarian regime that suppressed any form of contentious collective actions, including those in the economic domain. This is particularly the case in the aftermath of the post-2011 Arab uprisings. Nathan Brown argues that under Fayyadism, the maintenance of institutions was done "in an authoritarian context that

robs the results of domestic legitimacy. Hence, the entire program is based not simply on de-emphasizing or postponing democracy and human rights but on actively denying them for the present."[62] This is what distinguished the present PA authoritarianism from Arafat's: being "regularized and softened" and "less venal and probably less capricious. But it is also more stultifying."[63]

To better contextualize this authoritarian transformation, the neoliberal Fayyadism linked Israeli security demands with Palestinian economic growth.[64] This exchange between the security of the colonizer and the economic growth of the colonized meant the economic (and military) dominance of Israel and the entrenchment of Palestinian authoritarianism to fulfill the Israeli security demand.

AIDING OCCUPATION: CRITIQUING THE AID INDUSTRY AS A SOURCE OF CONTENTION

The industry of international aid is a major source of contention, particularly in conflict-affected areas. The OPT is not an exception. But with the existence of the Israeli military occupation, aid was "as much aid to Israel as it was to Palestinians."[65] Despite the US$24 billion aid given to Palestinians over the last two decades, it has not brought peace, development, or security to the Palestinian people, let alone justice. Between 1993 and 2012, international aid disbursements to Palestinians totalled around US$ 24.6 billion. Aid inflows increased from an annual average of US$ 656 million between 1993 and 2003, to over US$1.9 billion since 2004. International aid increased by 17 times overall between 1993 and 2009. To illustrate the intensity of aid dependency, from 2004 onward aid represented between 24 percent and 42 percent of GDP. Per capita aid for the same period averaged around US$530 per year, ranging from a low of US$306 in 2005 to US$761 in 2009.[66]

Yet despite the sheer volume of aid, the socioeconomic indicators show an ultimate failure in Palestine's case. Using the consumption-based definition of poverty, 26.2 percent of the Palestinians lived in poverty in 2009 and 2010: 19 percent in the West Bank and 38 percent in Gaza. By using the income-based definition of poverty, the reality can be understood to be much worse, with 50 percent of Palestinians living in poverty in 2009 and 2010: 38 percent in the West Bank and 70 percent in Gaza.[67] According to the World Food Programme (2011), 50 percent of Palestinian households suffered from food insecurity: 33 percent were food-insecure and 17 percent were vulnerable to food insecurity. Unemployment has remained constant at around 30 percent

since 2009, with 47 percent unemployed in Gaza in 2010 and 20 percent in the West Bank. The unemployment rate for Palestinian youth under 30 is particularly alarming at 43 percent.[68] The income and opportunities inequality gap continues to widen not only between the West Bank and Gaza, but also within the West Bank.[69] Manufacturing and production capacities continue to erode,[70] while the vital agriculture sector remains sorely neglected.[71] The celebrated economic growth of 7.1 percent in 2008, 7.4 percent in 2009, and 9.3 percent in 2010 was a jobless growth driven by aid with an eroded productive base, antipoor, and reflected an economy that was recovering from a low base.[72]

The aid-development dilemma exemplifies outcomes of the de-development process, despite all international aid. Aid administered as a gap-filler and fire-extinguisher solution for persistent crisis[73] served as a major pillar to guarantee the existence of the PA and rescued the Palestinian society from further deterioration of living conditions. However, aid helped to sustain the status quo, subsidize the occupation, and contribute to the de-development process as a result of the diplomatic failures. These failures reflected an inability to understand or acknowledge the de-development process, an unwillingness to address the main problems for such de-development (the Israeli military occupation) and finally the adoption of an irrelevant postconflict conceptual framework.[74]

At the scholarly level, four schools of thought can be identified to better understand the aid-related contention.[75] One group can be termed "instrumentalist." This mainly includes the international financial institutions and many bilateral government donor agencies and argues that the fundamentals of the Oslo economic framework are sound and the model should be maintained but simply needs to be better applied. This group tends to sanitize the Israeli occupation and the settler-colonial nature of the Israeli state. It also lays a disproportionate amount of blame on the PA for the failure of aid to achieve results. A second group, the "critical instrumentalists," does focus on the occupation as the main obstacle to peace and development, and they consider aid and politics to be intrinsically linked. They are not however very critical of the neoliberal normative values that define Palestinian aid. They believe the policy should be reevaluated and retooled, and they share the instrumentalist faith in the ability of policy to bring about positive change.

The third group consists of "critics" of the Oslo aid model. Many in this group assert that the aid model is itself a part of the occupation, because it

is designed in a way that subverts Palestinian development while reinforcing and subsidizing the Israeli occupation, along with long-standing Israeli policies dating back to the 1948 *Nakba* and beyond. For these critics, development is not a policy to be implemented, but domination to be resisted, because in the case of Israel-Palestine, the hidden intent behind development aid is to reinforce the occupation. The "critics" argue that economic integration benefits Israel at the expense of the Palestinian economy and they view policy as a rationalizing technical discourse that conceals a hidden bureaucratic power or dominance, and that this hidden reality is the true political intention of development.[76]

A fourth group, which is not often considered when analyzing the impact of aid, is the "neo-colonialists," who consider aspects of foreign aid to have been a success. Particularly in the West Bank, Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation has largely been mollified and Israel's policy aims have largely been achieved. This perspective is highly influential, especially in the United States, and this can be seen in the approach of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy advocating an approach to aid. This approach provides economic incentives to Palestinians in return for them giving up rights. Also, the Congressional Research Service reports spell out the duty of aid to Palestinians: combating terrorism against Israel; encouraging Palestinian peaceful coexistence with Israel while preparing Palestinians for self-governance; and meeting humanitarian needs to prevent further destabilization.[77] Therefore, when aid to Palestinians is analyzed from a neocolonial perspective, it may not be failing at all.

This chapter argues that in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab uprisings, the debate and contention around the aid industry and donor policies in the OPT, and the PA economic policies, have moved beyond the scholarly and élite circles onto the Palestinian streets. As a result, there have been numerous protests, which, despite being small in size, constitute a form of contentious collective action. They formed cycles of contention and were one of the driving forces behind the resignation of Prime Minister Fayyad in mid-2013.

Targeting the aid industry and donors' policies, multiple protests took place between 2011 and 2013. There were mainly organized by the youth movements that emerged in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. USAID was the major target of the protests, particularly during the 2012 Obama visit to the OPT. "USAID go out," "USAID is entrenching the occupation and hindering our development," "we reject funding that undermines the exercise of

our self-determination" are a sample of the slogans that appeared in a protest against USAID on September 10, 2011, in Ramallah.[78] Posters critical of USAID were designed by youth activists and disseminated over social media, in activist circles, and among the public.[79] USAID was not the only target; the European Union Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS)[80] was targeted for its role in supporting Palestinian authoritarianism and because of the European Union's "hypocritical and duplicitous positions towards the Palestinian people and rights." The youth even warned that they would escalate their actions to include direct confrontation with those who facilitate the work of the occupation and normalization.[81] The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)[82] and the European Union were targeted for their role in supporting and organizing normalization activities and sponsoring joint Palestinian-Israeli projects. Even the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was under criticism for not assuming its responsibilities in protecting Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Forms of protest included occupying offices (sit-ins) as in the case of ICRC; blocking entrances to offices and protesting at 7 a.m. in front of the EUPOL COPPS offices; waiting for USAID representatives with shoes in front of a conference they were sponsoring; holding slogans against USAID during Obama's visit; and organizing a peaceful gathering in front of the Japanese embassy in Ramallah. A particular form of protest was designing posters and visuals to convey the message and spread it over social media. This proved to be a very influential tool to raise awareness among people and move the discussion about aid from the intellectual élite circles to the people in their homes in the form of a poster, a song, or a novel. Additionally, a number of youth-led initiatives were launched precisely to counter the status of aid dependency, promote concepts and practices of self-reliance, and revive the traditions of collective actions and voluntarism.

The protests were not only against the donor community and their policies and practices, but also against the PA's neoliberal economic policies and the rising cost of living. People protested against the income tax law, the increase in the value added taxes, the prices of fuel and gas, and the early retirement law. Public servants protested for not receiving their salaries due to the financial crisis of the PA. Other economic demands of the protestors concerned price controls on basic goods, public investment, the protection of local producers, a cap on top earners in the public sector, and the introduction of minimum wage.[83] But most importantly, the overall Oslo economic framework

and Paris Protocol (the economic annex of the Oslo Peace Accords) were major targets of the protesters. This formed the ultimate exemplification of the marriage between political and economic protests. In September 2012 for instance demonstrations took place throughout the West Bank. Protests were characterized by road closures, tire burning, self-immolations or attempts to do so, peaceful demonstrations, stone throwing, clashes with the PA security forces, and workers' strikes.

In a major protest against the Paris Protocol on September 11, 2012, Palestinians for Dignity (the umbrella for the youth movements post-2011) stated in their press release and call for action that,

> …building upon the popular anger that rejects being turned into beggars who are preoccupied with making a living instead of our national struggle, Palestinians for Dignity calls upon you to join a mass march to demand: Social justice and the termination of the Paris Economic Protocol…Let us all emerge from our silence and tolerance of the Palestinian Authority's dependence on the Occupying State, the rampant corruption in our institutions, and our leadership that no longer has options, only justifications.[84]

Meanwhile, as was argued by the economist Raja Khalidi in 2012, "a series of sarcastic, graphic postings and humorous songs on Palestinian youth internet/Facebook networks depict a series of accusations against the PA encompassing grievances about Ministerial privileges, urban and rural poverty, runaway prices, and political dysfunction." In turn, the protests against the rapid increase in the cost of living could be summarized by the words of a protestor who told me during a protest in Ramallah, "we receive the salaries of Somalia and pay the prices of Switzerland." A poster that was widely circulated stated clearly that "subjugation will lead to a revolution."

The results and implications of these protests were mixed depending on their sustainability and regularity, demands' ceilings, repression, and cooption attempts by the PA, and the political trajectories.[85] A notable example includes the protests against the income tax law in January 2012. As noted by Raja Khalidi, 'this Law is notable for being the most significant, if not first-ever, economic measure since 2005 to be rejected by public outcry. In January, the PA was obliged to announce its suspension and reformulation after a 'public dialogue.'"[86] The protests against the Paris Protocol were not successful in

changing that protocol or dismissing it, but they accumulated enough anger for its rejection to become a popular demand.[87]

Regardless of the final results, the cycles of contention and contentious collective actions over the last three years indicate that despite the demobilizing policies of Fayyadism and the authoritarian transformation, Palestinians remain able to clash with the repressive authorities and engage in contentious collective actions, albeit in very small numbers as compared to the past. As Sobhi Samour summarized it,

> Within just a few days, the protests helped to counter the ubiquitous feeling of collective apathy, created a vehicle for widespread public discussion around the political economy of the Oslo framework, and produced initial victories by forcing the PA to reverse tax and price increases and its decision to table a proposal for a minimum wage law.[88]

In this realm of contentious politics and economics, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations and contradictions of the contention. A major challenge for the cycles of contention in the OPT, discussed here, is to overcome their very own contradictions, and face collectively the attempts of the authorities to suppress and co-opt them. In the theories of contentious politics, Sidney Tarrow rightly reminds us that "although movements usually conceive of themselves as outside of and opposed to institutions, acting collectively inserts them into complex political networks, and thus within the reach of the state."[89] This reminder is extremely relevant in the case of Palestine, particularly within the overall framework of Palestinian authoritarianism and Israeli colonization.

CHALLENGING AUTHORITIES: TOWARD A VIABLE RESISTANCE ECONOMY MODEL

Critics of the aid industry, donors' policy prescriptions, and the PA economic policies have not only passively critiqued but also actively provided contributions, albeit fragmented, to an alternative paradigm that moves away from neoliberalism. These attempts illustrate an ultimate challenge to the authorities and their dominant models. They are acts of resistance that fit into contentious economics and politics frameworks. These contentious actions lay at the heart of reclaiming economic rights both in theory and practice. And therefore, this chapter views these efforts as contributing toward building a model of a resistance economy.

This chapter defines the resistance economy, through a developmental lens, as a model that understands the development process as a cumulative, complementary, economic, social, and political one that fundamentally seeks to liberate human beings from dependency and humiliation. Philosophically, the concept of a "resistance economy" is a process that sets out to emancipate human beings by freeing them from poverty, inequality, fear, and oppression, empowering them to cultivate their lands, and expanding their options, capabilities, and potentials to ensure their happiness. As such, this socially inclusive model rejects economic unity with the colonizing power and resists attempts to sustain the status of asymmetric containment. In other words, the model is the opposite of the Paris Protocol, working at dismantling the regime of oppression and acting as a model that is socially inclusive, and that can ultimately play a role in ending the occupation and colonization of Palestine.

On this basis, this chapter argues that a resistance economy is a very real alternative that can, through a good system of collaboration and creativity, be implemented and maintained for a sustaining a progressive Palestinian economy. It begins by understanding economy as more than a monetary transaction for financial profit. Instead, economy should be understood and viewed as an extension of a people's *mode de vie* that connects through the intersection of the global and local efforts. A resistance economy is an indigenous approach well-rooted in Palestinian history and in the pre-PA era, long before the monopolization of the Palestinian economy by the development-industrial-complex.[90]

Put differently, the neoliberal Fayyadism model and the resistance economy model are based on fundamentally different rationales and lead different paths. Neoliberal Fayyadism is a top-down approach, while resistance economy is socially inclusive and built from below. Neoliberal Fayyadism is a model that is inherently unable and unwilling to clash with the occupying power, but rather cooperates and lives with it. Neoliberal Fayyadism is a local phenomenon sponsored externally, while resistance economy is an indigenous, locally rooted, and sponsored model. Neoliberal Fayyadism focuses on institution building while resistance economy is about the people. If Neoliberal Fayyadism is about standards and neoliberal governance, resistance economy is about rights and the national struggle. While one is centered on individualism, the other is focused on collectivism. Resistance economy then is not only about resisting the Israeli control of Palestinian economy, but also about being courageous enough to self-reflect about mistakes that are being made within the Palestinian socioeconomic environment.

Interestingly, the youth movement in the OPT provided its own definition for the resistance economy model and spelled out a number of its pillars. In their 2012 press release, mentioned earlier, they were asked: What is the solution? Is there really a solution? This is what they answered:

> Of course there is an alternative. The alternative is an economic resistance that can achieve a redistribution of resources, social justice, and dignity for the Palestinian people. This is not just a slogan! The most important alternative steps we can take are: to start a comprehensive boycott of all Israeli products; to refuse to adhere to the Paris Protocol and to call on the Palestinian Authority to announce this explicitly; to impose high taxes on imported products in order to protect our national products and agriculture; to reclaim the Palestinian lands dubbed "Areas C" that comprise 60% of the West Bank, to unite these areas with the rest of the West Bank; to work together to plant these lands; and to establish agricultural cooperatives to fulfil local needs. Furthermore, there are many other ideas that Palestinian economists can put forth if there is only the political will to implement suggestions and rid ourselves of economic dependency.[91]

However, there are few prerequisites to ensure the viability of the resistance economy model. These prerequisites include, but are not limited to, the need to reinvent the aid industry practically; redefine development conceptually; utilize indigenous approaches for livelihood and governance; resist and reject the Israeli matrix of control beyond rhetoric; and resist and challenge any form of Palestinian authoritarianism. In other words, Palestinians need an economy that reinforces solidarity and social ties and accumulates social capital and national cohesion. This can be done through subjecting the market and its transactions and mechanisms to the principles of equality, justice, and local democratic inclusive participation in the decision-making processes. The economy should be placed within societal dynamics, rather than it restricting and containing the society through economic dynamics. The challenge remains on how to operationalize these prerequisites.

This alternative framework provides a different approach to the much-criticized aid industry that considers development as a technocratic, apolitical, and neutral process. Shifting toward a model that recognizes structures of power and relations of colonial dominance and rearticulates processes of development as being linked to the struggle for rights, resistance, and

emancipation requires problematizing the mainstream notion of development as one that is centered on free-market economy, toward shifting the focus into people-centered participatory democratic approaches and steadfastness/*Al-Summud* strategies.[92] Such an approach also implies shifting the framework of the humanitarian assistance from "destroying agency" toward "promoting solidarity," and problematizing the liberal notion of individualism that is associated with and reproduced through donor democracy schemes as an alternative to the grassroots participatory democratic forms and processes.[93] In other words, the alternative economic vision has to sit at the heart of the Palestinian struggle and follow a genuine bottom-up participatory citizen-centric development model. This model needs to be legitimate. Therefore there is also a need to think about how Palestinians can institutionalize and create a bureaucracy around a democratic people-driven development agenda.

These theoretical understandings and propositions were coupled with initiatives on the ground that aim to examine the viability of the resistance economy model and, by extension, the social mobilization that practices contentious economics. These forms of mobilization utilized different tools that are normally used in building social movements. Such tools include public awareness about certain issues; lobbying for change at the policy level; working with and mobilizing grassroots communities; working directly with neglected and marginalized actors; building different discourses through innovative media outlets, and finally publishing books, composing music, and using different forms of art and poster designs. What is vital about these initiatives, as far as contentious politics and economic theories are concerned, is their courageous determination to challenge and confront authorities while representing and empowering others.

These initiatives as a practice of contentious economics include for instance the work of the Bisan Centre for Research and Development on the importance of raising public awareness to create cycles of contention. In particular, the initiative they took against the neoliberal joint industrial zones in the West Bank is a case in point. The work of Dalia Association through engagement with grassroots communities and marginalized women groups in rural areas built the case for the importance of self-determination in the aid industry and development process. Other civil society organizations working in the agriculture sector, such as MA'AN Development Center and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, are particularly important in contributing to the building blocks of the resistance economy and the agriculture sector.

The research production of critical institutions such as the Center for Development Studies at Birzeit University was a crucial base for informing the alternative agenda. The policy-oriented production of Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network provided a cutting-edge analysis that informed activism in the streets, in addition to the impact at the public policy level. Finally, newly established media outlets, particularly by youth, such as Quds News Network, played an invaluable role in disseminating information and increasing public awareness. Media was not the only form of communication; artists and writers too devoted their efforts to this matter. Novels that protested the consequence of neoliberalism were under unprecedented demand. Poster designers who were among the youth activists were influential in their production to fuel activism, and the same goes for songs, films, and theater plays. Such microexamples constitute a component of the overall framework of the resistance economy. However, these cycles of contention are still fragmented, and the channels that allow them to contribute to the framework of resistance economy are still a work-in-progress that had accelerated in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings.

CONCLUSION

The entrenchment of the neoliberal economic policies during the Fayyadism era, backed by the international community and their financial assistance, triggered activism—despite limited—in the streets of the West Bank in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab uprisings. The policies of the neoliberal Fayyadism deepened the crisis of legitimacy, sustained the de-development process, and directly and indirectly entrenched the Israeli military occupation and the colonial condition. The fragilities, limitations, and harmful consequences of the Fayyadism paradigm pointed out to the need for a viable alternative that is able to start a process of reversing the de-development condition. Critical scholars and intellectuals, coupled with the work of a number of Palestinian institutions, initiated a process of operationalizing the concept of resistance economy.

Using the theories of contentious politics and social movements, this chapter aimed to understand the economic-related protests in the OPT in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. The analysis showed that these protests constituted cycles of contention but failed to transform into a social movement. However, these protests and the tools and approaches they used showed that they illustrated a form of contentious collective actions where multiple actors

joined forces to challenge and confront authorities of repression and oppression. Although protests were not backed by well-structured social networks or galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, they managed to challenge neoliberalism and suggest an alternative paradigm through intellectual efforts and actions on the ground, one that could build toward a model of resistance economy. The notion of resistance economy was used to reflect on the broader dynamics of contentious politics theories and contribute to its expansion through introducing the concept and practice of contentious economics.

The focus of this chapter was not on the analysis of the reasons that contributed to the failure of cycles of contention to transform into a social movement in the OPT in the aftermath of Arab uprising. Rather, the roots and sources of such contention were explored through discussing the consequences of the neoliberal economic policies and the impact of international aid. The notion of a resistance economy was advanced as an ultimate expression of contentious politics and economics and as a framework that theorizes and operationalizes the cycles of contention in the era of Arab uprisings and Fayyadism. However, efforts to establish an alternative model in an ultimate expression of clashing with the repressive authorities remain fragmented or repressed. This is the reason why these contentious politics and economics in the OPT have not yet emerged as a social movement in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. But as a social movement society, for Palestinians, the pillars and roots of contentious economics are political in nature and are subject to social dynamics that, in instances of contention, are stirred by injustice and inequality.

NOTES

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6. World Bank, *Building the Palestinian State: Sustaining Growth, Institutions, and Service Delivery* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011); World Bank, *Sustaining Achievements in Palestinian Institution-Building and Economic Growth* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011); IMF, *Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Sixth Review of Progress* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2011); IMF, *Recent Experience and Prospects of the Economy of the West Bank and Gaza* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2011).
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8. Apart from the civil society led Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) movement, which is gaining more momentum over the years and achieving remarkable successes.
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10. Ibid.; Fawaz A. Gerges,ed., *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
11. S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.
12. Ibid., 9.
13. Ibid., 4.
14. Ibid., 6.
15. Ibid., 33.
16. Ibid., 6.
17. Ibid., 7.
18. Ibid., 7.
19. Ibid.,8.
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21. Ibid., 9.
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24. J. Beinin and Frédéric Vairel, eds., *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa* 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 19.
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30. Cited in Beinin and Vairel, *Social Movements*, 25.

31. Beinin and Vairel, *Social Movements*, 25.
32. Tarrow, *Power in Movement,* 33.
33. Tarrow's views on Palestine seem to be problematic, misguided, and fraught with contradictions. In the third edition of his *Power in Movement*, Tarrow views the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a "civil war between Jews and Arabs" (107), and views the first Palestinian intifada as a "phase of radicalization" (174). Further, the narrative about the 2010 Turkish-led flotilla to Gaza presented in the introduction of the book (1–4) is one-sided in support of the Israeli narrative, subjective, dismisses crucial facts, and contains major factual inaccuracies. These understandings completely dismiss the Israeli settler-colonial project and military occupation, and the ongoing process of ethnic cleansing by Israel taking place since 1948.
34. Beinin and Vairel, *Social Movements*, 7.
35. Ibid., 8–9.
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40. Julie M. Norman, *The Second Palestinian Intifada: Civil Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2010).
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"Defeating Dependency, Creating a Resistance Economy." *Al-Shabaka Policy Brief*, February 2012. Accessed at: http://www.al-shabaka.org/sites/default/files/policybrief/en/defeating-dependency-creating-resistance-economy/defeating-dependency-creating-resistance-economy.pdf; A. Tartirand I. Shikaki, "Al-Tanmeya ka'ada llimuqawama wa altaharur" [Development as Resistance], in *Critical Studies in Development in Palestine,* ed. N. Shahin (Ramallah: Bisan Center for Research and Development, 2013), 13–40; CDS-BZU, *Public Debate on Alternatives to Aid and Neoliberal Development in the oPt* (Birzeit: Center for Development Studies, 2011); Dalia Association, *An Appeal by Palestinian Civil Society to the International Community to Respect Our Right to Self Determination in the Aid System.* Dalia Association, 2011. Accessed at: http://www.dalia.ps/files/pAppealForRights.pdf; Bisan, *Drasat Naqdiya Fi Waqi' Al-Tanmina Fi Filasteen* [Critical Studies in Development in Palestine] (Ramallah: Bisan Center for Research and Development, 2013); and Bisan, *Wahm Al-Tanmeya* [The Myth of Development] (Ramallah: Bisan Center for Research and Development, 2011).

43. Many scholars and practitioners, mainly from the mainstream domains, view the concept of resistance economy as a concept that implies negativity, violence, and aggression. They view it as a pessimistic, backward, and old-fashioned idea. They go further in viewing it as unrealistic, fantastical, and unviable in both economic and political terms. Additionally, they argue that it is merely a nostalgic concept to romanticize old indigenous approaches. However, I simply argue that the notion of resistance economy represents the complete opposite of what the counterargument proponents are proposing. It is an approach that has its roots in the local context and was built up to react to the realities of the ground through acknowledging the potential of the people and aiming to expand their capabilities. It is an approach that understands development as freedom and dignity. It is based on clashing with repressive authorities in the short term, but with an optimistic and strategic vision for the economic and political spheres. It is a concept that celebrates resistance through practice as the main source of achieving rights under colonial subjugation and authoritarian conditions. The legacy of this concept is based on the legacy of the resistance movement itself in the Palestinian context. Intellectually, it is also based on a rich legacy of a revolution-based research and knowledge production, as Faris Giacaman (2014) reminded us recently through the utilization of the concept of "militant researchers." Further elaboration on the notion of resistance economy can be found in the last section of this chapter.
44. De-development is "the deliberate, systematic and progressive dismemberment of an indigenous economy by a dominant one, where economic—and, by extension, societal—potential is not only distorted but denied" (S. Roy, *Failing Peace, Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 33.). Therefore, de-development is a process that forestalls development by "depriving or ridding the economy of its capacity and potential for rational structural transformation [i.e., natural patterns of growth and development] and preventing the emergence of any self-correcting measures" (S. Roy, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (Washington DC: institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 128.). De-development "occurs when normal economic relations are impaired or abandoned, preventing any logical or rational arrangement of the economy or its constituent parts, diminishing productive capacity and precluding sustainable growth…Over time, de-development represents nothing less than the denial of economic potential" (S, Roy, Foreword, *in M, Turner and O, Shweiki, Decolonizing Palestinian Political Economy: De-development and Beyond*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), X.).
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53. Khan, Post-Oslo State-Building Strategies.".
54. Samour, "Promises and Limitations," 70.
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85. With the emergence of the economic protests in the OPT, the Israeli government voluntarily transferred an advance payment of PA tax revenues collected by Israel, and Israel also asked the EU and the United States to grant more funds to the PA. Additionally, they lifted a number of checkpoints in the West Bank and issued more permits for Palestinian workers to work in Israel and its colonies in the West Bank. This was due to Israeli fears that these economic protests could turn into an intifada against the PA and Israel and could threaten the overall framework of the Oslo Peace Accords.
86. Khalidi, *After the Arab Spring in Palestine*, 2012.
87. Put simply, the Paris Protocol institutionalized Israel's total control over the Palestinian economy and necessitated that the PA would follow the decisions taken by Israel in relation to taxes and prices. As summarized by Samour, the Paris Protocol "gave Israel the right to collect monthly trade taxes on the PA's behalf (thus seizing leverage over roughly two-thirds of the PA's total revenues); to set the PA's VAT rate at a level no less than 2 percentage points below that of Israel despite the enormous difference in the size of the two economies and personal incomes (so as to not threaten Israeli producers); and to force the PA to import fuel and electricity from Israel at Israeli consumer prices.' (Samour 2014:72). For further elaboration, read Hiba I. Husseini and Raja Khalidi, "Fixing the Paris Protocol Twenty Years Later: Frequently Asked Questions for Diehard Reformers," *Jadaliyya*, February 6, 2013. Accessed at: http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10023/fixing-the-paris-protocol-twenty-years-later_frequ.
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THE BOTTOM-UP MOBILIZATION OF LEBANESE SOCIETY AGAINST NEOLIBERAL INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE OF OPPOSITION AGAINST SOLIDERE'S RECONSTRUCTION OF DOWNTOWN BEIRUT

Hadi Makarem

INTRODUCTION

Like many countries in the Middle East, Lebanon has been witness to a neoliberal project involving the restructuring of the state. Briefly put, this state-restructuring involved the creation of new, "neoliberal" institutions that are built on "informal decision-making" (decisions that take place behind closed doors or through mutual agreement between certain actors and interest groups). Importantly, this restructuring has led to a clash of interests, as many ordinary Lebanese citizens believe that these new institutions privilege an exclusive group of people over and above everyone else.

One particular area that appears to have been a cause for concern for ordinary citizens is postwar reconstruction. After 16 years of fighting and destruction, there was a general euphoric feeling that there would be huge plans to reconstruct the country. As a result, public debates and discussions about where to reconstruct, what to preserve, and how, became a regular occurrence. From this, some citizens believed that they had the right to take part in the reconstruction process and have a say in the matter. However, the new institutions that were created at the time did not provide a space for these citizens to voice their views and concerns. As a result, these citizens who

found themselves excluded from the decision-making processes within these institutions responded by taking part in demonstrations and other forms of collective action, either to make a point or to change the way these new institutions were functioning. All this raises important questions: Who exactly were these citizens? What were their claims and interests? And, finally, how successful were they in confronting the new institutions?

In order to answer these questions, this chapter will focus on the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut because it was at the center of this standoff between ordinary citizens and new institutions. In this regard, the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut was carried out by Solidere (Société libanaise pour le développement et la reconstruction de Beyrouth)—a private real estate company built on informal decision-making.[1] By agreement with the Lebanese government, and under the leadership of businessman and later prime minister Rafiq Hariri, this company enjoyed special powers codified in law to plan and redevelop the heavily damaged city center. In less than a year since its establishment, Solidere had generated a staunch opposition. Of course, it is misleading to simply say the "opposition." While sometimes one in their efforts and advertising campaigns, the opposition was by no means a unified block, and was, instead, split into three distinct groups: first, the former landowners and tenants, who objected to the existence of a company that appropriated private land; second, the displaced/refugees who were squatting in the abandoned buildings; and, finally, the intellectuals and professionals, who objected on purely aesthetic, environmental, intellectual, or historical grounds.[2] But in the end, the opposition did not achieve much.

This issue of exclusion leads us to another set of empirical questions: What preferences is Solidere's "construction strategy" permeable to? Is this new institution accessible to some groups and closed to others? And, is this institution responsive only to certain interests? To answer these questions, we must first understand the institution itself. The problem of exclusion from Solidere is really an issue related to the profit orientation of this institution and its subsequent bias toward certain interests over and above others. Of course, any polity can experience collective mobilization against its institutions; especially if the structures and norms in that polity privilege certain groups and individuals over others.[3] Mark Limbach demonstrates this when looking at protests in the United States: "to understand black protest one must understand racist institutions, and to understand feminist activism one must understand sexist institutions. The same homily holds for Jews, Indians, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, consumers, Italians, and Catholics."[4] In other

words, a study of the opposition against neoliberal institutions in Lebanon is a study of the "group-institution nexus."[5] In addition, a specific institution such as Solidere affects the mobilization of specific groups which, in turn, try to influence the concerned institution.

Those who study the group-institution nexus must deal with the actions opposition groups adopt. This is because the study of actions against any given institution is at the center of the group-institution nexus. In fact, scholars study the actions of opposition groups —rather than any other event, process, policy, or outcome—because they are much better in revealing the structure of a given authority and the political power it holds.[6] The actions being studied here indicate a bottom-up mobilization against Solidere—either through street protests, press conferences, publications, or, in some cases, by launching media campaigns abroad. The groups opposing Solidere were forced to resort to a bottom-up activity because the main decision-makers in Solidere held political sway as well—for example, Rafiq Hariri as prime minister. Such bottom-up activity can lead to a number of consequences. Sometimes, these consequences are good. At other times, they are bad. More interesting are the consequences that are unintended, unexpected, and unpredictable, yet, seemingly inevitable. This chapter is therefore designed to stimulate a discussion on whether the main consequence of this mobilization and confrontation against Solidere was one of success, failure, or even unexpected.

UNDERSTANDING SOLIDERE AS A NEOLIBERAL INSTITUTION

Before the civil war, the Lebanese state played a leading role in managing and safeguarding public interests. While its institutions were arguably weak in the face of sectarian politics, the private sector always remained in the grip of the state. The civil war, however, debilitated these institutions, and the militias replaced the state with a new system of patronage that provided welfare to the people in their respective territorial domains. When the civil war ended in 1990, the state underwent a neoliberal restructuring that led to the creation of new "neoliberal" institutions that would take over the responsibilities of the old bankrupt ones. This raises the three following questions: How did these *new* institutions function compared to the *old* ones? What kind of reaction did this create in Lebanese society?What did this mean for the reconstruction process?

To understand how a neoliberal institution such as Solidere functions, we can begin by referring to literature on "New Urban Governance." According to scholars of New Urban Governance, a new form of state-restructuring has taken shape in many countries since the end of the Cold War. Authors such as Neil Brenner, Nik Theodore, David Harvey, Jason Hackworth, Neil Smith, Erik Swyngedouw, and Frank Moulaert among others, argue that this particular form of restructuring involved the state adopting a new, "neoliberal" regulatory framework. In turn, this regulatory framework led to the creation of new governmental agencies and institutions.[7] While much of the research produced by the aforementioned scholars is based on observed patterns in the international context, this literature can be collapsed within the regional, Arab/Middle Eastern context[8], as well as within the local, Lebanese context.[9]

To understand how these new institutions are different from the old ones, we must look at them in terms of a *transition* from "hierarchically organized" coordination to "heterarchically organized" coordination. In other words, this transition refers to a shift in the coordination of political and social systems from a model that relies less on "formal authority" (public institutions) to a model that relies more on "informal authority" (private or semiprivate institutions).[10] According to scholars, the most visible expression of informal authority are the so-called public-private institutions. Since the 1980s, these institutions that involve cooperation between the private and public sectors have gradually adopted the tasks and functions that were traditionally dealt with by governments.[11] In this regard, this transfer of power in favor of these public-private institutions occurred as governments struggled to keep up with the changes and pressures of a highly uncertain external environment.[12] This move toward public-private institutions began in a number of US cities such as Atlanta, Baltimore, and Boston.[13] Later, the trend reached Europe, and was particularly evident in the UK with the London Dockland Development Corporation.[14] In post–civil war Lebanon as well, the idea of public-private partnerships has gained traction with the establishment of private real estate companies like Solidere.[15] Since then, the delegation of large-scale reconstruction to private real estate companies has become common practice in Lebanese planning, especially after the 2006 war. A few miles south of Downtown Beirut, in the neighborhood of Haret Hreik (a part of the southern suburbs that was heavily bombed in the 2006 Israeli war), the private construction firm of Hezbollah known as Jihad al-Bina has rebuilt some 200 multistory apartments according to the most up-to-date standards (as part of the "Waad Initiative").[16] All in all, the main objective behind the participation of private

actors was to financially support the state in developments it could no longer afford.[17]

Undoubtedly, the transfer of power in favor of public-private institutions has been a controversial one. The central issue, according to some scholars, is the loss of control by and the possible undermining of the state's authority. As Jon Pierre argued:

> The overarching question is what significance or meaning remains of the liberal-democratic notion of the state as the undisputed center of political power and its self-evident monopoly of articulating and pursuing the collective interest in an era of economic globalization, a "hollowing out of the state" (Rhodes, 1994), decreasing legitimacy for collective solutions, and a marketization of the state itself.[18]

With this increased private participation and outsourcing of public responsibility to the private sector comes the transition from a social welfare policy toward a policy that is more focused on profit orientation. In this regard, the problem is that public-private institutions are more inclined to pursue a policy that is defined less by long-term and nonprofit visions and more by middle- and short-term profits.[19] A larger problem with public-private institutions is the way they integrate market actors (such as Hariri and his protégés) while excluding other actors and interests.[20] In this regard, many urban governance scholars criticize these new institutions for their "extraordinary degree of autonomy and impermeability."[21] For example, Ingemar Elander and Maurice Blanc criticize them for their insulation from external interests and influences.[22] More significantly, Moulaert, Swyngedouw, and Rodriguez criticize them for becoming "elite playing fields" that are "bunkered" against participation and ownership by local community groups.[23] Due to all this, there appears to be an inherent lack of democracy in and a lack of legitimation for these institutions.

One exceptional aspect of Solidere is not only that its modus operandi detached from public accountability and democratic mechanisms, but also that its action impacted on a crucial public good of the Lebanese state, that is central Beirut, a crucial space for national identity, collective memory, and economic resource. In light of this, the case of Solidere's reconstruction of Downtown Beirut demonstrates very well such a potential for conflict. In the context of New Urban Governance, in Beirut, the state-controlled monopoly over urban planning was partly transferred to a private real estate company

headed by Hariri and a small number of initiators and investors. At the same time, most of the people who would be affected by the reconstruction, like the former landowners and tenants, were excluded from the decision-making. The most important decisions were made behind closed doors by a small group consisting of Hariri and his protégés.[24]

THE MOBILIZATION OF LEBANESE SOCIETY AGAINST SOLIDERE

Opposition to Solidere's reconstruction plans in Downtown Beirut came from several individuals and interest groups within Lebanese society. This opposition can be organized into three categories: first, the former landowners and tenants; second, the displaced/refugees squatting in the abandoned buildings; and third, the academic intellectuals and professionals in architecture and engineering who were opposed to the way reconstruction was taking place. Each group mobilized in a different way when confronting Solidere. For example, the former landowners and tenants formed different committees and tried to confront the company through innumerable court proceedings and ongoing public relations activities. The intellectuals and professionals organized media campaigns and launched a number of public relations activities as well. The mainly Shiite refugees, however, did not form a specific action group, but they were supported and represented by the Shiite parties (namely, Amal and Hezbollah). Despite this fragmentation, the different opposition groups triggered a very controversial public debate on the goals and interests of the reconstruction process in Downtown Beirut. In turn, this public debate symbolized the beginning of a mobilization by those who were trying to make new institutions such as Solidere more inclusive.

FORMER LANDOWNERS AND TENANTS

The most disputed topic was the foundation of Solidere as a "private" entity that had the right to expropriate property from its landowners and tenants. In accordance with a new law—"Law 117" (dated December 7, 1991)[25]—ownership of all real estate properties in the Beirut Central District (BCD), as well as all leases and other rights, were terminated. In addition, all loans, mortgages, and other encumbrances against such properties were discharged, and Solidere was granted full rights to expropriate all private properties within the city center. Such plans did not sit well with many of the former landowners and tenants, many of whom did not leave their properties and were still residing in them. Although supported by a legal framework, the opposition

criticized Solidere for its de facto monopolization of the reconstruction process because it did not correspond to public interests.[26]

Refusing to surrender their rights, many of the former landowners and tenants banded together in different committees to prevent the reconstruction project from taking place. One of these committees was known as the Association of Owners of Rights in the Beirut Central District, and was headed by Omar Daouk, who came from a well-known pre–civil war bourgeois family with significant properties in the city center.[27] These committees organized a number of meetings, demonstrations, leaflet campaigns, discussions with political and religious leaders, as well as press conferences. They also adopted the same rhetoric used by the intellectuals and professionals, calling for the preservation of "old Beirut." However, it must be noted that unlike the academic intellectuals and professionals in architecture and engineering,[28] these committees were not completely opposed to the idea of a financially lucrative development project in the city center. What they were unhappy about was the way Solidere expropriated their properties without taking their rights into consideration.

Despite these efforts, Hariri and Solidere were able to divide and weaken this group through buying out/co-opting those who came from influential backgrounds. Most significantly, Hariri co-opted Omar Daouk's cousin, Maher Daouk. Interestingly, Maher Daouk was then used to create a "counter-committee" to hinder the work of the opposition committees. This was a heavily symbolic gesture, as Hariri sought to delegitimize the demands of the committees. Importantly, Maher Daouk was elected as a member of the board of directors of Solidere in May 1994 and is still a member of the company's board today.[29] Other than that, Hariri managed to co-opt some large property owners with political influence as well. For example, the Murr tower, which sits on the fringes of the Solidere area, was owned by businessman and politician Michel al-Murr. Importantly, al-Murr was opposed to the expropriation of his tower by the Solidere project.[30] This was until al-Murr was awarded a considerable amount of shares in Solidere. A similar situation happened with politician Tammam Salam, a scion of a prominent Sunni-Beiruti family, and the head of Makassed Foundation (a well-known charitable organization), which had major properties in the city center. In this regard, Salam eventually acquiesced to Solidere's expropriation of land in the city center when a seat in the board of directors was created for a "Makassed representative."[31]

Eventually, many members of the committees found it increasingly difficult to shore-up public support for their cause, both in the media and in the

judicial courts. Some claimed that Hariri was using his financial weight in the media to improve the company's image in local and international circles, while also using his authoritative powers to silence the country's judiciary.[32] In one famous case involving the Doumani family, it is claimed that judges were even being bribed by Hariri and Solidere to avoid addressing their appeals in the judicial courts.[33] The issue of bribery and corruption—while being difficult to authenticate —appears to have been prevalent in the political system. In a seminal piece by former MP Najah Wakim, it was claimed that Hariri bribed around 40 MPs in 1991 to vote in support of Law 117.[34] Interestingly, some of these bribes came as cash ranging from $50,000 to $100,000. However, others received interest-free loans from Hariri's Bank Méditerranée and Saudi-Lebanese bank, which allowed them to subscribe to Solidere shares issued in January 1994. Such views are certainly over-cynical and hard to prove, but given that the civil war had ended not long before, the lack of trust and transparency at the time means these views cannot be entirely ruled out of the question.[35]

Over the summer months of 1998, when there was a summer judicial recess (and when there was a smaller number of judges on duty), the Doumani family was informed that Solidere workers, accompanied by the police, were to begin destroying their building, known as the Khayyat building. Frantically, the family called human rights groups, the Association of Owners of Rights in the Beirut Central District, a number of media stations, and others to come to the site to try and get as much media coverage of the demolition as possible. Mounir Doumani—the son of Constantine Doumani and owner of the Khayyat building—casually commented in an interview, "Of course, Future TV [the channel owned by Hariri] did not show up." After heading down to their building, the family went up and occupied the family office. Fearing the worst, Constantine (the father) chained himself to the window. Mounir remembers that there were about 30 members of Internal Security Forces (ISF) ready to oust the family. After the family refused to leave, the ISF—with order from the prime minister' office, which at the time was headed by Hariri himself—resorted to force. At the end of the ordeal, Mounir, his younger brother Nasim, his mother Victoria, and his father Constantine were all arrested, all of them requiring medical attention. Victoria was released to empty the building of all their essential belongings. The rest of the family was not released until after the building was completely demolished.[36] Solidere workers, accompanied by members of the ISF, forcefully evicted the Doumani family from their property (the Khayyat building) in Downtown Beirut.

THE DISPLACED SHIITE REFUGEES

By the end of the civil war, reports tended to suggest that there were hundreds of displaced families squatting in abandoned, bullet-ridden buildings in the city center. Unsurprisingly, their presence was seen as an obstacle for reconstruction. Solidere wanted to turn Downtown Beirut into "an island for the rich."[37] But in order to achieve this, it needed to "cleanse" the area of all things that would be considered "dirty" or "unwanted." It therefore resorted to "cash incentives" to persuade squatters to move and reestablish a new life somewhere else. In this regard, many displaced Shiites residing in other parts of the country (victims of a brutal Israeli occupation in South Lebanon) were feeling "left out": many were squatting illegally in abandoned buildings elsewhere after being forced out of their homes in South Lebanon, and therefore, they felt entitled to some form of compensation as well.

While the mainly Shiite refugees did not set up specific action groups, they received significant support from Shiite parties, namely, Amal and Hezbollah. As Solidere officials began paying squatters in Downtown Beirut to leave, it was believed that Amal and Hezbollah were driving in pickups full of Shiite families who came from Israeli-occupied South Lebanon, telling them to settle in quickly in order to receive payments as well.[38] The news of the future pay-offs spread like wildfire, and many other families began to come on their own accord. A 1991 survey conducted by Solidere of the population in Downtown Beirut initially showed that there were only 2,500 illegal families. In a 1993 count, the number soared to 4,500.[39] According to Mounir Douaidi, the financial manager of Solidere, the final count said that there were as many as 20,000 refugee families that received compensation.[40] The Solidere pay-off scale was fixed at US$8,000 to US$12,000 per family. But considering the hardship some of these families endured, they demanded higher payments. It is alleged that some families were paid as much as US$100,000 before they agreed to leave.[41]

According to Douaidi, the compensation program became increasingly "greed driven," as more and more refugees demanded higher payments.[42] At this point, Hariri and Solidere had to deal directly with Amal and Hezbollah as they feared that violence could derail the reconstruction process. In this regard, Solidere engineered a "political premium" to ensure the Shiite parties' support for reconstruction. Eventually, the company paid Amal and Hezbollah huge sums of money that they then distributed amongst their Shiite clientele. It is believed that Amal alone was paid $250 million to ensure its compliance and support.[43] Importantly, this political premium—or what can

be better described as a form of bribery—was effective in diverting people's attention away from the "squatter issue." In one particular incident on February 15, 1996, 13 people were killed when the building they were squatting in was brought down by a Solidere demolition crew.[44] Despite the scale of such an incident, there was very little public reaction to the news and no investigation into the incident. Ussama Makdisi notes:

> Solidere…claimed it was a mistake; the dead were carted off, destitute migrants with no place in the government's vision of revitalized cosmopolitan city center. Brushing off criticism…the prime minister insisted…The alternatives facing the nation…are clear: either the "will to progress" or "the will to despair."[45]

Clearly, Hariri played on people's fears of regression to push the Solidere project forward. More importantly, the lack of public support for the victims was a sign that Hariri and Solidere had successfully managed to buy out Amal and Hezbollah, the two main political backers of displaced citizens.

THE INTELLECTUALS AND PROFESSIONALS

The extensive expropriations and the forced evictions led to vehement criticism of the reconstruction process in Downtown Beirut. But it was the far-reaching demolition and the profit-oriented urban planning that aroused the biggest response. This response was led by a group of intellectuals and professionals (which included architects, archaeologists, and sociologists, among others). Their opposition began in the summer of 1991, after a preliminary Master Plan for Downtown Beirut (known as the Dar Al-Handasah Plan) was disclosed to the public for review. Importantly, the accompanying report concluded that there was "no other solution" than creating a private real estate company to carry out and fund this plan.[46] But despite the growing support for this idea "in certain public- and private-circles,"[47] opposition from these intellectuals and professionals was also growing. Eventually, they came together and formed a protest group that met to try to generate possible alternatives to this idea.[48]

Protests against the Dar Al-Handasah Plan began in July 1991, during the public symposiums held by Dar Al-Handasah and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). But expressing critical views was very difficult in Beirut at the time, because local newspaper owners were becoming

closer to Hariri, and were in turn, leaving little room for the public to state its case. One example of this was the newspaper, *An-Nahar*.[49] In some cases, the intellectuals and professionals found it easier to express their opinions abroad. For example, two conferences took place, one in the United States at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the other in France at the Institut du Monde Arabe. The two conferences facilitated exchange of views between supporters and critics of the Dar Al-Handasah Plan.[50] Despite the difficulties, a small group of academics and planners was able to make itself heard in Beirut. Among its distinguished members were architects Assem Salam, who had designed a number of elaborate buildings across the country since the 1960s, and Jad Tabet, son of Antoine Tabet, whose St. Georges Hotel and Yacht Club, among other buildings, had been a prominent symbol of Beirut before the civil war. At this point, two of their younger colleagues who had recently finished their studies in the United States, Hashim Sarkis—not related to Shihabist president Elias Sarkis—and Oussama Kabbani, were also actively involved in the opposition. There was also the economist and historian Georges Corm (who operated in Shihabist tradition and would later become finance minister in Salim el-Hoss's government), the sociologist Nabil Beyhum (a scion of a prominent Sunni-Beirut bourgeoisie family), and the journalist and novelist Elias Khoury (the new editor of *Al-Mulhaq*, which was the cultural supplement of *An-Nahar*, and which became the main outlet of dissent at a time when its mother publication preferred to maintain a neutral stance).[51] Together, they became known as the "only credible and independent experts" on the reconstruction effort.[52] In several lectures and meetings, books, and television talk shows, this group of local experts demanded modifications to be made to the Dar Al-Handasah Plan.[53]

The Dar Al-Handasah Plan called for the almost total demolition of whatever remained in Downtown Beirut. As one British freelance journalist living in Beirut at the time eloquently put it: "Today, with the fighting over, there is a new plan to destroy [what was left of] the city center…but this time with the bulldozer and the pick-axe."[54] As a result, most of these experts' criticisms, focused on the extensive demolitions proposed by the Dar Al-Handasah Plan and the impact this would have had on the city. The Dar Al-Handasah Plan, argued Jad Tabet, would have made the city center an isolated "island of modernity,"[55] all but cut off from the rest of the city. In one more poignant critique, Elias Khoury wrote that Downtown Beirut would have become an "empty face," a "placeless place" and a "hole in the memory,"

in the face of a "frightening amnesia."[56] Eventually, these criticisms spread like wildfire as other personalities joined in and made their voices heard. One of these was Lebanese archaeologist Suzy Hakimian, who underscored that the main weakness in the Dar Al-Handasah Plan was the lack of cooperation among architects, archaeologists, and city planners, and emphasized that archaeological and historical preservation should not be an obstacle to reconstruction.[57] All in all, public debate surrounding the Dar Al-Handasah Plan represented what Beyhum described as "the first public debate since the beginning of the war, and the first on urban matters in Lebanon's history."[58] In the face of a public outcry, the CDR and Dar Al-Handasah were forced to scrap the scheme and return to the drawing boards and amend the plan. Out of all the amendments, the most significant was the proposed preservation of a hundred more "old buildings' in the area.[59] Hariri advertised the amended plan as "an inclusion of the criticism,"[60] and as the involvement of the "public" in a "private" scheme.[61] However, the opposition argued that these amendments "did not go far enough," and therefore, dismissed them as a "corrupting co-operation"[62] to win over the opposition.[63] The group of intellectuals and professionals continued to organize public relations activities.

Eventually, the continued criticisms and the subsequent public indignation forced Solidere to listen to the activists' demands. To the surprise of many, the company approached some activists with job offers. A notable example is prominent Lebanese urban planner and academic, Oussama Kabbani. Born in Beirut and educated in an environment of civil unrest, Kabbani was a man with great expertise and a big vision on rebuilding the city he grew up in. In 1992, he was invited by Oxford University's Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS) to present at a conference in London on the reconstruction of Beirut. By September 1992, with the support of CLS, he compiled his criticisms of the Dar Al-Handasah Plan and published a small book ntitled *Prospects for Lebanon: The Reconstruction of Beirut.*[64] The following year, Solidere hired Kabbani to review the master plan for the reconstruction. In 1994, he became the manager of the town planning department, and in 1997, he became the head of the urban management department of Solidere.[65] More significantly, Kabbani became a member of Solidere's board of directors in July 2012.

Although some intellectuals and professionals were hired to join the company, the concept of Solidere remained profit oriented, and many historical monuments were reduced to make way for highways, luxury residential buildings, and skyscrapers. As a result, Kabbani and others were accused of

allowing themselves to be co-opted so easily. But not all of those who were hired remained with the company. Jad Tabet is a case in point. Tabet was also hired by Solidere to become the leading planner for the reconstruction of the souks in Downtown Beirut.[66] Interestingly though, Tabet stresses that his opposition to Solidere did not "waver" like that of Kabbani (and others). He explains his recruitment as coming at a time when he sensed the opposition movement was already defeated, and therefore, describes his acceptance of the job offer as a last-ditch attempt to change the master plan from "within the company." According to Tabet, his long-time friend Assem Salam had encouraged him to accept the job offer as well. When Tabet realized his limits in influencing the decision-making process within the company, he chose to quit.[67]

CONCLUSION

To summarize, then: post–civil war Lebanon was in the throes of a neoliberal transformation that led to the restructuring of the state and the creation of new, neoliberal institutions. These institutions were based on informal decision-making, and were designed to cater to the interests of an exclusive group of individuals over and above everyone else. The most significant example of these institutions was Solidere. Hariri and his confidants were the main beneficiaries of Solidere. Having gained personal control of the company, Hariri and his allies were able to take, directly or indirectly, all the important decisions regarding the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut. In this regard, he was able to expropriate the landowners and tenants, evict the refugees, and launch far-reaching demolitions of old buildings without being stopped.

When looking at the literature, the main points that have been considered in the analysis have focused on the institutional changes associated with neoliberal restructuring of the state. According to New Urban Governance scholars, neoliberal restructuring leads to a transition away from a formerly state-controlled decision-making process, in favor of privately controlled (informal) arenas of decision-making. Importantly, these scholars highlight the lack of democracy as well as the lack of legitimation that these new arenas of decision-making embody. Of course, the case of Solidere remains an extreme example of a neoliberal institution because it is almost completely "autonomous" and "insulated" from state control. While Solidere claims to

operate in a public-private manner, it in fact behaves in a private manner. Undoubtedly, all this revealed an enormous potential for conflict.

In this regard, the example of the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut demonstrates particularly well such a potential for conflict. This reconstruction project led to massive public indignation and a mobilization of Lebanese society. Opposition actions groups were formed by the former landowners and tenants. The Shiite parties mobilized to support the refugees' demands for compensation. And academic intellectuals and professionals in architecture and engineering came together for the first time to express their standpoint on urban matters. Despite this fragmentation between different groups, the opposition was able to incite the Lebanese public against Hariri and Solidere. The media appears to have played a considerable role here. The opposition—particularly the former landowners and tenants, and the intellectuals and professionals—resorted to public-relations activities. In this regard, it is argued that without the media, such an bottom-up mobilization would have not been able to draw public attention to their critical remarks.

However, Rafiq Hariri and Solidere were able to avoid introducing any reforms that would lead to the expansion and deepening of inclusion and equal representation in the company, either through their own media campaigns, or through buying out/co-opting leading members of the opposition. In this regard, four conclusions can be made. First, it appears that the "well-off" elite (in this case, Hariri and his protégés) maintained their domination and privilege over the reconstruction process in Downtown Beirut. Second, the case of Solidere demonstrates particularly well that "the powerful"—in particular, the Shiite refugees supported by Amal and Hezbollah—extracted the most benefits from their mobilization against the company. Third, it shows that only the most "privileged" and "resourceful" former landowners were successful in getting their interests met and protected. And, finally, the revelation made by architect Jad Tabet makes the opposition look naively unaware of the limits that they had in influencing the decision-making process within the company when job offers were awarded to them. But in spite of these disappointing results, the public debate and confrontation against the reconstruction process in Downtown Beirut was symbolic, to say the least. As Tabet put it:

> Although we did not succeed in saving all of the buildings that we had hoped to save, our confrontation [against Solidere] succeeded in creating a widespread public reaction. And even though there was a

fragmentation in demands and numerous interests involved, this public reaction was very democratic and peaceful in nature.[68]

It is therefore deduced that one of the main—yet, unexpected—consequences of this mobilization has been the return to a democratic and peaceful culture.[69] In a country where 16 years of conflict was carried out with weapons, the fact that all the protagonists agreed to confront Hariri and Solidere in a democratic and peaceful manner signified remarkable progress. Indeed, some scholars of contentious politics have argued that this kind of social collective action can help empower people by deepening democracy and democratic values in their respective societies.[70] In this regard, it must be understood that mobilization can happen in any polity that has an "open space.". In Lebanon, the mobilization against Solidere was facilitated by the end of the civil war, and the return to the confessional democratic system that the country once had before 1975 (the start of the civil war). These developments helped to open the space for people who felt downtrodden or excluded to articulate their aspirations, make demands, and mobilize. According to scholars of contentious politics, institutions can be strengthened through reforms forced by the mobilization of society, while social forces can benefit from concessions that are made to them by the institutions.[71] But in the case of Solidere, the mobilization was limited to only some concessions being made. As demonstrated in this chapter, they did not lead to any significant reforms in the way Solidere functions; the profit orientation, the lack of state control, and the exclusion of numerous protagonists from the decision-making process remained extremely problematic.

Therefore, what many scholars of contentious politics forget is that an open space can empower the social forces controlling the targeted institutions as well. Since the public space is open to everyone, Hariri and his protégés were able to use it to maintain their domination and privilege: for example, the creation of a "counter-committee" to confront the work of the Association of Owners of Rights in the Beirut Central District. Moreover, it must be stressed that mobilization requires resources, and hence, only the most resourceful members of society were successful in getting their interests met: in this context, Hariri—who was well-off and more resourceful than the rest—was able to benefit more from the open space. But while this is the case, recent events are beginning to suggest that 'money' is not the only source of power. The past few years have witnessed a resurgence of the public debate against the

Solidere project. This is mostly due to the development of social media, which has served as a new, affordable, and powerful platform that can deliver opposition voices. Online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have helped activists to keep each other updated about their activities and events.[72] Moreover, blogging websites and other commentary sections for media outlets (both inside and outside Lebanon) have become useful tools for ordinary citizens to express their viewpoints and concerns on the reconstruction process.[73] While this new form of bottom-up activity is yet to make any concrete gains, the increasing use of social media suggests that the opposition is rising once again.

NOTES

1. In terms of governance, informal decision making refers to decision-making processes that have been *informalized*. In this regard, it must be understood that informalization in governance is appealing to decision makers because it provides the "flexibility" that is needed to make *more* decisions in "mutual agreement" (on an *ad-hoc* basis), rather than in a "state-legislated format." One of the possible advantages of informalization in governance is that it allows conflict resolution and mediation to take place in "unregulated spaces" that are between the public agencies and that are outside the public spotlight. In such spaces, participants in decision-making processes conduct "informal dialogue" and "operate largely consensually" because they are no longer worried about "outsiders taking their words out of context.". See J. E. Innes, S. Connick, and D. Booher, "Informality as a Planning Strategy," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 73, no. 2 (2007): 195–210; J. E. Innes and David E. Booher "Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century," *Planning Theory and Practice* 5, no. 4 (2005): 419–36.
2. Further opponents included organizations that wanted to protect historical monuments, independent politicians, and splinter parties.
3. In order to understand this correlation we can look at collective mobilizations through literature on "contentious politics.". According to Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, contentious politics can be defined as: "episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants. Roughly translated, the definition refers to collective political struggle." [As quoted in: D. McAdam, S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5]. This chapter broadly concurs with this definition and will investigate the mobilization of Lebanese society against the new institutions as a "collective political struggle."
4. See M. I. Lichbach, "Contending Theories of Contentious Politics and the Structure-Action Problem of Social Order,", *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 1 (1998): 402.
5. Ibid, 403.
6. The most theoretically interesting and significant theories of conflict are those that best illuminate the power relations under the given regime and the opposition against it. This is one reason why the political economy literature became more successful than either the conflict literature or the voting and elections literature during the 1970s and 1980s; the political economy literature was more successful at probing the nature of authority and power in society. Conflict studies only just regained this

connection recently. See: Sidney Tarrow, "Social Movements and Contentious Politics: A Review Article," *American Political Science Review* 90 (1996): 874–83.

7. See N. Brenner and N. Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism," *Antipode* 34 (2002): 349–79; D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); J. Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); N. Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy," *Antipode* 34 (2002): 427–50; E. Swyngedouw, F. Moulaert, and A. Rodriguez, "Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy," *Antipode* 34 (2002): 542–77.
8. For example, see Y. Elsheshtawy (ed.), *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity & Urban Development* (London: Routledge, 2008); Rami Daher, "Neoliberal Urban Transformations in the Arab City," *Urban Environment* 7 (2013): 99–115.
9. For example, see H. Schmid, "Privatised Urbanity or a Politicised Society? Reconstruction in Beirut after the Civil War," *European Planning Studies* 14, no. 3 (2006): 365–81; M. Krijnen and M. Fawaz, "Exception as the Rule: High-End Developments in Neoliberal Beirut," *Built Environment* 36, no. 2 (2010): 117–31.
10. See J. Pierre, ed., *Partnerships in Urban Governance: European and American Experience*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 5; G. Stoker ed., *The New Politics of British Urban Governance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 3.
11. See A. *Cochrane*, *Whatever Happened to Local Government?* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1993); R. A. Beauregard, "Epilogue: Globalization and the City," in*Change and Stability in Urban Europe*, ed. H. Andersson, G. Jorgensen, D. Joye and W. Ostendorf (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); A. Bongenaar, *Corporate Governance and Public Private Partnership: The Case of Japan* (Utrecht: Knag/Faculteitt Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen Universiteit Utrecht, 2001).
12. This external environment is characterized by monetary chaos, speculative movements of financial capital, global location strategies by major transnational corporations, and rapidly intensifying interlocality competition. For details, see R. Imrie and M. Raco, "How New Is the New Local Governance? Lessons from the United Kingdom," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 24 (1999): 45–63.
13. See C. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946–1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989); S. R. Fosler and R. A. Berger, *Public-Private Partnerships in American Cities: Seven Case Studies* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1982), 174–98.
14. See, for example, S. Brownill, *Developing London's Docklands: Another Great Planning Disaster?* (London: Sage Publicatons, 1990).
15. However, the delegation of entire urban centers—such as Downtown Beirut—to a profit-oriented real-estate company is unprecedented. Solidere is said to inspire other major developments in the historic cores of cities across the region, such as Amman. See Rami F. Daher, "Amman: Disguised Genealogy and Recent Urban Restructuring and Neoliberal Threats," in *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy (London: Routledge, 2008), 37–68.
16. For general details on other large-scale development and reconstruction projects, see M. Harb, "Urban Governance in Post-War Beirut: Resources, Negotiations, and Contestations in the Elyssar Project," in *Capital Cities: Ethnographies of Urban Governance in the Middle East*, ed. Seteney Khalid Shami (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001), 111–33; N. Khayat, *Case Studies: The Elyssar Reconstruction Project* (Beirut: LCPS, 2007); M. Fawaz, "Hezbollah as Urban Planner? Questions to and from Planning Theory," *Planning Theory* 20, no. 4 (2009): 323–34; M. Fawaz and M. Ghandour, "Spatial Erasure: Reconstruction Projects in Beirut," *ArteEast Quarterly* (2009).

Accessed at:, http://www.arteeast.org/pages/artenews/extra-territoriality/254/, on July 31, 2012; Howayda al-Harithy (ed.), *Lessons in Postwar Reconstruction: Case Studies from Lebanon in the Aftermath of the 2006 War* (London: Routledge, 2010), 21–45.

17. There was a strong belief that partnerships represented the optimal mechanism for achieving development. For details, see Brenner and Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies."
18. See Jon Pierre, "Introduction: Understanding Governance," in *Debating Governance. Authority, Steering, and Democracy*, ed. Jon Pierre (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1–10.
19. Considering the changed economic conditions since the end of the Cold War, the profit orientation represents a desirable choice for many public-private institutions. See F. Moulaert, E. Swyngedouw, and A. Rodriguez, "Large Scale Urban Development Projects and Local Governance: From Democratic Urban Planning to Besieged Local Governance," *Geographische Zeitschrift* 2–3 (2001): 71–84.
20. Ibid., 71–84; Gerry Stoker, "Introduction: Normative Theory of Local Government and Democracy," in *Rethinking Local Democracy*, ed. Desmond King and Gerry Stoker (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 1–27.
21. For examples, see M. Raco, "Researching the New Urban Governance: An Examination of Closure, Access and Complexities of Institutional Research," *Area* 3 (1999): 271–79; Moulaert et al., "Large Scale Urban Development"; Stoker, "Introduction."
22. See I. Elander and M. Blanc, "Partnerships and Democracy: A Happy Couple in Urban Governance?" in *Governing European Cities: Social Fragmentation and Governance*, ed. Ronald van Kempen and Hans Thor Andersen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 93–124.
23. Swyngedouw et al., "Neoliberal Urbanization," 567–68.
24. In Downtown Beirut, then, decision making was only semi-transparent and numerous protagonists were excluded from it. As Healey et al. expressed: "New forums for decision-making are often not as open and transparent in the way that traditional government decision-making is now expected to be. Real decision-making often takes place behind closed doors." As quoted in: Patsy Healey, Goran Cars, Ali Madanipour, and Claudio de Magalhaes, "Transforming Governance, Institutionalist Analysis and Institutional Capacity," in *Urban Governance, Institutional Capacity and Social Milieux*, ed. Goran Cars, Patsy Healey, Ali Madanipour, and Claudio de Magalhaes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 13.
25. See Lebanese Official Gazette. Accessed at: http://www.pcm.gov.lb/arabic/index.aspx?pageid=5, on August 10, 2013.
26. See O. Kabbani, *Prospects for Lebanon: The Reconstruction of Beirut* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992); Henri Eddeh, *Al-mal–in Hakam* (Beirut: Sharikat Al-Matbou'at Li Al-Tawzee', 1998).
27. Daouk described the prospects of expropriation by a single company as, "the biggest land grab in history." Cited in: Tim Llewellyn, "The Big Build-Up," *Sunday Times*, January 29, 1995.
28. Academic intellectuals included sociologist Nabil Beyhum, archaeologist Suzy Hakimian, and economist Georges Corm, while professionals in architecture and engineering included Assem Salam, Jad Tabet, Hashim Sarkis, and Ousamma Kabbani. As will be shown shortly, many of these professionals were targeted by a "co-optation" campaign initiated by Solidere in the early 1990s.
29. See Solidere's Board of Directors webpage. Accessed at: http://www.solidere.com/corporate/about/board-directors, on August 20, 2013.
30. See R. Becherer, "A Matter of Life and Debt: The Untold Costs of Rafiq Hariri's New Beirut," *The Journal of Architecture* 10 (2005): 17.

31. See Schmid, "Privatised Urbanity or a Politicised Society,"19.
32. For example, see Zayan Khalil, "Angry Property Owners Accuse Solidere of Bribing Judges," *The Daily Star*, October 15, 1999; Reem Haddad, "Property Owners Claim That Solidere Is Corrupt," *The Daily Star*, May 01, 1998.
33. Interview with Mounir Doumani, Beirut, 2012.
34. See N. Wakim, *Al-Ayadi al-Sud.*
35. Reinoud Leenders references Wakim's claim that Hariri bribed around 40 MPs. Leenders finds them difficult to authenticate. See Reinoud Leenders, *The Politics of Corruption in Post-War Lebanon* (London: PhD thesis, SOAS, 2004), 86–87.
36. Interview with Mounir Doumani held on July 27, 2012 in Beirut.
37. First highlighted in Kabbani, *Prospects for Lebanon*, 42.
38. See M. Raschka, "Changing Lifestyles: Some Squatters in Rags Get Riches from Effort to Rebuild Beirut Area: But Others Are Overlooked by a Program That Pays Thousands to Families Displaced by Construction." *The LA Times,* April 18 1995.
39. Ibid.
40. Figure obtained from an interview with Mounir Douaidy held on July 23, 2012 in Beirut.
41. See H. Schmid, "The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut in the Context of Political Geography," *The Arab World Geographer* 5, no.4 (2002): 239–40.
42. Douaidi claims that the program became increasingly greed-driven, as more and more refugees demanded higher payments. The qualification of this process as "greed-driven" seems highly subjective also considering the fact that, even assuming that the squatting population was "greed-driven," the same was being said of the management of Solidere by those who opposed the project.
43. These figures are obtained from a report that was written in *The Daily Star*: Lysandra Ohrstrom, "Solidere: 'Vigilantism under Color of Law," *The Daily Star*, August 6, 2007.
44. See U. Makdisi, "The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon: Reconstructing the Nation-State," *Middle East Report* 200 (1996): 23.
45. Ibid.
46. Interview with Dar Al-Handasah employee Ahmed Makouk held on September 5, 2012 in Beirut.
47. See S. Makdisi, "Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narrative and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidere," *Critical Inquiry* 23,no. 3 (1997): 672.
48. For details on these events, see Eddeh, *Al-mal–in Hakam.*
49. There are allegations of Hariri using his wealth to buy out some of the leading newspapers. For instance, some believe that *An-Nahar* newspaper, which used to report the views of the opposition academics and planners, reached an informal agreement with Hariri that Solidere would award *An-Nahar* an attractive plot of land in the downtown area to build a new headquarters if it stopped reporting the critical views against the reconstruction effort. This is as argued by a number of interviewees, such as Giorgio Tarraf, Habib Battah, and Mohammed Zbib, but denied by Violette Balla (Economic Editor of *An-Nahar*).
50. This is according to information obtained from Samir Kassir, *Beirut* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 531.
51. Ibid., 531–32.
52. This information on the symposiums and protest group is according to: Tamam Mango, *Solidere: The Battle for Beirut's Central District* (Cambridge: Masters Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), 52–54.
53. Some of these experts would later come together and release a series of books documenting their criticisms against the project. Notably, this included a tetralogy

published as '*I'mar Beirut wa-l-al-Fursa da'i'a*' (1996), edited by four of the main individuals mentioned above: Nabil Beyhum, Jad Tabet, Georges Corm, and Assem Salam. Interestingly, one of the authors in the book, Kamal Hamdan, claims that many bookstores in the country were "sold-out" of this critical publication focusing on the reconstruction process in the city center because Hariri was "buying them all." This information is according to an interview with Kamal Hamdan held on August 8, 2012 in Beirut.

54. Quoted in G. Trendle, "A 'Civil War' over Rebuilding Beirut," *Middle East Journal* 22 (1991): 22. Giles Trendle was a freelance journalist based in Beirut and reporting on Lebanon's economy after the civil war. He spent over ten years in Beirut reporting for, among others, *The Economist, The Sunday Times*, CNN and CBS radio. Today, he works for *Al Jazeera English.*
55. See J. Tabet, "Towards a Master Plan for Post-War Lebanon," in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, ed. Samir Khalaf and Philip S. Khoury (New York: Brill, 1998), 95. See also N. Beyhum, "Beyrouth au coeur des debats," *Les Cahiers de l'Orient* 32–33 (1994): 103.
56. See E. Khoury, "The Memory of the City," *Grand Street: Special Issue on Space* 54 (1995): 142–73.
57. See S. Hakimian, "Beyrouth: L'histoire d'une destruction ou les destructions de l'historie," in *Beyrouth: Construire l'avenir, reconstruire le passe?* ed. Nabil Beyhum, Assem Salaam, and Jad Tabet (Beirut: Urban Research Institute, 1996), 17–29.
58. See N. Beyhum, *Construction and the Public Benefit in Society and Culture: Citizens and the City* (Beirut: Dar El-Jadeed, 1995), 50.
59. See G. B descu, "Beyond the Green Line: Sustainability and Beirut's Post-War Reconstruction," *Development* 54, no. 3 (2011): 363.
60. See Schmid, "The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut," 242.
61. Interview with Georges Corm held on July 25, 2012, in Beirut.
62. Interview with Simon Moussalli held on July 11, 2012 in Beirut.
63. According to one analyst, two high-profile architects were won over and their support was proclaimed as an approval of the reconstruction project by the opposition. For details, see Schmid, "The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut," 242.
64. See Kabbani, *Prospects for Lebanon.*
65. This is according to the biographical note in H. Sarkis and P. G. Rowe (eds.), *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and the Reconstruction of the City* (London: Prestel Verlag, 1998), 299.
66. The original criticism was contained in Jad Tabet's work. For example, see Tabet, "Towards a Master Plan." Tabet's move to Solidere to help in the souks project is mentioned in the biographical note in Sarkis and Rowe's book as well. See Sarkis and Rowe, *Projecting Beirut,* 301.
67. Interview with Jad Tabet held on September 28, 2013, in Paris.
68. Ibid.
69. On the other hand, however, it can lead to violence and destabilization. Samuel Huntington makes the argument that when large segments of society mobilize in changing societies, if the existing political conditions are unable to cope with these demands, the polities could witness violence and destabilization. See Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).
70. See J. Markoff, *Waves of Democracy: Social Movements and Political Change* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1996); McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention.*

71. See Joel S. Migdal, "The State in Society: An Approach to Struggle for Domination," in *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, ed. J. S. Migdal, A. Kohli and V. Shue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
72. The emergence and development of heritage protection groups, such as "Save Beirut Heritage," owe thanks to the existence of social media outlets. See group webpage. Accessed at: http://savebeirutheritage.org/, on September 1, 2013. See also group pages on Facebook. Accessed at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/106647959367804/?fref=ts, on September 1, 2013.
73. See, for example, the "Beirut Report," which is a blogging website by local freelance journalist H. Battah. Accessed at: http://www.beirutreport.com/, on September 1, 2013.

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"IFTAR" IN MCDONALD'S': THE EVERYDAY ENCROACHMENT OF CAIRO'S SUBALTERN COSMOPOLITANS

Harry Pettit

INTRODUCTION

On July 12, 2013, two days into the holy month of Ramadan, I received an invitation to break the fast with Kareem and Islam, two 19-year-old middle-class Egyptians living near downtown Cairo. With both about to commence public university courses, they were enjoying their "freedom" before the degree began. The place of choice was McDonalds. This same evening a demonstration was planned in Tahrir by Tamarod—the anti-Morsi rebel campaign—to show support for the military-backed overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi. However, rather than joining the protesters in Tahrir, or indeed the pro-Muslim Brotherhood protesters in Nasr City, most evenings during this tumultuous summer were spent hanging out in this as well as other symbolically "cosmopolitan" spaces. I came to learn that for these middle-class youth, the act of being present in spaces perceived to be frequented by Cairo's elite facilitated a feeling of social elevation, a feeling that their ambitious global dreams could one day be realized. Their active choice to disengage from the contentious politics unfolding on the streets outside, choosing instead to focus their attention on the performance of "cosmopolitanism" is important to voice, understand, and render politically significant.

This story presents an as yet unaccounted for contentious political process unfolding beyond the barricades of Tahrir Square, in Cairo's homes, schools, cafés, and shopping malls. It illuminates the lives of precariously-placed middle-class youth—whom I label "subaltern cosmopolitans"—who move around

the margins of the global city, encroaching upon elite consumption spaces and practices in order to perform the cosmopolitan lifestyle of their dreams. By "cosmopolitanism" this chapter points to an ahistorically constructed narrative that couples "Westernized" lifestyles with elite status in Cairo.[1] Yet these youth remain excluded from exercising complete consumptive mimicry by certain state/elite disciplinary practices as well as their own inability to exercise social mobility that affords access to the production, and the products of their city. Building on everyday resistance literature in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and particularly on Asef Bayat's notion of "quiet encroachment," this chapter seeks to illustrate how the simultaneous incorporation and marginalization of these subaltern cosmopolitans may ultimately unleash a new, as yet unseen consumption-orientated counterpower and process of hegemonic contestation on the segmented urban landscape.[2] Literature on how the marginalized challenge power through everyday practice has tended to view such acts simply as products of false consciousness only reinforcing unequal relations of capital. It is indeed possible to argue that Egypt's hegemonic neoliberal economic project is reaffirmed by these youth through the pacification influenced by exposure to elite consumptive discourses and spaces. This research, though, seeks to conceptualize how aspirational consumption can also form a possible source of resistance and counterpower as ambitious youth become increasingly frustrated by their exclusion from the illusionary promises of modernity and globalization to which they have been exposed by Cairo's economic liberalization. This contradictory phenomenon potentially comprises a hugely important, as yet unrecognized component of Cairo and Egypt's social transformations, as well as the transformations of other developing neoliberal economies. Ever-expanding, formerly middle-class constituencies—which in Egypt were produced out of public sector social mobility under Nasser—must grapple with their marginalization from internationally orientated private educational, employment, and consumptive circuits that increasingly replace the state as the focus of aspirations for prosperity and status. The response of this marginalized group in attempting to negotiate this situation and accumulate cosmopolitan capital is multidimensional, varying according to particular circumstances and life stages. This chapter introduces and explores this negotiation.

Existing literature on everyday resistance has been adept at illuminating the intricacies of contentious politics through the opening up of the constitution, and the reconstitution of dominant power formations within the practices of everyday life. Such incessant struggles over power are too often

marginalized in prominent conceptual frameworks (i.e., historical sociology or conventional social movement theory), which tend to focus on episodes of collective resistance. By identifying the role of subalterns in the constitution of Cairo's discursive formations of modernity, this chapter aims to further illuminate how marginalized subjects are not simply passive receptors of discourse outside visible episodes of resistance. This discussion, though, adds to current frameworks by attempting to conceptualize the agency and ambiguous counterpower of practices that do not fit neatly as conventionally defined "resistance." Academic works have thus far concentrated on marginalized groups that resist power, but have overwhelmingly ignored how subjugated individuals often actively, and ambivalently, take part in processes of hegemonic reproduction. The actions of this precarious middle class in Cairo, as well as those of millions of other members of marginalized classes around the world, cannot be reduced simply to their "taking part" in the reproduction of hegemonic power.

Thus, this chapter demonstrates how Cairo's hegemonic discourses of modernity and globalization are not necessarily resisted, but inhabited, aspired to, and appropriated by the city's middle-class youth. And as the rest of this chapter will show, their consumption practices are indeed contradictory to their political effects. With the help of Walter Benjamin's writings on the city, it illuminates the ambivalent, potentially resistant role of consumption that remains unrecognized in contentious politics.[3]

What follows is a brief analysis of contemporary studies on everyday resistance that outline how this body of work contributes to our understanding of the processes of hegemonic contestation. This chapter then situates this research within those current debates, while outlining the concept of subaltern cosmopolitanism. Finally, the chapter sets out the consumptive performances of these youth—who wished to remain anonymous—and suggests the potential consequences for the study of contentious politics.

EVERYDAY PROCESSES OF HEGEMONIC CONTESTATION

Moving away from determinist applications of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, theories of hegemonic contestation have recently begun to recognize the abilities of marginalized urban residents to challenge dominant orderings of power through everyday practice.[4] Studies from a wide range of disciplines posit how hegemony, as a constant process of creation and recreation, continuously leaves room for antagonistic cultural expressions and

counternarratives to develop.[5] Such a fluid conception possesses an ability to locate resistant tactics even in situations of high social constraint.[6] Thus, in literature illuminating marginalized resistance, the task is to show,

> how the latent contradictions, selectivity, fractures, instability, insufficiency and contingent strength of existing forms of hegemony, subsisting within and between structures of political, economic and cultural power, could be exposed, deepened, manipulated, transformed and converted through material and cultural processes of counter-hegemonic re-articulation.[7]

The grounded, ethnographic approaches utilized are vital to shedding light on how marginalized individuals and groups incessantly contest the "holes and chasms" left by hierarchical power.[8]

There are numerous recent studies that have successfully laid bare the importance of everyday resistance in the MENA region.[9] They all illuminate the ability of marginalized citizens to transform dominant distributions of power through daily activities. To highlight one example, which is particularly relevant to the arguments advanced here, Asef Bayat, through studies in Egypt and Iran, proposes the collective power of quiet encroachment by marginalized urban inhabitants, underlining their ability to reconstitute urban realities "not through formal institutional channels, from which they are largely excluded, but through direct actions in the very zones of exclusion."[10] Bayat defines these "social non-movements" as the:

> collective actions of noncollective actors; they embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organisations.[11]

Examples of the urban poor include sidewalk selling, setting up car parks, appropriating popular labels, and acquiring urban amenities. Through capturing and appropriating urban space, marginalized groups illustrate how the distribution of power can be reimagined through the common practices of survival carried out by large numbers:

> Informal and free-of-charge redistribution of public goods exerts a heavy burden on a state's resources. The rich—real estate owners,

merchants, shopkeepers—also lose properties, brands, and business opportunities.[12]

These practices lay a heavy economic and political burden on dominant groups and in the long run compel states to take greater account of the poor's concerns. Bayat's nuanced analysis, along with other studies on everyday resistance,[13] demonstrates how literature on social movements, by perpetuating bypassing dichotomies of active/passive and individual/collective resistance, limits the ability to view the way unnoticed social practices act as instruments of significant transformations. Although Bayat does not engage in the language of hegemonic contestation, his work illuminates how power is inherently negotiated through the practices of everyday life, and how such practices, when occurring on a large scale over time, can progressively forge transformations of dominant formations of power. This chapter thus contributes to an important body of research that is vital in uncovering the incremental importance of these intricate contestations.

It must also be recognized that this requirement to "resist" on a micro scale always holds within it the imminent possibility of transforming into collective action that can more rapidly endanger a hegemonic structure. Everyday resistance literature holds the prospect of better understanding the origins of, and potentially predicting events of, visible, collective, contentious episodes. Popular political processes are always taking place, "re-orienting collective forces and revising political ideologies."[14] Thus, visible episodes of resistance do not simply emerge all of a sudden; they are part of a long political struggle to disarticulate hegemonies that grounded accounts of everyday resistance have a unique ability to expose. However, the focus on individual agents also must allow for the spontaneous and unpredictable nature of decisions to partake in episodes of resistance—as Kurzman's nuanced study on the Iranian Revolution explicates.[15] Thus, while collective action can never be fully predicted even after the event, the intricate approach of ethnographic work on everyday resistance enables a better understanding of the individualized contexts, rationalities, and daily interactions with embodied power through which resistant subjects are formed and called to act.

However, despite this important progress in the study of contentious politicsprogress which also encompasses recognition of how hegemonic orders are reproduced through manipulation of subaltern resistant agency[16]—there remains room for expansion in the conceptualization of the role of

subordinates in the workings of hegemony. Analyses of hegemonic contestation that only recognize how marginalized residents resist power can remain limiting. This approach ensures that subaltern agency is reinstated, although only in places where resistance seems to occur. How nonresistant subalterns perform a fundamental role in hegemonic stabilization is often ignored, and with it, so also is their agency in all its forms. What is needed is a conception of hegemony in which conforming, nonpassive subalterns are recognized for their constitutive role in discursive reproduction. This approach also holds the possibility of understanding why marginalized citizens make the choice not to engage in contentious politics to overturn their subordination.

There have been very few studies to date, which look at why subjects actively "choose" to reinforce the hegemonic system that keeps them subordinate.[17] Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour*, although not based in the MENA, intricately achieved this in illuminating how labor market hegemony is secured. It is not through any simple process of direct subjectification of working class "lads" by dominant forms of power (i.e. the school as a state institution); but rather their active affirmation of manual labor (as the school's ideology is inverted within their patriarchal cultural praxis), which is the crucial mechanism in ensuring their smooth transition into low-paid employment.[18]

Willis's ethnographic approach is vital in ensuring recognition of the intricate process through which hegemonic structures are rendered powerful and stable; the agency or choice of marginalized individuals proving vital. Subalterns should never be assumed to "passively" exist under hegemonic constraint; rather, they *actively* partake in the articulation and continuation of the dominant workings of power, sometimes in unexpected and ambivalent ways. This conception does not dismiss the power of hegemonic formations; it only embraces the localized conditions through which it is reformulated.

Additionally, and more importantly for this chapter, this nuanced view of agency and hegemonic contestation enables easier acknowledgment of the imminently subversive potential carried by the marginalized even when they appear to subordinate themselves.[19] Both Willis and Chalcraft recognize this destabilizing potential. Chalcraft for example notes how Syrian migrants in Lebanon, who were bound to a system of circular migration as a result of their choice to migrate, were acutely aware of their exploitation—this awareness sometimes manifesting in public protest. He locates the imminent possibility of hegemonic disarticulation due to the constant presence of individual agency:

> precisely because decision-making agency was required by the system, there was always a possibility—especially in the context of ceaseless structural and social change, fracture, and contradiction—that such agency was put to purposes other than those that worked to reproduce the dominant form of power.[20]

Both studies open up a dialectical view that recognizes the simultaneous strength and fragility of hegemonic orders based on the inherent agency it allows the marginalized. As this chapter will illustrate, it is vital to recognize this ambiguity when excluded subjects are not directly resisting hegemonic power. The situations where subordination appears all-encompassing also provide the means through which that subordination can be imminently challenged. It is vital for contentious politics as a discipline to recognize and explore such hidden potentialities, instead of looking only to more obvious "contentious" moments in explaining political change (protest, social movements, and everyday resistant acts).

THE AMBIVALENT POWER OF CONSUMPTION

This recognition of the dialectical nature of subaltern agency has not been transmitted to the act of consumption thus far, at least not in the study of contentious politics.[21]Consumption has gone understudied in this literature; too often it is viewed as a product of false consciousness or forced subjection, a site devoid of revolutionary possibility.[22] However this chapter argues that consumption cannot be dismissed when exploring the origins of contentious politics. It is indeed important to accept that citizens are increasingly subjected as consumers by structures of modernity, and that this subjection provides the fuel that powers the consolidation and expansion of hegemonic capitalist orders within particular contexts.[23] Yet, it is also important to note that hierarchical power cannot fully control the ways in which the marginalized proactively engage with sites of consumption, particularly when modernity cannot fulfill the dreams of the ever-increasing aspirations of the consumer. When the conflictual nature of the consumptive act is looked at more closely, it appears a forgotten source of incessant power and political conflict, as marginalized citizens practically negotiate their consumptive and productive exclusions on a daily basis.

Walter Benjamin provides an enticing, as yet unutilized avenue through which consumption as an ambivalent, imaginative act can be retheorized

within contentious politics. Benjamin saw the potential for progressive change through the conjuring of "wish-images"— the "momentary, fleeting experience of fulfilment that is dimly anticipatory of a reality that is 'not-yet'".[24] Such utopian images that conjure up visions of a classless society and an end to "material scarcity and exploitative labor"[25]are stimulated through consumption experiences and could provide the motivation for marginalized citizens to demand future emancipation. However, the "dream-like" state of the consumer ensures these demands are overwhelmingly dissipated by a momentary façade that causes them to think that their utopian dreams are actualized. Thus, Benjamin accepts that consumption overwhelmingly provides the driving force behind the stability of capitalism as it ensures the satisfaction and pacification of the marginalized.

Yet, rather than viewing it as *simply* the source of "phantasmagoria," Benjamin views consumption as a source of potential power through which marginalized citizens may be called to act to overturn the hegemonic capitalist order. The promise of this revolutionary power lies within the realization of consumers that the dream of material abundance has not been actualized as the consumptive performance would have them believe, its fulfillment instead requiring collective action. Wish-images thus provide an imminent source of emancipatory power to the marginalized. They provide the potential energy to trigger revolutionary action by those who remain frustrated by their lack of inclusion in a capitalist dreamworld of material abundance.

Ghertner provides a recent context where this framework has been practically applied.[26] He illustrates how the Mumbai government's construction of a discourse of world-class aesthetics over elite housing development cultivated an aspiration for inclusion by slum-dwellers. Through the consumption of idyllic housing posters, they conjured up a wish-image for their own material abundance and formulated a demand for resettlement. Ghertner is ultimately left wondering how long such a democratization of aspiration can endure without the democratization of rights or urban space due to the increasing anger that arises from simultaneous consumptive exposure and exclusion.

Both Benjamin and Ghertner's studies, while recognizing how the consumptive experience enables the reproduction of relations of subordination, illuminates the subversive role that aspirational consumption *can* play in revolutionary change. As the rest of this chapter will argue in the context of aspirational middle-class consumers in Cairo, literature on contentious politics

must embrace such consumptive desires as an incessant source of revolutionary fervor that can imminently challenge the power of capitalist elites. Such desires cannot be viewed as explicit resistance, which is what the literature thus far has tended to focus on. Yet, previous works have acknowledged that marginalized citizens mostly do not express anger at capitalist relations of production. Rather, they channel their resistance through consumptive yearnings and needs formulated within the system of capitalistic hegemony to which they are subjected: yearnings and needs that, if not realized, can imminently lead to the emergence of explicit, collective resistance.[27] Subalterns often assert political demands by encroaching upon and appropriating a consumption-orientated discourse constructed from above for their own utopian ends. It is important for scholars concerned with social advancement to recognize and work to harness this transformative power.

What follows is an analysis of the everyday encroachment of young, precarious middle-class Cairenes on elite consumption and production practices and spaces across the city. The discussion will reveal how the consumer practices of these subaltern cosmopolitans cannot only be co-opted, but also considered to be potential sources of revolutionary action and resistance.

CLASS, CULTURE, AND CONSUMPTION IN CAIRO

Cairo's urban landscape and social stratification have long been segmented along consumptive lines.[28] Particularly since the onset of colonization a classed stratification of various aspects of life, "clothing styles, patterns of work and production, consumption styles, family relations, cultural orientation" has entrenched itself across the city.[29] Although complexities and nuances exist, Western stylization has become coupled with elite status and Egyptian cultural practice within popular classes.[30]

Sadat's 1974 post-Nasser "Infitaah" reliberalized the economy, thus opening Cairo to foreign investment and imports. This policy—based on building a "globally-competitive" city—produced rapidly changing class configurations, increasingly disparate urban geographies, and modes of inhabiting and consuming the city.[31] The expression of social status was progressively founded upon patterns of cosmopolitan productive and consumptive performance as captured by Sadat's proclamation that "the goal of every Egyptian should be to have a car and villa."[32] According to de-Koning, the Nasserite professional middle class, created out of large-scale access to university education and public sector employment, split into a locally rooted class which had to contend

with the fact that their state school education no longer ensured social status and employment stability, and an elite class, which, through access to private cosmopolitan educational and job opportunities, came to embody the globally orientated "lifestyle" to which all Egyptians should aspire.[33] De-Koning and Petersen have produced studies that explore this increasingly concentrated cosmopolitan elite.[34] Cairo's "upper-middle class" possesses the ability and resources to become familiar with cosmopolitan capital through their position in domains of education and the labor market: "facility with foreign languages, not only spoken but languages of dress, bodily comportment, brand names, technological familiarity, and current events" signify elite status.[35] Such class distinction is also imprinted on an increasingly segmented cityscape as private schools, institutes, universities, hospitals, restaurants, shopping malls, and coffee shops become the "new public spaces for First-World belonging," eliminating those from lower social strata through everyday state/elite practices of exclusion.[36]

Distinction thus takes place through everyday bodily and consumptive performances and processes of symbolic violence.[37] Cosmopolitan connectivity has become a marker of modernity and sophistication, in turn opening doors to professional jobs and social circles, whereas rootedness and locality serve to identify the popular classes that are increasingly marginalized from such circuits. However as Savage points out, "there is movement between cultural practices, with the result that social and cultural boundaries are porous."[38] His work illustrates how nonelites across the world possess an ability to manipulate sociospatial processes of distinction. De-Koning and Petersen are in danger of perpetuating a dichotomy between Cairo's "diasporic elites" and their working-class counterparts who are confined to localized identities. It is not only the elites who are exposed to Cairo's global production and consumption circuits. The following sections shed light on youth from the precariously placed middle class who are constantly exposed to the neoliberal urban project. They too develop aspirations to join the global economy and possess the ability to exercise inclusion in privileged spaces and consumption lifestyles, refusing to resign to an excluded, localized life.

WHO ARE THE "SUBALTERN COSMOPOLITANS"?

There are millions of nonelite Cairenes who are constantly exposed to the lifestyles provided by the global economy as they move around the city—or as they sit in front of computers/television screens—yet for whom the

employment avenues required for social mobility remain closed due to lack of the necessary educational capital, socioeconomic background, or *wasta* (social connections). The youth (in the 15–24 age group) make up 20 percent of Egypt's population, with the vast majority having received at least secondary level education. The official figure of 25 percent unemployment among this age group suggests a large aspirational, yet frustrated nonelite populace.[39] The discrepancy between skill set, aspirations, and employment availability is a reality with which many young Cairenes below the upper classes must come to terms.

A study conducted by the African Development Bank posits that the Egyptian "middle-class" (per capita daily consumption of $2–$20 in 2005, PPP US dollars) makes up 79.7 percent of the population, with over half living on less than $4 a day and thus vulnerable to sliding into poverty.[40] Being middle class after the Nasser period has been heavily delineated with a notion that university education ensures professional employment.[41] However, as previously stated, the "professional middle class" created under Nasser has been divided since the 1970s. Taking her figure from the share of professional and technical staff in the Cairo governorate labor force, de Koning suggests that this professional class makes up 30 percent of Cairo's estimated 15 million inhabitants.[42] Between 15 to 20 percent of this middle class (5 to 7 percent of all Cairenes) have been able to accumulate cosmopolitan capital in the city's private educational institutions, convert it to economic capital in its modern, internationally orientated workspaces, and consume in its cosmopolitan cafes and shopping malls, which have emerged out of economic liberalization.[43] Those middle class constituents who were left behind also developed aspirations to join this upmarket economy. However, they increasingly realized that without the necessary private education, they lacked the cosmopolitan capital needed to compete.[44] They therefore have been overwhelmingly forced to contend with unemployment, or underemployment in an insecure private sector or low-waged public sector, despite their high educational achievements. There are currently around 2.4 million students enrolled in public universities according to the National Tempus Office, with millions more either waiting to join, or just having left.[45] Many of these youth will experience and negotiate the productive and consumptive marginality on which this chapter seeks to shed light.

Thus, this research provides an introductory ethnographic exploration of the youth who occupy this precarious middle-class social position. All of the

participants are either about to commence, are in, or have just finished public university degrees studying subjects ranging from commerce, engineering, computer programming to fine arts. Their fathers—the students all still live with their parents—are predominantly employed in stable, low-income public sector jobs (school teachers, low level army officers, etc.). They consist of two groups. One contains a brother and sister, as well as three friends (two boys, one girl), who live in a relatively poor, informal neighborhood in the suburbs of Cairo. The others live in a slightly more affluent area in Giza, however parental employment and public education ensure they sit firmly within the middle-class, rather than the upper-middle class discussed by de-Koning and Petersen. These youth are situated in the middle-class group who were left behind by Cairo's economic liberalization. Yet, the stable employment of their fathers, as well as their university education ensures that these groups cannot be considered part of Cairo's lower class. Secure socioeconomic environments, along with their dependent life stage of youth, provide a platform from which they are able to keep alive dreams of joining the global economy enjoyed by the upper-middle class. This small-scale ethnography cannot pretend to capture the multifaceted experiences of a diverse constituency; however, it aims to illuminate some of the structural forces acting on and negotiated by this populace.

I have chosen to describe these youth as subaltern cosmopolitans as the embryonic concept encapsulates well their experiences and potential significance. It has been developed by literature exploring how marginalized people engage in forms of cosmopolitanism to manage situations of economic uncertainty. It identifies that large sections of the world's poor are now cosmopolitan in the sense of possessing an ability to "traverse boundaries and appreciate cultural diversity."[46]One important aspect of Jeffrey and McFarlane's definition is the use of cosmopolitan performance as a strategic resource to extend opportunities or contest power.[47] As discussed above, this paper addresses the potentially transformative counterpower that arises out of cosmopolitan consumptive performances. However, Jeffrey and McFarlane rightly recognize that cosmopolitan orientations may be entwined with the interests of governments and urban elites, and thus, have the effect of extending and justifying their dominance. Subaltern cosmopolitanism—in a similar vein to consumption—is therefore contradictory in its political effects. As will be illustrated, it is ultimately still a matter of contention whether exposure to cosmopolitan dispositions has a pacifying effect on Cairo's middle-class

youth, thus extending capitalist power; or whether unfulfilled consumptive-oriented aspirations act to incite demands for wider social change. The point of this chapter is to argue that it is vital to identify such contradictions.

What *is* clear though is that coverage of Egypt by media and academia alike—as well as much of the literature on contentious politics more generally—has recently focused on the power of public spectacles of resistance.[48] This chapter communicates a counternarrative to this conventional focus; it opens up other stories and aspirations being articulated beyond the barricades of Tahrir. The subaltern category actually describes those who are excluded from established structures of political representation.[49] Cairo's aspirational lower-middle-class youth have had their voices rendered inaudible in Egypt's postrevolutionary period, but their discrete consumption-oriented activities must also be viewed as possessing the potential to make claims on the urban landscape. They articulate political positions rooted in cosmopolitanism, in contrast to political binaries extended in Egyptian popular discourse at the moment—namely, being pro-Morsi or pro-military. I now turn to the articulation of their cosmopolitan performances and dreams, before returning to the literature on contentious politics in order to work through how their practices can add to its conceptualization. The views expressed here represent the anecdotal sentiments expressed by the participants that are vital in shaping their daily activities.

DREAMING BEYOND THE CITY

These middle-class youth have developed varying dreams of joining the global economy:

> I would like to own a restaurant, a chain as big as McDonalds, travel all over the world, and be with my family. Nour (aged 20).
> I wish to own an electronics company, move to Japan and get a job in computer programming. Ayman (aged 19).
> I wish to be famous, by any method, maybe by playing football, and I want to live in London. Islam (aged 20).

As outlined, Cairo has a long colonial and postcolonial history of classed stratification along consumptive lines, which has been recently reinvigorated by a neoliberal urban project. Thus the foreign orientation of youth aspirations from across the social spectrum has its roots in exposure to these processes.

There is of course a dialectical relationship between the formulation of cosmopolitan dreams and engagement in globalized consumption; exposure to globalized consumption ferments those dreams, and, as shown below, also creates the desire to engage in such consumption. The fact that Egypt also has a struggling economy and unstable political landscape means that many well-educated youth find it hard to see a satisfactory future in Egypt's labor market. The reasons behind *these* youth wanting to emigrate can be split into four categories: education, jobs, people, and politics. There is an overriding sense that Egypt's educational and recruitment systems do not reward hard work, favoring instead people with money, expensive education, and connections:

> The education system doesn't depend on the quality of the students but how good grades they get, and the way people get grades is very corrupt, I want to go somewhere other than Egypt for my children to get a real good education. (Ayman)
> A company might hire someone 'cos he just has good education when he doesn't have the talent or resolve to do the job; they wouldn't hire someone 'cos he doesn't have the same education when he has the talent and resolve to get the job done well. (Mohammed)

Most of the youth also expressed negative attitudes toward Egyptian people, both "poor" and "rich," describing them as "simple minded" and having "old, bad standards" when compared to people in the West.

Finally, there was a view, two and a half years after the revolution, that Egypt is incapable of copying Western "democracy":

> As you can see from the previous and current situation in Egypt, we can't go for democracy as long as we think that everyone can get what he wants…I'm tired of politics here so have little interest. (Ayman)

These attitudes toward the socioeconomic and political situation were juxtaposed to a perception of fairness, freedom, and economic prosperity in the West:

> The West has almost everything we don't have here. I think I can get a good job if I work hard, which is not possible here. Also you don't have to worry about politics. (Ahmed)
> I think the people in the West are more civilized. There I wouldn't have to worry about the safety of my kids everyday like here. (Riham)

There is an overwhelming perception that in the West they would be free to achieve their lofty ambitions, whereas in Egypt there exist too many socio-economic barriers. However, it is possible to find such perceptions throughout much of the non-Western world.[50]

PERFORMING THE DREAM

These aspirations to move out of Egypt shape the way these youth orient their daily practices and conversations. Everyday exposure to cosmopolitan consumerism comes from a variety of inexpensive sources that are possible despite their limited disposable income: the Internet, television, music, modern consumer items such as mobile phones, and cosmopolitan, consumption-orientated spaces like shopping malls, cafés, and restaurants. Through their active performances, these youth attempt to create a guise of a higher status that is denied by their lack of necessary capital. In the process, they distinguish themselves from the lower-/middle-class people around them. The best way to illustrate these attempts is to set out the story of one of these youth.

Ayman (20) is about to begin a degree in engineering. As stated above, he aspires to move abroad, to Japan, as he considers it the world leader in computer technology. He also views Japan as a better place to live and raise children:

> Japan has everything we don't have…I first started getting interested in what they do and I liked their culture, people are good, and I don't have to care about politics there. If I married there I wouldn't be worried about my kids, plus I would enjoy speaking their language every day and I would enjoy my daily life, right now I don't enjoy my life.

Ayman spends much of his time in his bedroom. The immediately noticeable object as you enter is an expensive-looking Samsung computer. It was a recent acquisition, bought for LE7000 (£700) with the help of the savings his father had kept aside for his marriage. Ayman had told his father that the computer would be a more useful purchase at the moment as it would enable him to learn computer programming. Thus Ayman spends much of his time on his computer, preferring to work alone in his room rather than to hang out with friends. It must be said that school/university study is a huge priority for all these youth. This was partly fuelled by parental pressure, but also very much by their own ambitions for future mobility. Educational study often becomes part of the cosmopolitan performance, and Ayman's Japanese dream

fuelled his daily practices in this regard. The ability to work on computer programming in his flat in a popular quarter of Cairo gives him the hope that his dream can become reality:

> Wanting to go to Japan affects my day a bit negatively since traveling from Egypt is so hard, it requires so much money, plus I didn't finish my studies here, that gets me a bit depressed but at the same time all the work I do, and I only study to get a job to save money to go there, keeps me happy.

The computer does not just afford access to programming software, it also provides the Internet, and the globalized commodities and information held therein. For Ayman, this enables him to download his favorite television show "Fairy Tale," a Japanese "Anime" cartoon series. He explained to me why he watches the show:

> There's emptiness in my heart that won't be filled easily, I am not sure why, but the only time I feel this emptiness is filled is when I watch Anime…maybe cause I sometimes feel I can't do anything about this world I live in…I watch it when someone treats me bad, I can get revenge through characters in the show…I feel that if I want to live happy in this world I need to change it, that's what I feel when I watch anime and that's why I watch it all the time!

The show provides Ayman with a means to escape the difficulties of his everyday existence. He also listens to Japanese music, learns Japanese words, and attempts to cook Japanese food. All of these practices provide him with inexpensive ways to submerse himself in the culture and society of his dreams, bringing his future aspirations temporarily closer to his challenging daily reality. Ayman's story is one of many that uncover the global aspirations and performances of these youth.

As previously stated, these subaltern cosmopolitans also show willingness to encroach upon spaces produced and maintained for use by, and exchange value for Cairo's elite. Shopping malls provide vivid illustrations of their capability to transgress classed urban divides. Built in the late 1990s in the upper-class district of Nasr City, CityStars is just one example of the Americanized consumer complexes—shops include McDonalds, Zara, H&M, and Starbucks—that continue to spring up to satisfy the globalized consumption desires of Cairo's elite, as well as many other elite constituencies around the

world. According to brochures placed throughout the mall, it provides "international-standard commodities and shopping experiences." Even though they cannot afford much (just a Coca-Cola or coffee), these youth make the one and a half hour journey approximately twice a month to hang out in its cafés, look at its shops, and converse with friends.

Abaza, who looks at youth below the social strata of those in this research, has previously illustrated how "once in these walled-off, exclusive spaces, low-income Egyptians imitate a higher social status through their dress and mere presence."[51]The mall thus provides an accessible space in which youth can include themselves in the aesthetic cosmopolitan lifestyle of urban elites, escaping the struggles of everyday life outside:

> I like hanging out in the mall, it is really cool isn't it? We come here often to look at the shops or just get a coffee. It has a lot of brands I like, and it is a lot cleaner and nicer place to be than the street. (Muhammad)
> People are more civilised in the mall, there is no fighting like you always see on the streets. (Kareem)

The perception of the space as "civilised" and "clean" not only echoes previous research on the attraction of shopping malls,[52] but also echoes the views of the West for these youth. Discourses of civilizationalism and cleanliness align the space of the mall with the society of their dreams. It becomes an accessible place in which they are able to create a "cosmopolitanization" of their daily lives while they wait in the hope that international mobility arrives. Two of the participants actually held employment in restaurants within malls. Thus, they may not have been able to consume in the mall, yet they were allowed peripheral access to the production circuits of Cairo's global economy.

There are diverse reasons for engaging in such cosmopolitan practices, however, as illustrated, these youth overwhelmingly—either implicitly or explicitly—connected these activities to future aspirations. As Jeffrey and McFarlane state, cosmopolitan dispositions often act as coping mechanisms to manage situations of economic uncertainty. Through performances in this regard, a desire to implement a higher status and escape or transform their everyday lives in the lower-/middle-class areas of Cairo manifested itself. Globalized lifestyles create a feeling of elevation and mobility, a feeling that they can partake in the global economy being produced in the urban landscape around them. They appropriate elite cultural capital through their

inexpensive cosmopolitan practices, keeping their global dreams alive and distinguishing themselves from the lower/middle classes around them.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

However, as mentioned, these middle-class youth lack the educational (private schooling), economic (on account of their fathers' low-income), and social (connections) capital to be considered part of Cairo's upper-middle class. Such restrictions threaten to destroy their aspirations for social mobility in the long run, and are already restricting their cosmopolitan performances in the present. In terms of long-term employment prospects, Nour expressed a yearning to be a journalist, however she realizes that it will be extremely challenging due to the need for *wasta* in Egypt's media, as well as a private education. Others who dreamt of moving abroad for study or employment expressed knowledge of its difficulty, knowing that scholarships, visas, and indeed jobs would be hard to obtain.

Despite this ever-growing knowledge, the dependent life stage of youth as well as their relatively stable familial backgrounds and educational achievements temporarily maintain the hope that global dreams can be achieved. Their middle-class youth status ensures they possess the free time (due to them not needing jobs to add to the family income), some disposable income from parents, and knowledge of the English language to be able to work toward their aspirations on a daily basis through the inexpensive consumption practices described above. They submerge themselves in the societies they wish to travel to in order to manage the sadness and frustration that continues to arise out of the ever-increasing reminders of the difficulties they will face in achieving mobility at home and abroad.

Yet, there also exist multiple restrictions on these cosmopolitan performances that prevent complete immersion in elite consumption circles. The experience of the shopping mall again provides a vivid example of the persistent friction between inclusion and exclusion. These youth are able to hang out in the mall, although they often require girls to get past security and frequently face ejection. This reflects the everyday practices of exclusion that attempt to keep out groups of lower-class boys from Cairo's elite spaces. This form of exclusion is intertwined with the Islamic practices of the youth themselves, as they believe it impious to hang out with girls pre-marriage. Thus processes of symbolic violence often utilize classed Islamic norms to ensure marginalization.[53] Lack of economic capital also prevents them from buying

the mall's branded clothes, thus restricting their experience to window shopping—they never feel comfortable enough to enter shops or try on clothes, for example. This low purchasing-power also restricts their cosmopolitan performance in other ways, for example, by preventing them from buying the mobile phone they crave, going on holidays abroad, or, in Ayman's case, eating in Japanese restaurants. However, despite this inability to consume particular products, they maintain the ability to consume the auras and discourses of elite consumption in the city. The possible consequences of of how this creeping experience of marginality could effect these youth as they make the transition to adulthood in the coming years should now be explored. The conclusion also reconnects their experiences to the conceptual debates.

CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the literature on "everyday resistance," it can be seen that the encroachment on globalized spaces by these young subaltern cosmopolitans challenges the bifurcated city produced and maintained by the government and urban elites. By inhabiting elite spaces and indulging in consumption practices in discreet ways, these youth subvert the hegemonic ordering of urban space and cultural forms that attempt to keep separate the cosmopolitan elite and localized poor. They undermine the logic that consumption requires economic capital, instead illuminating how cosmopolitan, consumption-oriented attitudes can formulate partial inclusion in desirable consumption circuits. They make themselves visible, in a similar vein to Bayat's urban poor, and instigate a challenge to disciplinary practices that attempt to exclude them from upper-class consumption circuits, albeit not always with seamless success. De-Koning for example also alluded to the ability of elites to move on to more exclusive spaces when threatened by such encroachment, and this is something that must be considered.[54] However, through this mimetic seizure of elite spaces, the city's marginalized are still able to render urban space as lived, produced, and contestable rather than abstracted and depoliticized as the politicoeconomic elite would like. Their politics of presence ensures that elite and governmental spatial control of Cairo's segmented map is imminently under threat.[55]

However, despite this ability to break down urban classed borders, the aspirational performances of these youth cannot be defined as conventional "resistance" that directly challenges the power of Cairo's elite. It is indeed possible to argue that the city's hegemonic neoliberal economic project is

reaffirmed by these youth; their actions justifying and extending the dominance of urban elites as Jeffery and McFarlane predict. By choosing to join the race to reap the rewards of affluence that modernity provides to elites, these subaltern cosmopolitans legitimize the capitalist organization of urban processes. This affirmation manifests itself in a very real sense as these middle-class youth choose overwhelmingly not to partake in the contentious political processes unfolding on Cairo's streets. They are essentially pacified and subjected by their partial inclusion in elite consumption and production circuits; a partial inclusion that is keeping alive dreams of joining the global economy, and thus, acting to prevent their engagement in contentious politics.

Yet, it is not sufficient to leave the discussion there. Young aspirational middle-class Cairenes are indeed subjected by the discourse—and the spaces—of the consumption-oriented global city. However, as mentioned earlier, the literature must look in depth at the active, ambivalent engagement with, and manipulation of, hegemonic discourses by the marginalized. Forms of resistance are always articulated within, and cannot be separated from the system of hegemony which encompasses them. It is out of such discreet forms of agency that counterhegemonies can emerge, often very suddenly and unpredictably.[56]

Thus the exposure and subjection of *these* youth has unintentionally democratized and cultivated desires for inclusion in elite lifestyles—desires that Cairo's economy will struggle to fulfill. The aspirational consumption of these middle-class youth conjures up—in a similar way to the mimetic consumption of idyllic housing in Mumbai—a wish-image to reap the perceived rewards of affluence and mobility offered by Cairo's globalized "modernization." The emergence of this wish-image to be included in elite consumption and production circuits acts as a source of potential power, due to the probability that these dreams may not be realized in reality. The exclusive practices of urban elites—as well as an inability for Cairo's precarious middle class to exercise social mobility—prevent complete consumptive and productive mimicry. As they approach the independent stage of adulthood, their partial inclusion may well not be enough to pacify these aspirational youth. Unless Egypt's economic system that marginalizes those without cosmopolitan economic, social, cultural, and educational capital is radically transformed, the chances are that these youth will be unable to realize much mobility. When and if their exclusion is solidified through lack of employment options, or lack of consumptive possibilities, the collective frustration that arises could well lead to renewed and more explicit calls for wider socioeconomic change.

Thus what is laid bare by the actions of these subaltern cosmopolitans is the potential power, however ambivalent and uncertain, of consumption to stimulate contentious political processes. The cultivation of a collective demand for inclusion—and potentially future collective action—through the act of consumption, or at least exposure to consumptive discourses and spaces, must be recognized and taken seriously within the literature of contentious politics. As everyday resistance studies have already shown, marginalized resistance does not arise out of a conscious anticapitalist sentiment, but rather, overwhelmingly, out of desires for self-improvement, which in Cairo are manifested through the global economy. This chapter has illustrated how aspirational commodity consumption may imminently hold revolutionary potential. Across the MENA and the rest of the world, there are rapidly expanding middle-class populaces who become increasingly exposed to capitalist modernities. They develop dreams of reaping the consumptive and productive benefits of the global economy, yet, they often lack the employment opportunities, and various forms of capital required to join an ever-decreasing and exclusive affluent populace and urban landscape. Thus, the potential of this form of consumption-oriented counterpower is not just confined to Egypt. Further research must investigate this ambivalent form of contentious politics as it manifests itself across the globe, while at the same time, taking into account this potential source of resistant power when analyzing contentious political events, both past and future. For example, the 2011 Egyptian revolution could well be potentially further understood through these as yet hidden mechanisms.

It is also ultimately the job of further research to explore the impact on contentious politics as these youth attempt to make the transition from dependence to independent adulthood. Of course, there exists the possibility that these youth will become ever more disenchanted and thus not develop into revolutionary subjects. For the moment though, it is vital to recognize the ambiguous position of this aspirational group that expects the rewards of economic liberalization. The voices of these subalterns remain drowned out by the loud resistant calls for political and economic change coming from Egypt's streets. But these youth continue, unheard, working and performing within the home, the university, and the shopping mall. Yet, unless their dreams are fulfilled, they could well join the masses in the near future to more actively demand access.

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CONCLUSION

John Chalcraft

This rich and wide-ranging volume makes an important contribution to understanding protest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in terms of the tools and methods of both classical social movement theory and of contentious politics. The volume sits comfortably alongside other recent interventions,[1] in a field energized by the Arab uprisings. These brief concluding remarks highlight some of the ways in which this book both draws MENA research into larger disciplinary conversations about mobilization and illuminates important dynamics on the ground. The strongest chapters, I will argue, suggest ways to deepen or exceed the limits of by now conventional concepts, whether objectivist or constructionist, in studies of contestation.

Many of the authors define their subject by drawing on one or other of the standard definitions of contentious politics or social movements. Some go deeper. Hariri's contribution is outstanding. She puts together a well-crafted and researched argument that the Iraqi uprising of 1920 is best understood as an episode of "transgressive contention," succinctly defined *pace* McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly as "a case of contentious politics mobilising new political actors and employing innovative practices, all of which increase its scope for producing political change." Her central argument is that "the Iraqi independence movement was at the centre of a process by which an accepted model of political community was being forged through contentious claim-making, and it was the convergence upon a particular model of Iraqi polity that meant the movement had potential for substantial political change." Hariri explains that

> the establishment of a temporary national government was both an innovative and historically unprecedented act and offered one of the most powerful contentious practices of the uprising. It provided a potent demonstration of the genuine possibilities for political cooperation between the mid-Euphrates tribes, the Sunni and Shia Baghdadi nationalists and the Shia *ulema*.

Hariri offers a powerful exposition of how one of the key concepts of the original *Dynamics of Contention* program[2]—transgressive contention—can make sense of an important and transformative episode of protest. This is all the more important because Tarrow and Tilly dropped the notion in their later work.[3] Hariri's chapter is a key illustration of the ways in which contentious mobilization, and the new alignments it throws up, cannot be merely epiphenomenal, but is generative as well. In the process, Hariri re-focuses our attention on the importance of the 1920 uprising in the making of Iraqi nationalism, and argues insightfully that post-1920 sectarian conflicts in Iraq were less an expression of ancient confessional hatreds and more a "result of how the Iraqi state would relate to the independence movement and whether it sought to institutionalise [its] … inclusive patriotism."

Wilken's chapter is another suggestive foray into both ontology and *generative* contentious politics. Wilkens draws on theories of constitutionalism, uncommon in social movement theory. He makes use of the distinction between *pouvoir constitué* (referring to the power of existing institutions) and *pouvoir constituant* (referring to the power of the people). He conjures with the idea of processes that might uncouple the *pouvoir constitué* and the *pouvoir constituent* and thereby generate some new or unexpected forms of alterity between the two, as well as with processes that render the construction of *pouvoir constituent* subject to border-crossing and transnational forces.

In drawing our attention to the translocal, Wilkens is not alone: Nosova suggestively situates the history of protest in Kuwait in a wider transnational context, while not losing sight of the domestic; Zarnett finds unexpected relationships between activism and diaspora, while Morrison exposes some of her sustained research on the rise of the transnational Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement for Palestinian rights. These contributions together plausibly tell us that the translocal and "globalization" matter; that they are political, cultural, and migratory, not just about "the social life of things"; that they are more "lumpy," appropriated, and complex than unidirectional and linear; and that they complement and imbricate, rather than erase, the local.

Göksel and Jay remind us that the Arab uprisings were not all about Arabs by respectively taking up issues relating to Kurdish and Amazigh ("Berber") mobilizations. Galián points beyond the usual emphasis on either liberal youth or Islamism by picking up on the role of small anarchist groups in contemporary Egypt and insisting on the importance of tracing their submerged history. Gibril considers the unexpected role of the Ultras (highly committed football fans) in contentious mobilization in Egypt, reminding us suggestively

of the potency of the "apolitical political": the importance of actors who refuse to define what they do as political, while acting in ways that are *de facto* politically consequential.

Through research on forms of everyday resistance among Palestinian Israeli women, Zinngrebe seeks to challenge the basic definition of contentious (as opposed to noncontentious) politics. Zinngrebe argues that in some cases supposedly highly transacted and routinized forms of the political, such as voting or accessing health care, can be highly "contentious" in some sense, and certainly interwoven with active strategies of resistance. At the very least, this work draws attention to important practices of resistance that fall outside the category of organized and overt claim making that is so dominant in theories of contentious politics.

Another interesting challenge to conventional categories comes in Dursun's chapter, which treats little-known movements in contempory Turkey such as "Anti-Capitalist Muslims." Dursun aims to complicate the commonly drawn contrast between movements that are about recognition and identity on the one hand, and movements that are about redistribution and political economy on the other. She picks up on forms of activism in which claims about identity and claims about redistribution are imbricated and potentially mutually reinforcing.

Explanations for protest couched in terms of the familiarly overworked notion of political opportunity make their appearance in various parts of the volume. Institutional openings and closures, the existence of international and local allies, and divisions among elites are linked in various ways to the Coptic Maspero Youth Movement in Egypt by Delgado, and to the changing shape and fortunes of protest in Syria by Gani and Lilli. Recent protests in Turkey, argue Altıok-Kar ıyaka and Yıldırım, were prolonged by the very mixture of escalated force and negotiated-management models of policing. These authors demonstrate the continuing relevance of the study of political opportunities and threats, while at least implicitly pointing to some of the characteristic limits of thinking in these terms. It is not that we cannot agree with von Weitershausen's chapter, which argues that the study of the policies of both domestic and foreign states matters for the study of protest. It is more that the concept of political opportunity structures (POS) itself is often either too narrow or too indeterminate in matters of causation. Too narrow because it is supposed to serve as *the* vehicle for detailing explanatory extra-movement context and is thus inevitably stretched to include factors that seem to fall outside a meaningfully tight use of the concept. Delgado's

work, for example, includes the alliances made between Coptic youth protestors and two important Coptic priests. Arguably what is suggested here is the study less of political opportunity structures per se, and more the question of how alliances are forged or lost in social movements: an important point in its own right. The concept of POS is too indeterminate, further, in that opportunity or its opposite are shown to both prolong or diminish protest. Gani's incisive analysis, for example, points to the problems resulting from having a diplomatic alliance-seeking strategy, while Lilli argues on the contrary that protesters need foreign-state allies in order to sustain significant challenges to local regimes. Underlined here is the causal indeterminacy of the POS concept itself. It is hard not to find plausible Gani's detailed and well-argued thesis about the weakness in grounded, mass mobilization that accrued to the ("secular") Syrian opposition as a result of their diplomatic strategy. Arguably, this point, however, leads us not back into the causally ambiguous arms of POS, but toward a consideration of the role played by forms of strategic leadership in the fate and fortunes of movements.

In fleshing out the study of relevant explanatory context beyond political opportunity, an important feature of the volume is the refusal of a number of contributors to accept the "strange death" of capitalism in social movement studies. Pettit explores aspirations to Western lifestyles and consumption patterns by "subaltern cosmopolitans" in contemporary Cairo; Parker and Debruyne trace reconfigurations of space and statehood under neoliberalism in Jordan; Tartir refers to contentious *economics* as part of the struggle to inject a meaningful politics into the neoliberalism and aid-dependency of the Palestinian Authority, while Makarem considers unsuccessful protests against a particular form of neoliberal urban "development" in Lebanon in the 1990s. Spatiality, parastatal organizations, and consumption play important roles, while economics never comes without its politics. These contributions at the very least indicate the relevance of neoliberal economic contexts, without succumbing to determinism on the one hand, or to the reductionism of POS on the other. "Bringing the economy back in" will be a major challenge to future social movement studies.

Social movement theorists have rightly remarked that since the 1990s the direction in the field has been toward social constructionism: many of the most innovative contributions have set out to demonstrate that what was once thought objective, inert, and/or necessary is better conceived as subjective, dynamically interrelated, and/or contingent. What is perhaps most interesting

about this volume is that it does not seem to be centrally concerned with driving forward constructionism. The volume's key debates and concerns do not hinge on winning this battle: hence Dursun's interest in movements about *both* recognition and redistribution; Hariri's close attention to both generative protest and historical context; Tartir's clear recognition that contentious economics involves context and struggle; Gani's evident interest in both strategic leadership and international alignments; Wilken's tense juxtaposition of the *pouvoir constitué* with that of the *pouvoir constituant*, and Pettit's point that neoliberal consumption aspirations might lead not just to hegemonic incorporation but through disappointment back to resistance. Perhaps the salutary message is, finally, that the constructionists have had their day, and it is time to accept the importance of both context and construct, and to move forward, working through the resulting contradictions and searching for new conceptual frameworks. At the very least, the energies and ideas at work in this volume bode well for future research and for the development of our understanding of protest in the MENA and beyond.

NOTES

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