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Jihadism, White Supremacy, and the New Man

A Study of Extremism and Masculinity

Sad boys are the latest advancement in terrorist technology. Right wing extremism commanded media attention in the Middle East and the United States for much of the 2010s in part because of its consistent appeal to young, lonely, and depressed young men. Two types of groups gained attention throughout media narratives. Islamic extremism groups, like ISIS and Al-Qaeda, saw rapid increases in membership from the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, much to the surprise and shock of defense and public officials (Center for Strategic and International Studies 2018). Second, white supremacist groups and other hate groups increased their online presence, often resulting in "lone-wolf" attacks in public venues that scared and confused the American public (Statista Research Department 2020; Lowery 2018). The violent and random attacks opened questions and concerns about the appeal of extremist groups and their recruitment methods, and how their message reaches younger and impressionable men.

The attraction to jihadist and supremacist armies seemed to stem from their promise to provide young men success in traditional masculine roles. Twenty-first century terrorism, while largely online, frequently tailored traditional themes and archetypes of masculinity throughout recruitment narratives. Extremist groups adapted ideas of "what it means to be a man" into narratives, stories, and songs; promises of "manhood" would be achieved by recruits who pledged themselves to the groups' aims. Jihadist armies called upon young men to become defenders of the Islamic faith, protecting the religious community against forces that sought to harm it (Al-Hayat Media, 2014). White supremacist groups urged young white men to become protectors of a European-American legacy and providers for a "white future" (Anonymous, 2019). These types of messages were very effective in recruiting numbers of

young men who felt disillusioned about their positions in society and inadequate about themselves. The young men who joined each group likely came from circumstances where opportunities for achievement and accomplishment were limited. Similarly, the group's ideologies and purpose served to validate young men's concerns and provide opportunities for self-fulfillment. Extremism's popularity continues to be highly concerning, and the rate at which participation increases is even more alarming.

While jihadist and white supremacist groups have vastly different ideological motives, their narratives, recruitment strategy, and retention of young men follow a distinct pattern. Each group's narrative serves two parts: first, it explains why life's hardships are the efforts of an outside, collective enemy. Second, it conjures images of success in traditional masculine roles; the promise upon joining is becoming a hero on the battlefield, a wise leader, or a protector of a community. A group's recruiters or established members push the group's narrative and ideology as a solution to life's adversities: unemployment, romantic failure, or unhappiness. Recruiters befriend or direct message potential members through online platforms, explaining that membership is a path to circumvent these hardships. As they begin their membership, young men find a unique niche of validation for their discouragement and an outlet for their frustrations. Their continued dedication to the groups' cause yields comradery, recognition by peers, and promotion within the group, increasing the chance of long-term engagement. In some cases, long-term members perform lone-wolf attacks to further the groups' visibility and cause. The repeated themes, grooming messages, and items promised to new recruits offer commentary on the future of terrorism and themes of masculinity in the new decade.

This research paper examines how extremist groups tailor themes of masculinity into recruitment messages and how themes of traditional masculinity are effective tools for retainment. By examining the context and circumstances that lead to the rise of extremist groups, we can better understand their appeal to groups of young, disadvantaged men. The independent variable of this research is "masculine excellence," or promoted images of success in traditional masculine roles found throughout circulated recruitment materials, namely, multimedia and written media. While the selected pieces of media represent a limited selection of

members, the available published media illustrates how masculine excellence serves to empower young men and to strengthen the relevant messages of the groups. The two dependent variables are fighter demographics (age, nationality, and socio-economic position) and long-term membership. As extremist groups offer avenues to achieve "masculine excellence" through adherence to their cause, fighter demographics will homogenize. Similarly, groups that partner masculine excellence themes with leadership opportunities, young men's chances of long-term membership increase. The groups examined will be ISIS from 2010 to 2015, Al-Qaeda from 1980 to 2015, and online white supremacist ideology from 2010 to 2016. Through examining the recruitment narratives and demographics of each right-wing extremist group, the reasons for extremism's appeal may provide commentary on the evolving nature of online terrorism, new themes of masculinity, and the social dynamics of the next decade.

Founded in Anger, They Prey on the Weak

Extremist groups are puzzling for several reasons: they are often unbelievably violent, their members take pride in inflicting pain, and they espouse a deep, fraternal love among members (Khalaf 2014). Extremist groups foster innovation for malicious intents. Group members engineer new tactics, weapons, and means to kill people on a large, indiscriminate scale (Miller-Idriss 2019). At the same time, individuals within the group enjoy a high degree of acceptance and comradery among one another. Members build friendships based on common values, motives, and "brotherly support" through participation in violence (Heggehammer 2017). Extremist groups are often elaborate communities or hierarchies that predicate leadership on adherence to strict ideological rules, hazing rituals, and indoctrination processes (Bloom 2016). Mainstream confusion comes from their brand as "hypermasculine" segments of society: they embody hostile, violent aggression alongside deep, brotherly love (Heggehammer 2017). While the two ideas seem mutually exclusive, Middle Eastern and U.S. extremist groups are seen often seen as an option to bypass the angst of unemployment, romantic failure, or meaninglessness. They are met with rage and disgust by mainstream media, but for poor and pessimistic young men, it is the route to success, fulfillment, and purpose in life.

ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and white supremacist ideology each violently emerged out of societies that underwent significant changes. Their presence surged during the past twenty years and fed opportunities to several thousand people. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or the Levant, as in ISIL), was founded by former Al-Qaeda member Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq (Islamic Networks Group n.d.) and operated "in the rural and desert areas of central and northern Iraq, primarily within and near Sunni populations, with some presence in major population areas (Central Intelligence Agency n.d.). Its predecessor, Al-Qaeda ("the base"), was a Salafi organization born in Pakistan, but spread throughout Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states, and Africa (Choi 2020). In the few years before and after 9/11, the group executed a number of car bombings and suicide attacks throughout the Middle East and United States and became the U.S.'s target during the War on Terror (Hanna 2016). At the same time, 2016-2018 saw an unprecedented increase in homegrown terrorism: mass shootings, bombings, and hate crimes were linked with violent right-wing extremism throughout the U.S. (Anti-Defamation League 2019). Nearly every mass shooting perpetrator in the U.S. in 2018 was exposed to right-wing extremist ideologies like white nationalism over online forums (Southern Poverty Law Center 2012). These groups fed on public fear and saw lasting support from a target demographic.

To curb their influence, politicians and security officials attempted to de-platform online networks where violent ideas were shared. Right-wing forums are often shut down, banned, removed, or deleted as they grow and gain traction, resulting in a temporary moratorium on ideological spread. Recruitment systems and terrorist messages were targeted and censored with the advent of technological developments, like artificial intelligence capabilities identifying terrorist speech (MacKinnon, 2017). These measures produced significant challenges to right-wing organizations for a limited time, but it soon became clear that the efforts to curb extremist speech online would not be a complete or perfect strategy. As one forum was closed, a new website would open to allow the extremist material to proliferate (Brantly, 2015). While a major challenge for recruitment is censorship and community rules, circumventing the rules is possible.

While dedicated forums are removed from public view, individual users post propaganda videos, music, poetry, memes,

or magazines that outpace government bans. Jihadist groups often reach out to interested individuals through anonymous usernames and private message to "talent-scout" specific individuals with desirable traits, characteristics, or goals (Southern Poverty Law Center 2020; Bloom 2016). The one-on-one conversations offer a unique interaction because online "friends" personally introduce the young men to the rhetoric of the group (Callimachi 2015). Having a personal relationship with recruiters has tipped many new recruits into sharing and enlisting in the cause. These friends are confidants that validate the young man's feeling and simultaneously encourage his pursuits in the group. Recruiters have an important responsibility to the groups' leadership to share published material, send gifts, encourage conversion, or discuss the goals of the group with impressionable young men (Palmer 2019; Callimachi 2015). The product of focused recruitment efforts is higher numbers of new recruits pledging lasting allegiance.

Each extremist group employed personalized tactics and messages to gain membership from vulnerable young men. The newest extremist group, ISIS, created a social media presence to reach this demographic of pessimistic, often secluded, young men (Marshall 2014). "Friends" preyed on the young men's limited opportunities for success in financial, educational, or relationship goals and harness the resentment they feel towards an unjust society or government. These pains were most felt by lower- to middle-class young men ages 18-35 who spent a lot of time online. Recruiters befriended the young men and shared political messages, memes, or videos with them through social media that poked at insecurities or perceived failures to motivate their participation (Jones 2008). New members were then guided through the indoctrination process to begin their formal participation, perhaps becoming a recruiter themselves at a later point.

While their methods for "formal recruitment" are limited, white supremacist ideology uses similar modes to reach out to isolated young men. Introduction into white supremacist groups often starts as a one-to-one interaction. Interested young men hang out with members of the group who gradually introduce him into the group's goals, promises, and aims. The groups offer opportunities for success, respect, honor, and accomplishment over the society that did them wrong. Success and acceptance in these groups comes from expressed hatred of racial or religious minorities, the

government, or another common enemy (Southern Poverty Law Center 2020). In addition, each group offered comradery with like-minded friends, opportunities to contribute to a long history, and recognition for individual efforts. While those outside the group are quick to condemn and further ostracize its members, those inside see membership as a rare and valuable opportunity for success, acceptance, validation, respect, community, and purpose.

The organizations pandered to some of the most depressed and lonely individuals and gave them a chance to prove themselves to be strong and brave. Jihadist groups consistently push new recruits to success in personal endeavors by celebrating the "brave men" who successfully carried out attacks for the ideology's purpose. Likewise, users and moderators of online neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups manipulate messages and themes of masculine excellence to spread to the same type of audience (Southern Poverty Law Center 2012). This presents a unique type of terrorism and poses significant challenges for the United States' defense policy.

A Man's Standard of Excellence

Within the two ideologies, jihadist militants and white supremacists share ideological narratives and recruitment methods, both of which enhance their effectiveness of gaining and keeping new members. The several shared, constant themes are carefully constructed to reach the most affected members of the target demographic. The overarching images of "men in their prime" lure young men to achieve a desired standard of excellence, success, and self-fulfillment.

The independent variable for this research design is the concept of "masculine excellence," namely, archetypes of heroism and leadership. Conceptually, masculine excellence includes lifestyle achievements and archetypal behaviors (Euben 2015): strength, absence of weakness, sexual prowess, and heroism. While traditional male gender roles vary across time and cultures, there are several shared "milestones:" employment, marriage, starting a family, protecting women and children, providing for others, taking on a leadership role, and contributing to a larger community (Villalba 1999). Similarly, male gender roles are accompanied by expected behaviors, such as stoicism, "strength, courage, leadership, and firmness" [author's translation] (Sadiq 2015). Men who accomplish these are typically seen and accepted

as successful individuals within a given society. Masculine excellence can be summarized as successfully achieving important milestones and exhibiting the expected archetypal behaviors.

Operationally, the independent variable of masculine excellence is defined as recurring messages, themes, and symbols of success in typical male roles: "warrior," "protector," "hero," and "leader." These roles are the most compelling archetypes in recruitment narratives, and are celebrated through articles, songs, and poems within a group (Styszynski 2014; Heggehammer 2017; Tucker 2015). Narratives that highlight an individual's heroic leadership on a battlefield, behind enemy lines, or against a seemingly overwhelming struggle are proliferated throughout online messages and in-group rhetoric (Heggehammer 2017). Similarly, individuals who were imprisoned or martyred become examples of brave protectors, fearless leaders, and great men. Groups celebrate and revere individuals who have achieved or contributed to their goals while enhancing themes of masculine excellence to strengthen persuasiveness of the groups' ideologies.

The dependent variable is new fighter demographics: personal backgrounds, economic conditions, age, gender, and motives of new fighters. Conceptually, larger numbers of young men from socially disadvantaged positions will find validation, comradery, and lasting personal opportunities through extremist groups. These young men will join extremist and terrorist organizations because they want to achieve masculine excellence typified by the archetypes in recruitment messages (Kruglanski 2014). The characteristics, goals, and interests of young men who join will likely become more identical over time and their membership will lengthen when placed in leadership positions.

Rewards Come to Heroes and Leaders

Right-wing extremist employ symbols and images of masculine excellence to appeal to young, disenfranchised men and maintain their allegiance in the group. The two most important promises in extremist rhetoric are victory over a struggle and recognition as a leader. Men who achieve victory over an overwhelming struggle are traditionally seen as successful protectors, warriors, and heroes. The struggle is typically against an Other, or an outside group whose cultural values, religious identity, ethnicity, or other core identifying trait opposes the objectives of the extremist

group. Additionally, men who carry out the aims of the group are recognized as valuable providers, patriarchs, or leaders. Isolated, disadvantaged, and depressed young men are most likely to join and stay in extremist groups because of the promises made to them.

While the length of the recruitment processes varies among extremist groups, disadvantaged men are likely to engage in the groups for longer periods of time if they come from backgrounds of poverty or abuse. Young men who are in disadvantaged positions (socially, economically, or racially) are deliberately targeted from a wide net of potential members. They often lack employment opportunities, marriage prospects, are helpless, or are victims of abuse in various forms. Online recruitment messages poke at the insecurity of failing to provide for oneself or their family, being weak, not being accomplished, not having successful relationships, or not being able to protect loved ones (Crozier 2016). They take comfort in knowing that not all hope is lost. Recruitment scouts befriend these young men through online platforms or in-person interactions and invite them to "a path, to answer a call to something, to right some perceived wrong, [or] to do something truly meaningful with their lives" (Bloom 2016). Recruitment messages and scouts claim that the problems young men face is the result of the Other's efforts; success, according to the message, is found in joining the army that will soon defeat the Other. Additional benefits like comradery, meaningful work, respect, recognition, and purpose are found alongside the core goals and further entice membership (Tucker 2015). Eventually, victory over the Other will afford them the opportunities to eventually fulfill traditional expectations of masculine roles.

Heroism or "warriorship" are common themes throughout traditional masculine roles and are typified through struggling against the Other. Extremist groups "mix ideological, political, moral, religious, and social narratives ... [into] a range of real or imagined grievances" that dehumanize the Other (Briggs 2013). Messages, narratives, and stories portray the Other as an absolute enemy, whose moral bankruptcy causes their personal economic and social disadvantage. The group's "struggle" is overcoming the Other and establishing a new social order based on their religious, ethnic, or cultural premise. The allure of defeating the Other attracts several young men to abolish systemic injustice (Miller-Idriss 2019). Similarly, their "heroic" efforts would later be recognized in a society

where their position would be favored; they fulfill the traditional male "warrior" or "hero" role in their respective groups. Groups whose recruitment rhetoric includes a personalized "struggle narrative" see repeated increases in the number of guys who want the glory of victory.

Struggle narratives are especially common in Islamic extremist groups and are typified through the "call to jihad." According to classical Quranic scholarship, jihad is divided into two types: inner and outward jihad. "Jihad" is widely interpreted to mean "to strive," "to exert," or "to fight," and varies according to Surah within the Quran. While it is not one of the five pillars of Islam, it is frequently articulated to be one's "duty toward God," a "divine call," or "striving in the path of God" (Oxford Islamic Studies n.d.). "Inner jihad" (sometimes known as "greater jihad") is a "focus … on personal piety and righteous living or on community service" (Burkholder 2002) whereas "Outward jihad" ("lesser jihad") "constitutes a moral principle to struggle against any obstacle that stands in the way of the Good" [author's translation] (Jabri 2009). While most Muslims place higher priority and importance on inner jihad as a series of efforts to "improve oneself, their faith, or their obedience to the commandments of God" [author's translation] (Islam.web 2012), Islamist extremist movements see both types of jihad as a mechanism for achieving social goals, and simultaneously leveraging its religious importance (Teaching Tolerance n.d.). Collective jihad ranges from ousting autocratic regimes or international governments to the complete establishment of Sharia law. Within Islamic contexts, successful completion of jihad allows Muslim members to receive blessings from God alongside veneration and recognition by peers and posterity.

Within both types of extremist groups (jihad and white supremacy), valuable leaders and successful men are celebrated and glorified. One poignant aspect that extremist groups play is "the desire to matter, to be respected, to be somebody in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others" (Kruglanski 2014). Defeating the Other is both a victory for the group as well as the individual because the individual has an important part to play for the collective, and an individual can be an integral part that ensures the group's success. Several extremist groups, especially eastern jihadist groups, keep an oral or remembrance tradition that denotes the significance of certain martyrs or mujahideen. Stories about their leadership,

decisive battlefield victories, or brave deaths are passed down and disseminated throughout the group. The stories elevate the importance of another to an "elevated status" and inspire younger recruits with images of power, respect, wisdom, authority, and victory (Heggehammer 2017). Young men are often attracted to the unique leadership roles and the possibility of fame: fame from mainstream media fear and veneration within the group. Groups that propagate the importance of leadership throughout internal narratives see higher rates of member retention because of the promises of self-fulfillment, leadership, and fame.

Various studies on recruitment methods argue that there are several different factors that serve as the primary reason for joining extremist groups. One report cited that the quest for identity, purpose, adventure, or revenge are the most common calls for people to seek extremist groups (Venhaus 2010). Studies say that the broad arch of jihadism encompasses various reasons, motives, and attractions. Researchers Alejandro Beutel and Krystina Perez from the Institute of Counterterrorism found shame was an especially effective mechanism, and that finding retribution for "Muslims' collective humiliation at the hands of Western powers was a key push for several young males to join." In addition, the images of child soldiers in propaganda videos "discomfort many men [because of] the thought of a child being more empowered than themselves" (Beutel 2016). In addition, another report published by researchers at the University of Maryland explain that one of the largest factors that motivates young men to join was the "quest for significance;" the "desire to matter, to be respected, to be somebody in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others" attracted men who felt misunderstood or ignored (Kruglanski 2014). This phenomenon is found most often in jihadist propaganda as anger and frustration is channeled toward the United States, giving emerging jihadis "purpose and direction." Similar studies on extremism and terror membership conclude that there are several individual aspects that play into recruitment processes, and no one motive is the "most influential."

Proclivity to join also depends on the individual's unique circumstances, motivations, or talents. Recruitment tactics are difficult to measure, and there is often no "step-by-step" process to sign up. Recruitment happens in dark, hard-to-find corners of the internet. Similarly, each group initiates its members in a uniquely

stylized way. During its height, ISIS's Twitter attracted several different types of people, sometimes attracting young women, older men, and others who were outside the targeted demographic. ISIS's recruitment process was never formalized; instead, recruiters scouted for specific talents in online programs, photo editing, or web design to create multimedia pieces that could be circulated. In the case of white supremacy, groups like the KKK (Ku Klux Klan) or Aryan Brotherhood decreased talent-scouting efforts during 2010-2019 (Southern Poverty Law Center 2012). Joining these groups was almost always by word of mouth, and members of the joining demographic were likely to be intrigued by other aspects of the group (comradery or social mobility). While unique ideologies, talent-acquisition, and technological usage the groups varied, most of those who joined shared similar demographic information and motivations for self-fulfillment.

Other research suggests that themes of masculinity or recruitment narratives have a very minimal role in recruitment, and that joining a group is the result of individual circumstances rather than efforts. Availability of financial opportunities exploit young men and groups leverage cash incentives to carry out objectives for the group, creating a carrot-and-stick attachment to the group's ideals (Styszynski 2014). The cash incentives and financial opportunities have played a significant role in membership numbers, especially for Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Other research suggests that poor mental health and preexisting psychological conditions are stronger pulls to commit acts of violence (Miller-Idriss 2019). Similarly, the levels of "isolation, loneliness, depression, and anxiety" among young recruits was very high. Predisposal and entrapment into these ideologies can significantly influence an individual's likeliness to join and stay to a greater degree than recruitment narratives. In cases where there is a lack of masculine attributes driving recruitment processes, each of these motivating factors plays a key role in influencing individuals' decision to join.

Despite arguments of preexisting conditions, the carefully structured narratives and images of masculine excellence offer a more plausible explanation to extremism's behavior and effectiveness. Strong narratives that vilify the Other serve extremist groups by increasing their popularity. Strong narratives offer a "battle plan" for defeating an "enemy," and if the Other is a present force in society, the ideology of the group remains relevant. Extremist

narratives also create "safe-spaces" or niche environments of validation for young men who do not receive empathy for their positions. Negative motivations like fear, helplessness, shame, hatred, or anger can be expressed freely; the men are not labelled "toxic" for doing so. Young men feel empowered when carrying out duties of their position, especially when in leadership roles, and are more likely to carry out acts of violence for the group. Narratives and images serve to strengthen the group's effectiveness, both in terms of violence and group cohesion.

Extremist groups that build their narratives and objectives on winning the "struggle against the Other" are more likely to see higher numbers of young, disillusioned male recruits. The targeted group of young men cannot achieve traditional milestones of masculine excellence. They are unable to secure permanent or meaningful employment despite being college-educated, which could mean that they are unable to marry or pursue romantic relationships (Mahood 2016). The men feel angry and pessimistic at their conditions and seek comfort or control, or they may seek someone to blame for their frustrating conditions (Tucker 2015). The messages and images of heroism, celebrations of victory over the Other, or martyrdom for the objectives are stark contrasts to their current situation and inspire visions of domination, power, and respect. Defeating the Other transforms from a collective, group goal to a personal, focused vendetta that prompts membership to become known as successful and powerful men (Long 2015).

Likewise, groups that partner the overarching narrative of "overcoming the struggle" with leadership opportunities will see high numbers of recruits transform longer-lasting membership. Alongside messages that inspire heroic actions, becoming a recognized leader within the group promotes lasting allegiance and participation to the group's objectives. New members often come from circumstances where opportunities for leadership are limited or absent, either because of government denial or poor financial position (Tucker 2015). The broad arch of group goals creates new, personalized opportunities for leadership, ranging from specific roles, employment opportunities, official positions, family assistance, serving others, or combat positions. Serving in capacities with responsibilities or overseeing operations serves the group as functions for the cause are carried out and young men are able to protect, provide, and control operations (Euben 2015).

New members will then continue their participation in the group because it becomes their sole source of employment, confidence, morality, and responsibility. The identity of the young men changes from victims of circumstance to victors. With this newfound responsibility, they may try to expand the organization further to hasten achievement of group objectives.

Finding the Narrative of Brotherhood

Themes and images of masculine excellence will be traced through three different types of extremist media: written publications, forum discussion, and accessible videos. These selected media types are some of the first pieces that young men encounter. The media types are easily accessible and contain a call to membership. Each piece provides main narrative points of each group, images of brave warriorship, praise of past and present leaders, and opportunities for new members to contact recruiters. ISIS's published magazines and propaganda videos will be examined as the materials that contain calls to action, messages from leaders, group discussion, and images that promote religious ideals and the achievable masculine archetype. Al-Qaeda's more limited online presence provides similar types of published material, namely blog posts and forum chat histories. White supremacist ideology is present throughout websites, forums, and meme pages.

ISIS's Call to the East and West

ISIS's call to jihad through social media and "talent-scouting" targeted groups of young men in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States and appealed to both Muslims and non-Muslims. ISIS was one of the first jihadist groups to have a large online presence and video publishing accounts; similarly, they produced music and aesthetic magazines to appeal to a younger, web-literate demographic (Clarion Project 2014). Their most recognized material was their magazine, Dabiq, which was published online and circulated through Twitter and Facebook during the group's height. The magazine called members to "repent and answer the call to hijrah …and [tend] to the needs of their Muslim brothers (Hijrah is a holy pilgrimage or migration)" (Dabiq 2014). At the same time, online propaganda videos like "Flames of War" exploded onto social media, alongside infamous beheading videos. Individual recruiters pushed private messages to those

who were often ostracized in their communities, unable to obtain jobs, and/or have had educational experience but were unable to work (Callimachi 2015), an approach similar to white supremacist ideology in the U.S.. ISIS also built financial revenue systems that offered members stipends and paychecks for their efforts, similar to Al-Qaeda's organization and structure (Washington Institute n.d.). As the group spread from Syria and Iraq, ISIS videos reached young men in the United States and Europe, many of whom were not Muslim (Ozeren 2018). Posts, memes, videos, and songs from official ISIS accounts played on themes of jihad, honor, and retribution for emasculation (Anonymous 2019; Anonymous 2020; al-Awlaki n.d.; Heggehammer, 2017); their published materials revolved around their goal of establishing a new world order and a society in which their position was elevated from the past (Benmelech 2018). Recruitment narratives repeatedly played on themes of unfairness, discrimination, and victimization that would later be translated into rage, hatred, and desires for victory over an oppressor.

ISIS literature revolved around the jihad against the Other. Jihad is unique to Islamic extremist groups, and the word became one of the most recognizable lines of their recruitment campaign ("Join Jihad, Bro") (Becker 2014). In the early years of the group, Syrian and Iraqi members joined to engage in jihad against a regime that caused a lot of harm in the past. "They found themselves at the center of the anger and humiliation in the Middle East and longed for an organic legal and political order" (Hamid 2014). As ISIS's influence and territory grew, the articles in magazines like Dabiq depicted Western culture as an enemy who inflicted mass problems: "They do not know any good, nor do they denounce any evil" (Dabiq 2014). Similar messages from sheikhs and imams in Syria cited the "hypocritical politics of America" and the failures of the Bush administration (Dabiq 2014). ISIS's image of the West—specifically images of western opulence and excess—closely followed Al-Qaeda's and bin Laden's framework. Al-Baghdadi's establishment of the Caliphate called on mujahideen to exert their efforts in the fight, making the group's methods more extreme than Al-Qaeda (al-Baghdadi 2014). However, leaders and members in both militant groups saw jihad as their "defining struggle and a just war" [author's translation] (Islam.web 2012). The group's goals evolved from political activism to carrying out acts of violence to promote

Salafism and Sharia law on a global stage. Through engaging in what they saw as a "just war," jihadists sought to achieve individual and group goals by overcoming the West as the Other.

ISIS's unique outreach during 2013-2015 also allowed jihadists to become capable providers and respected leaders within their spheres of influence. For Syrians and Iraqis, the inability to provide for one's family was a major motivator to join, and these new recruits were able to find employment and income in ISIS's ranks (Hamid 2014). Refugees found opportunities to escape the hostility of host communities in Europe and a chance to fight back against the violence of the regime (Mahood 2016). At the same time, jihadism offered an avenue to exhibit the leader/warrior role in conflicts against autocratic and heavy regimes (Callimachi 2015). Dabiq and Rumiyah magazines envisioned a "new dawn" where these victimized men were powerful leaders who were respected and dignified members of a community (Clarion Project 2014), and argued that concerted efforts would bring about the opportunity to establish a personal legacy. Alongside these publications, popular recruitment videos like "No Life Without Jihad" reiterate themes of self-fulfillment through following the Quranic word; accomplishment comes through allegiance to the cause (Becker 2014, Al-Hayat Media, 2014). Legacy motifs and promises are also prevalent in white nationalist ideology.

As ISIS's membership peaked in 2015, the demographics of new recruits began to show similarities and resemble a specific type of person. In 2013, the group's size was estimated at 6,000 total, which later grew to an estimated 31,500 in 2015 (Long 2015). In 2015, the number of foreign fighters was larger than the number of fighters from Syria and Iraq. The number of foreign fighters from the United States, Europe, and other countries in the Middle East had an estimated range from 15,000-21,000 (Sarhan 2015). In its beginning, the demographics of new members varied from home region, but as foreign fighter numbers increased, their demographic information began to homogenize. Domestic fighters from Syria and Iraq were mostly younger men who were displaced as refugees and had little opportunity in terms of employment (Crozier 2016). Among foreign fighters, most were males between the ages of 18-35 from middle- to lower-class households (Bloom 2016). Some were second generation immigrants, and used social media regularly, and about half of recruits were converts to Sunni

Islam (Benmelech 2018). While the demographic data of the recruits varied widely, the most poignant commonalities were found in the psychological motivators to join the group. Many jihadists were motivated primarily by money and social status. Those who joined the group and received monetary benefits were reported to have longer periods of participation. Other groups of fighters later responded and stated that the thrill of finding a new adventure or taking revenge influenced their decision to fly to Syria. Their participation lengths were comparatively shorter (Tucker 2015). The success of ISIS's recruitment campaign and membership numbers is traceable back to its repeated themes of masculine excellence. The overarching struggle and promises for leadership allowed previously powerless members to gain recognition, take revenge on malefactors, and respond to injustice through armed conflict.

Al-Qaeda's Grassroots Movement

Because Al-Qaeda existed before the internet was widely accessible, recruitment tactics were very different from ISIS or white nationalism groups, however, it appealed to individuals with similar personal details. Recruitment in Al-Qaeda's early days was often a long process (Byman 2010) and individuals were more engaged in local conflicts or causes. Allegiance was often split between community-organized groups and Al-Qaeda at large; many people who shared Al-Qaeda's ideology never formally became members (Center for International Security and Cooperation n.d.). The early years of Al-Qaeda's recruitment narratives reflected the processes of formal white supremacist groups in the U.S., as indoctrination processes ranged from several months to years to complete. Additionally, Al-Qaeda "franchises" became very popular in countries like Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, and was especially successful in countries undergoing civil war (Venhaus 2010). Fighters were often simultaneously members of small militias that engaged in a local conflict and had little to no interest in Al-Qaeda's global mission or its affairs. Yet, because of its financial reserves and state-sponsored support, Al-Qaeda was able to incentivize membership by hiring people to carry out organizational functions (Fraise 2017). A large part of what made Al-Qaeda widely successful was its ability to adapt its goals to the scared, frustrated, and unemployed individuals and validate their

concerns into broad, global worldview (Fraise 2017). Young men who were engaged in grueling fights in their home countries could translate their efforts into the broader mission of Al-Qaeda.

As the predecessor to ISIS, Al-Qaeda's struggle narrative through jihad is a core tenet to the goals and objectives of the groups. Al-Qaeda first built its jihadist narrative during the war against the Soviet Invasion in Afghanistan in the 1980s and the later U.S. invasion in the 2000s which was adopted by the Mujahideen fighters (Taylor 2014). Al-Qaeda's religious officials expanded its outreach through the early days of the internet by building websites and blogs that offered messages of comfort and resilience . As membership grew, ranks of leadership swelled and more religious leaders began to contribute inflammatory lectures based on religious texts (al-Awlaki n.d.; CISAC n.d.). Like ISIS, Al-Qaeda's social order was complete Islam and Sharia law. One imam stated that "we're not really dealing with a global culture that is benign or compassionate [referencing the West]. This is a culture that gives you no choice, … and the only ideology that is standing up to this global culture is Islam" (al-Awlaki n.d.). Jihad evolved into a personal, "heroic narrative and removes the doubt that young men feel about their place in the world, replacing it with purpose and direction" (Venhaus 2010). The broader message of jihad was one that is easily applied at the local and global level, and it spread as Internet accessibility proliferated.

Al-Qaeda retained membership from the target demographic by providing several other avenues to gain power and respect. "The recruiting vocabulary focuses on humiliation, shame and guilt, contrasted with dignity, duty and honor. The seeker eventually sees Al-Qaeda as having a ready answer for everything, and the path to success is clearly illuminated" (CISAC n.d.; Venhaus 2010). Young men could find comradery and respect among those in similar, frustrated positions and take comfort together in a unified hope in God; this trait was passed down to ISIS as the group grew into the Iraq Civil War. In a Western paradigm, comradery was an important paradigm for young men joining white supremacist groups (Heggehammer 2017). Both ISIS and Al-Qaeda simultaneously offered religious support, peer validation, security, and financial relief for those entrenched in war (Financial Action Task Force 2019). At the same time, Al-Qaeda leadership often disseminated messages and songs that glorified heroes, leaders,

and martyrs, reiterating their bravery, courage, and blessings from God (Heggehammer 2017). The ideology of Al-Qaeda (and later ISIS) resonated with the same pool of disaffected, disconnected individuals.

The type of person to join Al-Qaeda was likely a poor resident of a city undergoing civil war in the Middle East; they joined because they felt a loss of personal dignity. While ISIS had a much broader reach with more foreign fighters, Al-Qaeda's membership base was local (Venhaus 2010). Most members during the early 2000s were victims of civil or international war, including Iraq, Syria, Gaza, the West Bank, Somalia, and Sudan and there were very few people who joined from the West (CISAC n.d.). Most were young men ages 18-45 from rural, lower-class households who had little to no formal education and joined primarily because they knew someone in the group. As Al-Qaeda moved into the internet, the average age of the new members became younger (Anti-Defamation League n.d.). During its height, the largest proportion of young men that joined were reported to seek revenge through "Al-Qaeda's message of intent to lash out against the West." The second and longest-serving group of young men joined with intentions for recognition or belonging, citing that "they [began] to feel that they must do something to show the world their value" (Venhaus 2010; Heggehammer 2017; Styszynski 2014). Resonant themes of excellence present themselves throughout the varied motivations of fighters. The seemingly universal appeal stems from the desire to be accepted and respected as contributing members of a devoted group.

The Hidden Hatred of White Supremacists

While traditional processes of recruitment declined over the past ten years, many groups posted ideologies online to reach a large and growing number of ostracized young men. Because of the stigma attached to formal white supremacist groups like the KKK, White Aryan Brotherhood, or Atomwaffen, "recruitment" within these groups evolved into "ideological adherence." Ideological adherence denotes a personal identification with a political ideology rather than a formal, recorded indoctrination into a group. White supremacist ideology surged in popularity over the last decade through social media forums like 4chan, 8chan, Reddit, and Twitter (Thompson n.d.). Within these forums,

videos, anthropological dissertations, and Nazi-era film footage served to glorify the white race and the ideals of white supremacy ideology (The Alt Hype 2018). The inability to find lasting and meaningful employment is blamed on racial minorities "stealing the jobs," affirmative action, and employer racial bias (Anonymous 2020). Similarly, the inability to maintain romantic relationships is because of "race mixing" and white women's "preference for black men " (Ware 2019; Anonymous 2019). The premise of white ideology differs widely from jihadist groups, but the dedicated spaces afforded young men opportunities to voice unfiltered concerns and seek validation. The close comradery resembled the similar pattern in Eastern groups (Michaelis 2015). Both ideologies seemed to offer solutions for missed opportunities, disappointments, or unfair circumstances affecting their daily lives.

While the concept of "jihad" is unique to ISIS and Al-Qaeda, there is a similar struggle narrative in white supremacy that calls members to fight in a pending "race war." "Extremists share the same ideological fundaments because their worldviews tell the same story; a story that pits supposedly homogenous cultural or racial entities against one another" (Ebner 2017). The overarching goals of white supremacist organizations revolve around the establishment of a racially homogenous state, maintaining a system of western values within that state, and preserving the future of the white race. Members (especially males) of Caucasian, Anglo-Saxon, or Nordic descent esteem themselves as racially superior and entitled to exist separately from people of color. Racial diversity is seen as the biggest obstacle to their goals (ADL Education n.d.). Securing the future of the race and ethnostate is accomplished only through overcoming and succeeding in the "race war." The "race war" rhetoric draws a similar comparison to the "just war" articulated in jihadist groups; likewise, there is a strong religious ethos that hate groups claim, wherein they are "doing God's work to save the white race from extinction" (National Socialist Movement n.d.). As young men entrench themselves into the ideology, they envision themselves as "warriors," "soldiers," or "heroes" in the "race war" (Perry 2012; National Socialist Movement n.d.). Lone-wolf attackers are celebrated as brave heroes, courageous fighters, and real men, and their narratives inspire images of power, heroism, and respect among interested

users. Participation in the struggle evolves from a broader, ethereal idea to a personal goal that can inspire increasingly violent acts.

Rewards for participating in the "race war" range, but there is an enduring attraction of commanding respect as a recognized leader that repeatedly empowers young men. In initial stages of ideological adherence, young men often feel cool and edgy among their peers by sharing violent posts, irreverent videos, or "politically incorrect" memes, sometimes earning a reputation among their classmates as a rulebreaker, edgy, or "based" (Mathis-Lilley 2016; Anonymous 2019). Further engagement with extremist material often portrays the reader as someone who is powerful, dangerous, or violent, all of which can conjure images of respect out of fear (Anonymous 2019). In another sense, those who fully adhere to the ideological ideals of white supremacy see themselves as "leaders" and "protectors" of an ethnic heritage. The prospect of establishing a legacy or continuing the "heritage" is equally alluring. Young men are empowered to become ideological leaders within the struggle for an ethnostate. Among the population susceptible to extremist ideologies, both white supremacist and jihadist recruits see opportunities for leadership, comradery, identity, adventure, and purpose that is not offered through other channels available to them (Ebner 2017).

The types of young men who adopt white supremacist ideologies differ slightly from the type of individual likely to join a jihadist group, but most characteristics are homogenous between groups. White supremacist ideology is most appealing to men with limited educational experience from the middle- to lower-class echelons. They are often victims of childhood abuse or parental alcoholism, and their ages range from 14-25 (VICE 2019). Several newcomers live in cities where significant and lasting economic problems occurred or cities that underwent significant changes in social norms (Ware 2019). Because of significant trend changes in recruitment, it is difficult to determine formal participation in groups. However, the recent spikes in forum activity are correlated with lone-wolf attacks. Like attacks attributed to jihadist groups, public interest peaks shortly after attacks and "celebrations" of successful operations are posted online. Going through normal membership processes and widespread community membership in groups like the KKK, White Aryan Brotherhood, or Atomwaffen produced higher rates of lasting ideological attachment (League

n.d.). While individual attraction to extremist groups varies among affected young men, the consistent searches for success, validation, acceptance, and self-actualization play on insecurities that push many young boys into domestic terrorism.

The New Man

Terrorism has evolved from unleashing unbridled violence in public centers or in the Levantine deserts; it is now a way of life, a philosophy, a comfort, a friendship, and a driving motivation to shape the world in a way that most benefits a specific group of individuals. The agendas of jihadist groups and white supremacist organizations are clear, and the outreach is wide. It is no longer random attacks made in the name of an obscure group. Consequently, the evolving definition and online nature of terrorism will undoubtedly shape how policy makers respond to large-scale attacks and fear (Venhaus 2010). The evolution of extremism from obscure groups to systematic, wide-scale recruitment will challenge the expectations of national security and continue to shape public caution.

As mentioned previously, many past communication platforms have been removed, either by site moderators, government officials, or community enforcement administrators. While the selected materials of this research paper represent many members' first experiences with extremist rhetoric, they do not represent all cases. The examined media in this research limits the generalizability of the conclusions to large segments of members, however, the information drawn from the websites, blogs, and social media accounts illustrate a broad narrative of masculine archetypes.

The challenge to national security will likely become more intense as extremist groups burrow further into online forums and slang. As seen throughout the last decade, extremist ideologies are likely to be received by those who exist on the margins of society or those who are economically left behind (VICE 2019; Thompson n.d.). The absence of opportunity and self-fulfillment create an existential gap for purpose which dangerous ideologies offer to fill. Changes in policy and new advances in national security are needed most by those who rarely leave home. Closing online forums that promote hate speech is an important step to curbing the dissemination of information. Desensationalizing lone-wolf attacks may limit growing interest. Increasing employment,

educational, and men's mental health opportunities can eliminate some of the negative feelings that would otherwise be focused toward a specific, unrelated group (Grant 2019; Venhaus 2010). The conflict is no longer taking place in a physical landscape; defense policy will likely evolve to be a series of online confrontations and strategic closings to create an effective anti-extremism sentiment.

While the ongoing threat of terrorism is a focal point of defense policy, extremism, at its core, is a reactionary movement to a broader change in social structures. The exhausting struggle against the Other is an articulation of opposition to changes in masculinity. The old expectations of masculine excellence are being turned down in favor of progressive gender dynamics. Throughout the past few decades, rigid definitions and lofty milestones became unreachable, if not obsolete. Being a soldier or a fighter is no longer demanded, especially after the advent of nuclear and industrial warfare. Warriorship is becoming obsolete. Equal gender dynamics mean men are no longer strictly tied to titles like "breadwinner" or "provider." (Fetters, 2018). The lack of viable economic opportunities frustrates young men's efforts to achieve the milestones that once defined "masculinity" and "manhood." As a result, young men are carving a new notion of manhood that departs from traditional expectations, behaviors, duties, and obligations of the past. To extremists, these new attitudes are a threat to traditional social orders and a rejection of conservative ideologies. Extremists assert that the traditional "alpha-male" role and traditional ideals for manhood are still relevant and need to be preserved; likewise, they argue that social acceptance hangs on a young man's ability to prove himself through the traditional archetype. Yet, masculine excellence is taking on a new meaning, set of expectations, attitudes, and behaviors that is departing from traditional hypermasculine behaviors of the past.

Twenty-first century masculine excellence will likely be characterized by a focus on individual growth, health, and accountability. Efforts that shape the new ideals of masculinity are ongoing and are being adapted by young men. Repeated messages of violence are failing to resonate with most young men, and most recognize that far-right ideologies are not a viable solution to social ills (McAleer 2019). Similarly, the behaviors associated with 'toxic masculinity' are being rejected and seen as oppressive attitudes to both men and women (Mayer 2018). Increased awareness of mental

health in recent years, especially men's mental health, can help promote healthy relationships between men and women. Similarly, a new masculinity built on acceptance of diverse masculinities, attractions, and orientations will limit unproductive bullying and pressure on individual sexuality. The ongoing reconsideration of ingrained traditions, expectations, and behaviors is a revolutionary change in social being and discourse. While the new paradigm on masculine excellence is an ongoing process, its progress is strengthened by those who focus on helping individual young men grow in a positive way. The new man is departing from traditionally toxic traits and entering a "new, positive ideal of twenty-first century manhood" (Wynn 2019).

The presence of right-wing extremism is not a new or isolated phenomenon. Extremism has taken many forms over the past few decades, and in recent years has adapted in new and undetectable ways. Despite their seemingly austere beginnings and motives, each type of extremist group shares similar themes to recruit some of the most impressionable and vulnerable individuals into their ranks. Through repeating themes, ideals, archetypes, and narratives of the "perfect man," groups promise young men the opportunity to overcome personal and global struggles while fulfilling one's duty to God or their people. Joining extremist groups stretches far beyond simple invitations to "hang out with the guys;" indoctrination into some of the most violent organizations is a deliberate process of grooming and predatory messaging that victimizes men. Weaponizing religious rhetoric and tailoring messages, jabbing at personal insecurities, and focusing hatred to one group of people explode in violent and memorable attacks.

It is possible, however, that a nuanced, individualized approach to "manhood" and "masculinity" may revolutionize traditional milestones, behaviors, expectations, and roles of men worldwide. By shifting from a set of collective rules on men to a celebration individual identity and achievement, a better and more inclusive idea of manhood can be forged. Military campaigns, online forum closing, weakness shaming, ostracizing, or censorship will not produce lasting solutions to terrorism. A new masculinity, one based on holistic acceptance of self and others, will.

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Christian Hawkes

A Perilous Situation

An Analysis of Palestinian Life in Iraq Before and After the 2003 Invasion

Iraq's population faces serious challenges in the wake of the United States military invasion and occupation that began in 2003. Life for many is marked by poor infrastructure and power shortages, to say nothing of the threat posed by armed groups and continued military operations. For many Iraqis, the perilous situation has forced them to flee their homes. By 2008, an estimated 2.1-2.4 million Iraqis had fled the country and resettled elsewhere, mainly in surrounding countries, while an estimated 2.7 million were internally displaced (Sassoon 2009, 5). The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 3 million Iraqis have been displaced as of 2014, with 2.1 million classified as internally displaced.

Of particular concern is the plight of Iraq's minority Palestinian population. Although their population was only estimated at 34,000 immediately prior to the U.S. invasion (Sassoon 2009, 27), most of whom resided and still reside in the al-Baladiyat neighborhood of Baghdad, these Palestinian-Iraqis merit special attention due to their special status in the local, regional, and international context. These Palestinians are refugees in the traditional sense, but government policy both before and after 2003 has not treated them as such. Rather, the Palestinians are foreigners in the eyes of the government and its citizens. In recent years, this national attitude has damaged the Palestinian national minority.

Under Saddam Hussein's rule, Palestinians were awarded preferential treatment and benefits that were stripped from them after 2003. During the Saddam Hussein era, the Palestinians received housing benefits and were granted special status. Since the fall of the regime, however, the Palestinian population has faced targeted attacks due to this favorable treatment and difficulties in resettlement due to restrictions from Arab countries on Palestinian

refugees. Many Palestinians report targeted harassment from civilians, and the Iraqi government, too, reportedly discriminates against them (Human Rights Watch 2006). Moreover, the government voted in 2017 to annul their special status, resulting in increased economic hardship and barriers to participation in Iraqi society (Abu Amer 2018; Reuters 2018).

Despite their relatively small population, Palestinians' unique experiences and identity merit discussion as Iraqi refugees flee the country or return as the political situation stabilizes. The Palestinian population in Iraq is distinct from other minority experiences in Iraq for three reasons. First, unlike Kurds, Yazidis, Assyrians, or other historically persecuted groups, Palestinian-Iraqis are a minority based on national rather than ethnic lines. Though other targeted groups experienced difficulties and persecution prior to and following the U.S. invasion and occupation, equal to or even greater than those faced by the Palestinian-Iraqis, this national minority status is all too often overlooked or ignored by research, though certainly not by the Iraqi government or its populace. Second, many Palestinians in Iraq are refugees twice- or thrice-over, first displaced from their homes in Palestine during or after 1948, then forced to relocate within Iraq or flee it during or after 2003. This is atypical of other Iraqi refugees and displaced persons, most of whom have only faced such circumstances once in their lifetimes. Third, the appeal of their historic homeland, especially given the instability of their current situation, may drive them to countries closer to the Palestinian Territories or to Israel. This may further complicate Palestinian refugee issues in countries such as Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, not to mention the potential effects on the situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Such issues may also present themselves the other way around as Iraqi refugees seek to return. If Palestinians who were forced to migrate from Iraq return in sizable numbers, the barely stable government will have to wrestle with the Palestinian question more than they already do, potentially exacerbating an already delicate situation.

This paper focuses on the unique circumstances of Palestinians residing in Iraq, both before and after the 2003 invasion and the fall of the Saddam Hussein government, and is divided into four sections. The first section will discuss the relationship between minority groups with preferential status and regime change. The second section will discuss benefits afforded the Palestinians by

Saddam Hussein's regime and his motivations for providing the special status to them. The third section will discuss the hardships faced by Palestinians in post-2003 Iraq that can be demonstrably linked to these benefits and status, while the fourth section will discuss other unique hardships faced by Palestinians that may or may not be directly linked to their status in the Saddam era. I rely on qualitative analyses of the experiences of Palestinians, both in Hussein's Iraq and in the post-Baathist era, through use of existing literature as well as government and non-governmental organization (NGO) reports. My focus is to determine in what ways Palestinian experiences in Iraq were and are unique from the regular Iraqi experience, and to discuss what this means for their current plight.

I submit that the Palestinian experience in Iraq merits consideration distinguished from any other discussion of post-conflict Iraq because of their legal and social status in their country of refuge. Although Palestinians may be considered refugees in the colloquial sense, the Iraqi government for decades has considered them foreigners, which means that their experiences in both pre- and post-invasion Iraq have always been a degree removed from the rest of Iraqi society. As I will show, this distinction has yielded both gains and losses for the group. As a result of their legal status and its beneficial and detrimental consequences, it is a grave mistake to categorize the Palestinian-Iraqis with other Iraqi refugees and displaced persons. Such categorization is inaccurate at best and does not take into consideration the special status and circumstances of this minority population.

This paper adds a unique contribution to existing literature on multiple topics, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, minority status under regime change, and the Iraq conflicts of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Specifically, this paper adds to existing literature on post-conflict Iraq, Iraqi refugees, and internally displaced persons by focusing on the Palestinian subset of the Iraqi population and their experiences. It also contributes to existing literature on Palestinian issues and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by focusing on the Palestinian population in pre- and post-conflict Iraq. Finally, this paper contributes to literature concerning minorities and regime change by focusing on what happens to a minority group that is given preferential status during a period of regime change. The established connection between Palestinians'

preferential treatment in pre-2003 Iraq and their becoming targets for harassment by the Iraqi government and extra-governmental military groups bolsters existing research concerning the targeting of minorities after regime change.

Literature Review

   Much of the existing research into the topic of Palestinians in Iraq focuses on the Palestinian connection to Saddam Hussein's Baathist government in the Gulf War. Gover (1990) and Karsh (2002) provide excellent discussion of Saddam Hussein's relationship to both diaspora Palestinians and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, determining that Palestinians favorably viewed Saddam thanks in part to their perception of him as an Arab unifier under attack from colonial powers. Hallaj (1991) comes to similar conclusions. He argues that the image of Saddam Hussein as a symbol of Arabs under attack from Western interests and colonial powers particularly resonated with the Palestinians because they perceived the establishment of Israel and the occupation of Palestinian territories after 1948 and 1967, respectively, in the same way. While this is certainly useful in analyzing the first part of the research—the relationship between Saddam Hussein and the Palestinians—it is inadequate for determining the state of Palestinians after the collapse of the regime, and we are left to infer that their unique situation before 2003 resulted in unique circumstances immediately following the U.S. invasion.

   Existing literature surrounding Palestinians in Iraq post-2003 consists mostly of official reports that analyze their situation. An official report by Human Rights Watch and three reports from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are crucial for analyzing the Palestinian situation in post-Baathist Iraq. These reports range in dates; the Human Rights Watch report was published in September 2006, while the three UNHCR reports come from 2006, 2012, and 2017. The situation in Iraq has certainly changed significantly between 2003 and the present, so the wide range of dates on these reports is beneficial in determining trends and changes in the Palestinian situation over time. Alongside these reports, a report from Migrationsverket and Landinfo (2014), a Norwegian government agency connected to immigration authorities, provides crucial analysis of government documentation for Palestinians, such as identification cards, in post-conflict Iraq. An article from

Jadaliyya (2012) analyzes difficulties faced by Palestinian refugees in relocating to surrounding countries, describing it as an ongoing nakba—a term for the forced migration of Palestinians after the 1948 war. This and a passing reference by Sassoon (2009) of the unique difficulties in migration faced by Palestinians in Iraq are helpful in analyzing their situation. Gabiam (2006) also discusses issues with Palestinian migration to Syria following the United States' invasion. However, his discussion thereof is used largely as an introduction to his analysis of Palestinian identity, rather than highlighting the difficulties faced by Palestinians in Iraq. As such, his research is of limited use beyond acknowledgement of these challenges.

This paper fills a gap in the existing literature by analyzing the situation for Palestinians both pre- and post-2003 and concluding that Palestinians receive unique treatment in both eras. To this point, all literature has held these two events as independent from each other or only acknowledged in passing a causal link between treatment pre-2003 and treatment post-2003.

Preferential Minority Treatment Often Generates Revenge

This paper argues that Palestinians were treated differently than typical Iraqis both pre- and post-2003 because of their heritage. This is important because research suggests that minority groups that receive preferential treatment are likely to be singled out during and after a period of regime change. If preferential treatment exists or is perceived to exist for a minority group prior to a change in regime, especially if preferential treatment is accompanied by real or perceived denigration of the majority group, then resentment towards the minority group builds among the majority. When a regime change occurs and the majority gains more power, they are likely to retaliate against the minority group that the majority perceived as repressing them.

Rwanda, in the 20th century, provides a clear demonstration of this point. A perceived ethnic divide between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa tribal groups resulted in resentment and mistrust for each other. During the colonial era, Belgium threw its support behind the Tutsi minority and ensured the Tutsi ruling class received preferential benefits, which deepened resentment between ethnic groups. In 1959, the Tutsi monarchy was ousted in a coup instigated by educated Hutu leaders. Many Tutsi were killed, and hundreds

of thousands were forced to seek refuge in neighboring countries. When a Hutu government came to power in 1962 and Rwanda gained independence that same year, the Tutsi minority continued to be oppressed by the Hutu government, ultimately culminating in the 1994 civil war and genocide (Olson 1995). The preferential treatment given to the Tutsi minority prior to regime change, and the oppression of this minority group after regime change, serves as precedent for this theory and demonstrates its validity.

Palestinians in the Saddam Hussein Era

Palestinian refugees came to Iraq in three waves, though they were not formally recognized as such by the government. The first group of refugees fled Haifa and Jaffa in 1948 and were evacuated to Iraq after the country's military withdrawal in 1949. The second wave came in 1967, following the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. The third wave was unique in that the refugees were not coming directly from Palestine, but rather entered Iraq after their exile from Kuwait in 1991 (Migrationsverket and Landinfo 2014). It is important to note that although these Palestinians may have met the international definition of refugees, they were not recognized as such by the Iraqi government. Iraq was not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which defined the term "refugee" and detailed the rights of displaced persons. Although Iraq did sign the Political Refugee Act of 1971 into law, which set terms for seeking asylum and receiving refugee status in the country, Iraq never recognized Palestinian refugees as such (Wengert and Alfaro 2006, 19). Instead, Iraq relied upon the 1965 Casablanca Protocol, which ensured the equal treatment of Palestinians in employment and travel and to which Iraq was a signatory.

Though the Casablanca Protocol granted basic freedoms afforded to ordinary Iraqis, Palestinians received advantages between 1948 and 2003 in the form of housing benefits. The Baathist government directly assisted Palestinians through the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Wengert and Alfaro 2006, 19). The Palestinians received the same benefits as other Iraqis, such as government-subsidized healthcare and education, and enjoyed the same prosperity thanks to the Casablanca Protocol, although they did not receive citizenship and instead received special travel documents from the government

(Migrationsverket and Landinfo 2014). However, benefits went beyond the standard Iraqi ones; Palestinians were permitted to live in special government housing in Baghdad and were granted government subsidies for rent in privately-owned residences, assistance only granted to the Palestinians (Migrationsverket and Landinfo 2014). The preferential housing treatment would lead to feelings of resentment among Iraqis post-2003 and contribute to the specific targeting of Palestinian-Iraqis.

Saddam Hussein had strategic reasons for his support for the Palestinian diaspora and the Palestinian movement in the West Bank and Gaza, particularly during the Gulf War. Saddam, eager to annex Kuwait, attempted to link the Kuwait issue to the Palestine issue to garner pan-Arab support. The reasoning was that by linking the two and presenting his annexation of Kuwait as a matter of occupation akin to Israel's occupation of Palestine, he would receive the blessing of his Arab colleagues (Karsh 2002, 58). Such an appeal to pan-Arab nationalism would be critical in defying the international community that broadly condemned his ambitions concerning Kuwait and paint the annexation as an anti-imperialist move (Muralidharan 1990).

For Palestinians, especially in the West Bank and Gaza, Saddam Hussein's brazen defiance of the international community in annexing Kuwait seemed a struggle against a colonial world order, with the United States and Western nations playing the role of colonial powers intent on subduing the Arabs and controlling them (Gover 1990, 168). The Palestinian diaspora, therefore, was at least sympathetic to Iraq's cause, though not necessarily in support of Iraqi annexation of Kuwait (Hallaj 1991, 43). Palestinians, however, felt shut out of the peace process and forced to take a pro-American or pro-Iraqi side. Given the pan-Arab nationalism prevalent among Palestinians, as well as a view that the Americans were interfering in an internal Arab affair and legitimizing a humiliating status quo, tacit support for Saddam's Iraq prevailed. The immediate consequence of this support was the exile of Palestinians from Kuwait and other Gulf states (Gradstein 2003; Hallaj 1991). The perceived support for Saddam would also heighten the problems for Palestinians after the downfall of his regime.

Thus, during this period, Palestinians in Iraq received preferential treatment in the form of housing subsidies and benefits not granted to other Iraqis. In return, Palestinians expressed support

for the Baathist regime, particularly during the Gulf War. We can therefore reasonably conclude that the Palestinian situation in Iraq pre-2003 was indeed unique.

Hardships Faced Due to Preferential Treatment

After the downfall of the Baathist government, Palestinians faced hardships motivated by their special status. Culturally, Iraq is a mishmash of different conflicting ethnicities, tribal origins, and religious factions, making the national identity prone to collapse if not carefully crafted. Saddam Hussein's regime focused on the Arab identity as a unifying force, later focusing on an Islamic identity during the Gulf War (Dawisha 1999). With the downfall of the regime, the different factions began competing for control, while sharing a singular goal of ending the United States' and coalition presence in the country (Rabasa, Chalk, and Cragin et. al. 2006). Palestinians were perceived by some to be a foreign presence, and their predominantly Sunni demographics provided further motivation for Shiite militias to target them. Though the leading Shiite cleric in the country, Ali al-Sistani, issued a fatwa prohibiting this, more militant groups associated with other clerics continued their harassment and targeting campaigns (Human Rights Watch 2006).

Palestinians were granted privileges in the form of housing benefits under the Saddam Hussein regime, but the collapse of the government resulted in those benefits being suddenly withdrawn. Palestinians who relied on subsidized rent suddenly had their housing situation altered dramatically. One Palestinian family reported that their landlord more than doubled their rent, from 20,000 Iraqi dinars (approximately 16.81 USD at the time of publication) under the Hussein government to 50,000 dinars (approximately 42.03 USD), more than they could pay (Irish Times 2003). Disgruntled landlords, frustrated that the government had forced them to provide low-cost housing with little financial support, evicted many Palestinians from their apartments, while Shiite militias attempted to seize the housing for themselves by threatening the tenants (Human Rights Watch 2006; UNHCR 2006). The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) office in Baghdad estimated that between April 9 and May 7, 2003, 344 Palestinian families, comprised of 1,612 individuals, had been forced to leave their homes one way or another. Some of these

families were relocated to a refugee camp in the predominantly Palestinian neighborhood of al-Baladiyat, in Baghdad, which housed approximately 500 Palestinians in tents pitched on a soccer field. By November 2003, the number of Palestinians in the makeshift camp ballooned to 1,500 individuals in 400 tents (Human Rights Watch 2006). Another 2003 report claimed that some 551 Palestinian families, comprised of over 3,000 individuals, had been forcibly expelled by landlords seeking market price for their property (Irish Times 2006). These reports clearly indicate that housing benefits afforded the Palestinians were withdrawn, either by violent militias or disgruntled landlords, after the downfall of the government.

Through analysis of the withdrawal of housing benefits, and the consequences of said withdrawal, we can conclude that the Palestinian situation in Iraq is unique, due in part to the special status they received under Saddam Hussein's government.

Other Difficulties Faced Due to Palestinian Identity

Palestinians also faced challenges in obtaining residency permits. Although Palestinians were legally unable to obtain Iraqi citizenship, the Saddam Hussein government allowed them to obtain and maintain residency status without obstacle. Immediately after the regime's ousting, Palestinians were told that their residency status was nullified, and they were required to renew it with the Ministry of Interior's Department of Residency (Human Rights Watch 2006). Reports from Palestinians described the arduous process of renewal. For instance, department requirements dictated that every family member be present for the renewal. Throughout the process, bureaucrats would reportedly harass Palestinians and at times arbitrarily deny their renewal, change documentation requirements, or even seize identifications. These seizures place severe restrictions on movement within Iraq and even the cities of residence since identification is required at checkpoints (UNHCR 2017). Additionally, the process demanded renewal every three months, sometimes resulting in Palestinians being granted residency only to be forced to renew shortly thereafter (Human Rights Watch 2006). These restrictions were unique to Palestinians, who were treated as foreigners, rather than refugees in their country of sanctuary. Although residency and identification restrictions have eased in recent years, they still presented a unique burden to the Palestinian population.

Identity cards for Palestinians also presented and continue to present a unique burden. Palestinian identity cards are issued by the Permanent Committee for Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of Interior (Migrationsverket & Landinfo 2014; UNHCR 2017), unlike regular Iraqi identity cards which are issued by their own directorate, the Directorate of Identity Cards, under the General Directorate of Nationality of the Ministry of Interior (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2017; مديرية شؤون البطاقة الوطنية 2015). The identification cards are color coded according to their refugee group: red for refugees from 1948, and yellow for refugees from 1967 and thereafter (Migrationsverket & Landinfo 2014). This distinguishing feature makes it easier for Palestinians to be singled out at checkpoints and security crossings run by state and non-state actors, with some reporting arbitrary detention by security officials and verbal abuse and harassment upon presentation of their cards (UNHCR 2012; UNHCR 2017). Fear of harassment and detention, as well as concerns about violence outside of Baghdad, has led some Palestinians to limit their travel outside of the al-Baladiyat neighborhood, which severely limits their access to education and employment and impacts their daily life (UNHCR 2017).

Government targeting is not limited merely to bureaucratic burdens and harassment, however; Palestinians have reportedly faced arbitrary detention and torture. In May 2005, four Palestinians confessed to a bombing incident in the al-Jadida area of Baghdad. Their lawyer claimed they were forced to confess after undergoing torture, and they reportedly bore visible signs of beating (Wengert and Alfaro 2006). Other Palestinians reported kidnapping by security forces and torture while in Ministry of Interior custody shortly after the collapse of the Baathist government. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international bodies are frequently unable to access detainees, preventing accurate reporting of the conditions of detainees (Wengert and Alfaro 2006). Although the situation has improved, Palestinians are still disproportionately arrested on suspicion of terrorism charges, and house-to-house searches and seizures are not uncommon, particularly after terrorist incidents in nearby areas (UNHCR 2017). Additionally, access to fair judicial proceedings is reportedly difficult for Palestinians, and they are often reluctant to report incidents to the police for fear of anti-Palestinian bias

and reprisal (UNHCR 2017). Such government harassment creates unique challenges for the Palestinian population.

Targeted attacks on Palestinians have also been reported, although the security situation has improved in recent years. This paper has already highlighted low levels of harassment from government officials and landlords, but Palestinians faced targeting from Shiite militias, especially after the bombing of the al-Askariya mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest shrines of Shia Islam. This bombing resulted in an increase in insurgency violence and resentment towards Sunnis, and especially toward Palestinian Sunnis due to their perceived foreigner status and closeness to the Baathist regime (Wengert and Alfaro 2006). Mortar attacks and gunfire rocked the al-Baladiyat village shortly after the bombing, resulting in the deaths of ten people, and flyers and text messages sent to Palestinians in other Baghdad neighborhoods threatened their lives if they did not immediately leave the city (Human Rights Watch 2006). The security situation has improved in recent years; Iraqi National Police regularly patrol the al-Baladiyat neighborhood to ensure security (UNHCR 2012). Despite this, the violence Palestinians experienced has left a lasting impact on the community, and many in the community report that they are still afraid over their present and future situations (UNHCR 2012).

Palestinians also face unique problems in resettlement. Despite the severe security threats Palestinians have faced, as well as the low-level harassment and fear of arbitrary detention they face today, many are unable to leave Iraq due to surrounding countries' policies (Human Rights Watch 2006). Palestinians experienced difficulties attempting to cross into Syria, for instance. A limited number of refugees were allowed into the al-Hol camp in the Hasake region, a camp originally established to house Iraqi refugees in the Gulf War. Here, they receive basic services through UNHCR while they await the chance to eventually immigrate, but their movement is extremely limited (Gabiam 2006, 722). Similarly, Jordan refused to allow Palestinian-Iraqis to enter their country unless they could prove familial connections to Jordanian citizens, and even then, they were not allowed to work. This resulted in refugee camps being established in the desert regions just inside the Jordanian border, fenced off and guarded by Jordanian soldiers. Conditions inside these camps deteriorated as access to medical services was heavily restricted (Charles 2012). Although the Palestinian Authority has

offered to relocate refugees to the Gaza Strip, Israel prohibited the move. The PLO and the Arab League are generally hesitant to accept local integration into Arab countries or resettlement in third countries, for fear that it would invalidate the Palestinian right of return (Human Rights Watch 2006). Palestinians are therefore often forced to choose between settlement in refugee camps, where harsh weather conditions and limited services make life nearly intolerable, or return to Baghdad, where they face harassment, arbitrary detention and torture, and, until recently, targeted kidnapping and violence.

Through analysis of government documents and reports concerning the Palestinian minority, we can accurately conclude that Palestinians have experienced hardships in the post-Baathist era unlike those faced by other Iraqis. Additionally, through discussion of housing benefits, we can conclude that their situation post-2003 is in part due to the unique benefits granted to them by the Saddam regime.

Limitations

This research is primarily limited to a qualitative analysis because of the state of post-2003 Iraq. Due to severe political instability and the perpetuation of violence, even within Baghdad, it is impractical at best to do any quantitative, on-the-ground study of Palestinian experiences. Additionally, time and monetary restraints further restrict the practicality of conducting research beyond a qualitative analysis of the Palestinian situation through existing literature. Despite these severe limitations, many state and non-state actors have gathered information on Palestinians in Iraq, particularly since 2003, which somewhat mitigates its effects.

A counterargument to this research is that although Iraq can still be considered unstable overall, the political situation has stabilized enough that the Palestinian hardships are no longer uniquely different from the average Iraqi. While UNHCR reports from 2012 and 2017 do acknowledge that the situation has improved, Palestinians still restrict their movement for fear of harassment at checkpoints and still experience verbal harassment from government officials and citizens. Additionally, noted reports of the government termination of Palestinians' special status in Iraq indicate that on some level the Palestinian experience remains unique (Reuters 2018). Lastly, noted issues with migration are still

in effect; Palestinians are still restricted in their resettlement in the Arab League member states, and Israel still refuses to allow most Palestinians to migrate from Baghdad to Gaza.

Additional arguments may arise due to section four of this paper, which analyzes difficulties that may not be linked to their status under the prior government. Reports of arbitrary detention and torture are also not uncommon in post-2003 Iraq, raising further questions as to this section's relevance. However, section four demonstrates how Palestinians are routinely targeted and harassed because of their unique status. Palestinians are often singled out by authorities because of their perceived foreigner status, as noted in this section, and this alone demonstrates a unique situation. In short, Iraqis are not arrested merely because of their citizenship, but Palestinians are arrested on suspicion of not being Iraqi.

Conclusion

Through qualitative analysis of the Palestinian experience during the Saddam Hussein era, and through similar analysis of their post-2003 experience, we can accurately conclude that the Palestinian situation in Iraq is unique from the situation of other Iraqis. Although the situation has improved somewhat, particularly with security issues, Palestinians still face harassment from the Iraqi government and its citizens, and the benefits given to them by the former government have been stripped away.

Today, Palestinians have obtained a measure of stability. The violence that marked the insurgency period of 2006-2007 has subsided. Updated requirements for residency and identification renewals have further eased the burden. Despite this, Palestinians are still routinely treated with suspicion by the general populace and still face targeted harassment by security forces at checkpoints and during residence searches. The broader problems that face Iraq—widespread corruption, lack of adequate infrastructure, and continued threat of incursion by terrorist groups—only add to their current problems. Furthermore, many Palestinians are essentially trapped in an unstable Iraq, unable to migrate away from danger.

The only solutions that will help in any meaningful way are an easing of regional restrictions on Palestinian immigration and a stabilized Iraq. The Arab League member states, particularly Jordan and the Gulf states, can permit Palestinians to migrate away from Baghdad and find greater stability and security in their

borders. Such a migration need not invalidate the Palestinian right of return, as Palestinians will still be Palestinians whether in Baghdad or out of it. Israel, too, can assist by allowing Palestinians to immigrate to the West Bank and Gaza territories, which would likely be at least slightly better for them than staying in Baghdad. The ultimate goal is a stable, unified Iraq, free from rampant corruption and infiltration by terrorist groups. Though the societal relations between Palestinians and Iraqis may not be dramatically improved even in a stable Iraq, an unstable Iraq currently threatens the safety of its Palestinian population. To save the Palestinians in Baghdad, save Iraq.

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Clayton Van Woerkom

The Straight Path to Closeness

A Latourian Perspective on Iconoclasm and the Signs of God in the Qur'an

Arguably, the central message of the Qur'an is *tawhid*, the oneness of God. In the service of preserving God's oneness, the Qur'an is filled with condemnations of *shirk*, or idol worship, and injunctions to worship only the true God. Because of this, many Muslims are uncomfortable with most kinds of religious images. In recent years, there have been several high-profile manifestations of this discomfort, including the various controversies surrounding European publications' caricatures of Muhammad, as seen in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* and the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, whose satiric comics mocking Islam and its Prophet were one of the key grievances motivating the January 2015 Paris attacks. The interpretation of what constitutes idolatry in Islam and how that idolatry ought to be addressed has long been the subject of debate among both believers and students of Islam, with some schools of thought in Islam condemning images while others do not. Throughout Islam's history, the prevalence of iconoclasm, the destruction of material religious signs seen as heretical and idolatrous, has varied greatly across time and location (King 1985, 269). Recent, prominent instances of iconoclasm such as the Taliban's destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in 2001 have led to the widespread perception that Islam is inherently iconoclastic. However, while the Qur'an condemns many material religious signs, it does permit some temporal representations of God. By examining the Qur'an's treatment of idolatry and signs through the lens of arguments made by the French philosopher Bruno Latour, I will show that the Qur'an does not exclude all elements of the material world from legitimate worship. Rather, it condemns the worship of material objects in and of themselves, while promoting the use of some material signs, such as the beauty of the natural world, as catalysts for achieving a spiritual connection with God.

In his essay "Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame," Latour argues that religious action is powerful insofar as worship can bring the worshipper into a relationship of closeness with the divine (2005, 31-32). According to Latour, this phenomenon of closeness can occur regardless of the worship's being aided by material objects. However, he argues that experiences of closeness with the divine almost always involve the interaction between the spiritual context of the believing worshipper and some form of material reality (2005, 39). In other words, the spiritual context that humans can bring to a material sign is what gives those signs spiritual significance.

Latour also speaks of what he calls freeze-frame, the action through which a material object is separated from the human-spiritual context that might otherwise have given it divine meaning (2005, 38-39). This separation occurs when the material object becomes the sole object of focus, and the otherwise relevant context is discounted. In this way, the frame of reference is frozen on the material object. For example, Bertel Thorvaldsen's *Christus Consolator*, if separated from Christians' transcendental experiences with Christ, would become a freeze-framed statue that relates in no way to the divine. However, for many Christians, the sculpture is related to the divine precisely because it reminds them of previous spiritual connections to Christ and therefore brings them into connection with the Heavens. Latour uses his notion of freeze-framing to argue that any material object is permissible in worship so long as it is not freeze-framed. Latour's inclusive argument would make many Muslims uncomfortable, for the Qur'an states that "God does not forgive the joining of partners with Him: anything less than that He forgives to whoever He will, but anyone who joins partners with God has concocted a tremendous sin" (Qur'an 4: 48)*. Here, God's view of idolatry as the unforgivable sin is abundantly clear. With this in mind, I am not attempting to argue that the Qur'an permits all material objects to influence the worship of God. Rather, I am arguing that given the right social and cultural circumstances, specifically the lack of freeze-framing, the Qur'an approves of certain elements of the material world which can lead directly to a close experience of the divine.

The Qur'an plainly defines what social and cultural circumstances lead to freeze-framed idolatry and what circumstances lead to proper worship. In so doing it makes clear distinctions about which material elements are appropriate in

seeking closeness with God. Qur'anic approval and disapproval of signs is determined by the nature of their creation, with the Qur'an favoring material signs created directly by God, such as those found in the natural world. However, creation by God is not enough; the Qur'an also enjoins worshippers to recognize the direct link between the created signs and the Creator. If this connection is not made, both the sign and the worship become illicit. As I will show, the Qur'an's injunction to recognize the connection of signs with the divine is essentially an injunction to avoid freeze-framing by bringing the necessary spiritual context into interactions with certain, approved elements of material reality.

The Qur'an is full of condemnations of idolatry, and many of these condemnations stress the importance of not freeze-framing in order to avoid *shirk*. The Qur'an has an expansive view of what can constitute an idol. Some examples include statues (Qur'an 2:51), images (Qur'an 21:52), Satan (Qur'an 14:22), past prophets (Qur'an 3:79), one's own passion (Qur'an 25: 43), and property (Qur'an 18:42). Some of these examples, such as images or property, cannot be signs of God because they were created directly by man. Such material objects are deemed by the Qur'an to have insufficient connection to the Creator to be permissible signs. In this way, the Qur'an sees such things as inherently freeze-framed because it is difficult to connect to God through reflecting on their creation. However, the inclusion of past prophets, who are elsewhere celebrated by the Qur'an, demonstrates that idols are not always inherently evil. Rather, some objects are made into idols by wrong worship. If one were to freeze-frame the prophets by worshiping them, the worshiper would be committing idolatry. But if instead the worshiper were to recognize the miracles and teachings of the prophets as signs pointing to God, the prophets, as signs of God's power, would have a permissible influence on worship.

While the Qur'an condemns idolatry stemming from the failure to worship the power behind the symbolic object, the Qur'an approves of signs when the worshiper recognizes their divine origins. In Surah 41, the Qur'an reads, "The night, the day, the sun, the moon, are only a few of His signs. Do not bow down in worship to the sun or the moon but bow down to God who created them" (Qur'an 41: 37). This clearly shows that nature contains signs of God that can direct people toward Him. However, it is also clear that the worshipper must not be distracted from the true object

of worship by taking the material sign out of its divinely created context. Surah 6 warns against making the Jinn into gods when it is God who created them and therefore is more powerful (Qur'an 6:100). This passage points to the inherent limits of the created, while emphasizing the power of God, who alone has the ability to create. This difference in creative power is the Qur'an's justification for reserving worship for God alone. This principle is further emphasized in the Qur'an's declaration that "those they invoke beside God create nothing; they are themselves created" (Qur'an 16: 20). Objects that are created by God are obvious manifestations of His power and not easily freeze-framed, and thus can be a significant means of bringing people to God.

The Qur'an contains a plethora of examples of approved material signs of God, often manifesting themselves in the beauty and power of the natural world. Many of the oaths in the early Meccan surahs mention such natural signs. In these oaths, God's power is made manifest by the Sun, the Moon, the morning, the day, the sky, the earth, the soul (Qur'an 91: 1-7), the differences in creation between male and female (Qur'an 92:3-4), the fig, the olive, Mount Sinai, and charging steeds (Qur'an 100: 1-5). Frequently, authorized signs of God are marked by some variation of the phrase "there truly is a sign for those who reflect." For example, Surah 16 contains the following list of signs of God contained in nature: "It is He who sends down water for you from the sky, from which comes a drink for you, and the shrubs that you feed to your animals. With it He grows for you grain, olives, palms, vines, and all kinds of other crops. There truly is a sign in this for those who reflect" (Qur'an 16:10-11). Certain elements of nature are clearly appropriate signs which can point the right-minded worshipper to God. Following verses speak of the signs of God contained in celestial phenomena, the colors of the earth, the sea, the mountains, and the rivers, stating again that these are signs of God for "those who use their reason," "take it to heart," and " give thanks" (Qur'an 16:12-16). These elements of the material world are legitimate signs of God because they demonstrate His creative power. However, they are only permissible insofar as the worshipper looks beyond them to their creator, avoiding freeze-framing and the resulting idolatry.

Other examples of approved signs include God's creation of man (Qur'an 40:67) and love between a man and his wife (Qur'an 30: 21). The miraculous revelation of the Qur'an is also frequently

cited as a sign of God's reality and power (see for example Qur'an 17:9; Qur'an 41:3; Qur'an 43:3). The important role of the Qur'an as a material sign of God is made manifest in the importance placed by Muslims on its recitation. The Qur'an is seen as the literal word of God, and therefore clearly points to His existence. While these signs are not elements of the natural world as are many of the other signs, they too are clear manifestations of God's creation and power. Still, none of these signs can function without human-spiritual context. In inviting people to reflect on the signs of God's reality and power, the Qur'an invites them to add that necessary context in order to experience His reality. In Latour's terms, it invites them to stop freeze-framing and experience closeness with Him. If the Qur'an is freeze-framed as a mere book, it might become an idol. But if the Qur'an is experienced in its intended form as the literal word of God (Qur'an 10: 37-39), the necessary spiritual context is present, and it becomes an integral part of worship.

With such a plethora of approved material signs, it is clear that the Qur'an does not condemn all potential symbols of the divine as idolatrous. Rather it generally approves or disapproves of signs based on the level of separation between God in their creation. Things created by man cannot be signs of God, but as long as material elements, including love, the natural world, and the Qur'an, are explicitly recognized as signs of the true God, it is appropriate for people to reflect on those signs. In reflecting, the worshipper will come to have a relationship of closeness with the divine. This interpretation of the Qur'an challenges the common perception that the Qur'an is purely iconoclastic. Certainly, there are many material objects that would constitute *shirk* if involved in Muslim worship. However, there are other elements of the material world that the Qur'an indicates will lead the worshipper to a better understanding of *tawhid*, to a closeness with the true God, should they choose to move beyond freeze-framing and reflect.

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Garrett Maxwell

The Intermediate State
A Theoretical Compromise in Qur'anic Free Will Discourse

Textual ambiguity in a sacred canon complicates the formulation of dogma that a coherent religious community depends upon. While Hinduism represents the textbook example of a tradition that, for this reason, resists a centralized orthodoxy, Islam has long stood for the paragon of the antithesis despite lacking a centralized ecclesiastical base. The Qur'an has a remarkable reverberation of many crucial themes—an immortal spirit of the whole—however, the nexus of its elliptical style of rhetoric and its variegated *asbab al-nuzul* (circumstances of revelation) periodically divulges apparent contradictions. Some are insignificant to its *telos*, such as the varying materials out of which man was created (blood clot, clay, dust, etc.) which rather than being detrimental to reception are rather powerful typological tools. At the present, I wish to reflect on a fundamentally important concept and its apparent ambiguity in the Qur'an: free will, and more specifically, the phenomenological effects arising from the presence of *both* predestinarianism[1] and free will in the same text. The acclaimed poet-philosopher Ibn 'Arabi of the Islamic Golden Age left behind a cryptic formulation that reflects the nature of reader reception of the concept of free will in relation to predestination in the Qur'an. William Chittick renders it thusly: "The freely choosing human being is compelled to have free choice."[2] This formula, derived from the Qur'an, speaks to the complexity of the question at hand, which I will demonstrate to be an unresolved matter worth further consideration. This demonstration is not out of line with readings of the Qur'an by Islamic exegetes like the Iranian Sufi al-Muybudi, who wrote: "There are two exalted parts to the Qur'an. One of them is the clear apparent sense (*zahir-i rawshan*) and one is the difficult obscure sense (*ghamid-i mushkil*)."[3] However, rather than convert this tension into polemical ammunition on grounds

of incomprehensibility, I argue that the dissonance of the free-will discursive in the Qur'an is a remarkably accurate portrayal of the human experience of agency. In other words, its aporia turns out to be virtue rather than vice.

Alison Denham's studies of the Greek tragedies led her to the following conclusion: "Human agency is essentially fragmented, suspended between, on the one hand, the directives of an ordinary personal will…on the other, the deterministic causal powers of nature, represented by the supernatural."[4] This represents a rather sophisticated take that reflects the Qur'anic tone. The central paradox of agency—heteronomy's primacy over autonomy—was a prominent feature of the Homeric epics, where divine interference ran rampant, and one fatal nod of Zeus' head determined destinies of nations. Aeneas speaks in tones familiar to the Qur'anic audience: "But Zeus gives men their worth, or lessens it/As he wills, since he is strongest of all."[5] The Qur'an has received little attention in studies of the epic genre, but prominent Islamic scholar Todd Lawson makes a convincing case that it does indeed belong to this class.[6] This affirmation magnifies the importance of elucidating the Qur'anic stance on free will because, "whatever else an epic does for a culture or a community, it provides a dictionary for the language of self identity, of mythography, and the broader cultural code."[7] More than perhaps any other *kitaab*, the Qur'an has played this central and defining role in Islamicate society. It therefore follows that its discourse on free will has, and will continue to, modulate the exercise and perception of agency in Islamdom. From the first centuries, "the question of the Decree was one of the most frequently debated,"[8] and issues such as the legitimacy of the Caliphate established by Mu'āwiya hinged upon the question of the Decree. The official position of the Umayyad caliphs was that "all actions, including wrongdoings, were all determined by God's will. This belief was held because it allowed the caliphs' corrupted behaviour to be left unpunished, evil actions becoming justified because they were believed to have been established by the divine decree"[9] In short, this subject has real-world implications.

The heart of the issue is, first and foremost, if the Qur'anic claim on clarity (*mubeen*) can be said of its discourse on free will. The internal disclaimer found in *Al-imran* informs us that "in it are verses [that are] precise (*ayat muhkamat*)—they are the foundation of the Book—and others unspecific (*mutashabihat*)."[10] The divine

voice of the Qur'an is plainly concerned with making some things clear beyond dispute, some of these having been readily distilled into ideological formulations like the 'Five Pillars of Islam.' Other concepts, it leaves as unfinished business, or in other cases, induces an uncomfortable dissonance. Continuing al-Maybudi's meditation on the supposed intentional obscurity of the Qur'an, he wrote: "There are two exalted parts to the Qur'an. One of them is the clear apparent sense and one is the difficult obscure sense. This apparent sense is the majesty of the law and that obscure sense is the beauty of reality (haqiqat)."[11] *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* admits that the topic of free will, belongs to the latter category; "as with legal theory, the Qur'an did not provide its adherents with a systematic and unequivocal declaration of doctrine or with a fully formulated creed."[12] Both the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites were able to construct diametrically opposed theological edifices (free will and predestination, respectively) upon the same sacred text by virtue of the polyvalence of its *tafsir*. The *mutashabihat*, accordingly, are characterized by the observation that "the truth and the falsehood are ambiguous in them" in the words of Al-Kashani.[13] With this word of caution, the investigative endeavor can proceed without fear of crossing battle lines of orthodoxy, because as centuries of Islamic literature will demonstrate, the matter is unsettled.

A brief and surely non-exhaustive survey of examples will serve to drive this point home and advance the search from queries for dogmatic formulations towards an investigation of the literary virtues of the Qur'an. The predestinarian bent of the Qur'an is based in the principle of total sovereignty, as exemplified in Q 5:120: "God controls whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth, and He has power over all things." Furthermore, God is "He who established [the fate of men] and directed them on the straight road."[14] Critics of the Qur'an also point to verses such as Q 32:13 as evidence of a capricious deity; "And if we had willed, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me will come into effect [that] "I will surely fill Hell with jinn and people all together." The implicit assumption of this verse is that Allah has determined that certain souls be guided, and others not, for the sake of some distribution in the hereafter. The mechanism of this determination is found in Q 2:6-7: "Indeed, those who disbelieve— it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them—they will not believe/ Allah has set a seal upon their hearts

and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil. And for them is a great punishment." Without interpretive freedom, the face value of certain *mutashabihat* verses such as Q 14:4, "Allah misleads whom He wills and guides whom He wills," can lead the hearer/reader to a one-dimensional conclusion—that Allah chooses who will have reward and by the sheer power of His will brings them in, and that the others are blinded and deafened in order that the fires of hell may fill their quota.

The anticipated need for a theodicy, so typical of Christianity, is nullified by the Ash'arite guiding principle that "what is created by God is without a reason (*sabab*) which makes it necessary and that God is not bound to any compulsion or any duty towards mankind: what He commanded was believed to be necessarily right, and what He condemned necessarily wrong."[15] Whitney Bodman goes so far as to say that Islam does not have a single theodicy[16] and that it "does not shy away from holding God responsible for the evil in the world as Christianity does. In Islam, all that occurs is determined by God's will, no matter how unfair it may appear by human standards."[17] Explicit professions of faith may even include the notion that the Decree of God is "for good or evil, weal or woe."[18]

However, any sense of closure or accumulated confidence within the world of the text is eventually met with its contrary, thereby dissolving grounds for certainty. The Qur'an at times places the burden of responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the audience. The hearer is not let off the hook—to cast off and be carried about by the predetermined winds will not do. The choice to believe is set before them; "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills—let him believe; and whoever wills—let him disbelieve."[19] Furthermore, "As a warning to humanity/ To whoever wills among you to proceed or stay behind/ Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained."[20] The ancient doctrine of the two ways is present in its most unmistakable form, with its bifurcation of salvation; "Have We not made for him two eyes?/ And a tongue and two lips?/ And have shown him the two ways?"[21] If there be any doubt on the matter of freedom, the famous surah *Al Baqarah* informs that "There is no compulsion in religion."[22] The previously cited Q 14:4 is rearticulated in Q 42:13 thusly: "Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself *whoever turns back [to Him]*." An element of human volition is present in this iteration, wherein the human agent's 'turning' initiates the divine guidance.

Q 76:3 renders the situation clearly: "We have shown man the path of truth and the path of falsehood; he may choose either the path of guidance and offer the thanks, or choose the path of ingratitude." However, the statement that 'he may choose' places a caveat on the schemata. The Qur'an has something to say on this account, that at times is startling.

The Qur'anic quandary of 'choice' is a question of volition and whether it operates independently of deity or not. If the heart symbolizes the volitional center then the whole enterprise is overturned in Q 8:24; "O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. *And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart* and that to Him you will be gathered." Even the seeming independence of humankind's dialogue with their own hearts is here claimed as the dominion of Allah. His intention to gather, or lead into error, is unmitigated by the human heart. Furthermore, if one seeks to be 'successful,' they are advised in Q 28:67; "But as for one who had repented, believed, and done righteousness, it is promised by Allah that he will be among the successful," but any sense of virtue in accomplishment is met with the following verse; "And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses; *not for them was the choice*. Exalted is Allah and high above what they associate with Him." In the face of these verses, it is difficult to deny the dogmatic discord.

However, even in the face of these kinds of declarations the Ash'arite theology of predestination found ways to insert a form of human agency "by way of recognizing the existence of a power which enabled them to acquire (*iktisāb*) the action created for them by God."[23] In a way, humans could be seen as the conduit of divine will, acquiring pre-formed action from a palette of precisely one color. According to Abū'l-Hasan al-Ash'arī, "God created a power in man (a generated power, *quwwa/qudra muhdatha*) through which man was allowed to become the agent over or the 'proximate cause' of an act."[24] Attributing a pure etiology of action to humans is gently skirted out of respect for the absolute and utter sovereignty of Allah—man is responsible for 'proximate cause' at best. Instead, humans act "by virtue of what [is] defined as a concomitant act of the will."[25] This concept is represented in Q 76: 29-30: "Indeed, this is a reminder, so he who wills may take to his Lord a way. *And you do not will except that Allah wills.* Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise." When the two wills align, the guidance is imparted and

reward granted, but when the lesser will collides with the greater, the greater has its way. Al-Ghazali remarks in the same vein as Ibn 'Arabi, that "God acts by pure free choice and man acts in an intermediate way, being compelled to choose freely," explaining why, in Maria de Cillis' words "humans find themselves in an intermediate position, which is contrary neither to compulsion nor to free will,"[26] in other words, in a state of heteronomy.

The Qur'an appears to have no qualms with this discursive friction. In fact, I argue that it resonates with the human condition—phenomenologically speaking. Returning to al-Kashani's commentary, "the revelation appeared in this manner so that the *mutashabihat* would turn towards the faces of the different forms of preparedness (*isti2dadat*)."[27] While the usual implicit argument of Sufi commentary of this nature refers to depth of knowledge and piety unlocking esotericism,[28] I suggest that this equally applies to a sort of reader-response theory. In other words, the state of the listener (preparedness) takes part in creating the meaning of these passages. The subjective human experience of fluctuating autonomy acts as an interlocutor with the text, at times finding resonance with one set of claims (predestination/Decree) and at other times, the other pole (complete autonomy).

To speak of human agency requires not merely sorting through various doctrinal formulations in search of resonance, but modulation by subjective reports. In other words, "no account of human action (and therefore human moral responsibility) is ever complete in the absence of a subjective report, a 'view from within,' provided by the agent."[29] This 'view from within' indicates that human agency is not a seamless process. Sean A. Spence, in a study on the cognitive neuroscience of free will, reports that at times humans can feel "a sense of separation, alienation, from their most intimate agentic experiences...the person is no longer the author of their own thoughts and deeds...there is 'interference.'"[30] If that is not bizarre enough, he continues: "Some quite complex behaviours can emerge without their conduit's 'consent.'"[31] In common parlance, statements such as "I was not myself at the time," or, "I was a different person back then," or, "I don't know why I did that," are expressions of this deeply rooted paradox. Denham observed that "ordinary human agency is neither seamlessly integrated nor perfectly coherent" and that "human experience is not merely punctuated by episodic interferences from external

causal determinants; it is largely shaped by them."[32] In sum, rather than arousing suspicion due to seeming discursive contradiction, the Qur'an speaks to an uncomfortable reality of human agency—namely, that one can never continuously maintain a sense of complete control, nor the sense of total lack thereof. This fact has concerned humankind from Homer to Shakespeare,[33] and down to the present. These same questions are now coming to the forefront of modern inquiry in fields inaccessible to our predecessors, such as neurobiology. Answers have tended to only multiply the questions and this pattern seems to reveal just how little we can be certain about.[34] Indeed, Sufis al-Kashani and Ruzbihan were correct in their assessment that "God created the world in such a way that truth and falsehood intermingle in an ambiguous way."[35]

The Sufi philosopher Al-Maybudi concluded that a sense of obscurity "is the beauty of reality" and that the structure of the Qur'an is connected to "that of mankind and the cosmos."[36] The structural correspondence represented, in this case, is the correspondence between free will discursive structure in the Qur'an, and the structure (or lack thereof) of the human experience of the same. The Qur'an anticipates both the human who feels phenomenologically free and the human prostrated by causal forces beyond control. From whichever side of the spectrum the Qur'an is approached, one has sacred material to work with to either rejoice, cope with, or enforce an existential paradigm shift in the endless grapple with formless agency and its ancillary considerations. Vitally, recognition of this conceptual tension has the potential to endow the audience with empathy sufficient to suspend judgments of moral nature upon fellow humans who, likewise, are suspended in the inchoate waters of heteronomy—Al-Ghazali's 'intermediate state,' and the common lot of humankind.

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1   The title of this essay uses the Arabic terms for this concept: Al-Qaḍāʿ Wa ʾl-Qadar. The first term is often translated as "the Decree," which will be used interchangeably with predestination for simplicity's sake. For a discussion of the terms see, Gardet, L., "al-Ḳaḍāʾ Wa ʾl-Ḳadar", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

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6   See Todd Lawson, *Quran: Epic and Apocalypse* (Oneworld Academic, 2017). Remarkably, the Qur'an can be considered as scripture, epic, and apocalypse, all in one.

7   Lawson, *The Quran: Epic and Apocalypse*, xii.

8   Gardet, L., "al-Ḳaḍāʾ Wa ʾl-Ḳadar", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 14 July 2020 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0407>

9   De Cillis, Maria. *Free Will and Predestination in Islamic Thought: Theoretical Compromises in the Works of Avicenna, al-Ghazālī and Ibn ʿArabī* (Routledge, 2014) 6.

10   Qur'an 3:7

11   Sands, Kristin Sahra. *Sufi Commentaries on the Quran in Classical Islam* (Routledge Studies 2006) 16.

12   McAuliffe, Jane Dammen. *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (Cambridge, 2006) 219.

13   Sands, *Sufi Commentaries*, 17.

14   Q 87:3

15   De Cillis, *Free Will and Predestination in Islamic Thought*, 13.

16   Bodman, Whitney. *The Poetics of Iblis: Narrative Theology in the Qur'an* (Harvard Theological Studies, 2011) 1.

17   Bodman, *The Poetics of Iblis*, 10.

18   Gardet, "al-Ḳaḍāʾ Wa ʾl-Ḳadar"

19   Q 18:29

20   Q 74:36-38

21   Q 90:8-10

22   Q 2:256

23   Cillis, *Free Will and Predestination*, 14.

24   *Ibid.*

25   *Ibid.*

26   *Ibid*, 124.

27   Sands, *Sufi Commentaries*, 17.

28   The rise of esoteric writings in Islamic literature was influenced greatly by al-Ghazali's philosophy of not revealing too much too soon to the uninitiated, see *The Venture of Islam*, vol.2, part VI.

29   Spence, Sean A. *The Actor's Brain: Exploring the Cognitive Neuroscience of Free Will.* (Oxford University Press, 2009) 236.

30   *Ibid*, 228. These cases of reported compromise are from experiments conducted on the outliers of psychological health, but if anything, this indicates the propensity for such an internal observation in any person considered 'normal,' but remains suppressed or only periodically surfaces. J.A. Gray proposed that, in the extreme example of schizophrenic patients, "alterations in the initial stages of information processing allow *items that normally remain unconscious to become conscious* in patients, thus leading to abnormalities at the conscious level," in "The Neuropsychology of Schizophrenia," *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 14, 1-84. This discussion lies beyond the scope of this paper, but deserves further attention as it pertains to the phenomenological event of agential 'interference.'

31   *Ibid*, 236.

32   Denham, "Tragedy Without the Gods: Autonomy, Necessity, and the Real Self," 145, 147.

33   *King Lear* is a profound meditation on this subject. See Edmund's speech in Act 1 scene ii: "We make guilty of our disasters the sun / The moon and the stars as if we were villains on / Necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves / ...and all that we are evil in by a / divine thrusting on... (120-126)

34   See Michael Gazzaniga's *Who's in Charge?*, Bernard Weltz's *Free Will, Causality, and Neuroscience*, Sean Spence's *The Actor's Brain: Exploring the Cognitive Neuroscience of Free Will*, and *Surrounding Free Will: Philosophy, Psychology, Neuroscience* edited by Alfred R. Mele

35   Sands, *Sufi Commentaries*, 17.

36   Sands, *Sufi Commentaries*, 16.

Ammon Burdge

Music: The Power of Common Knowledge in Tahrir

Music, especially live music, is threatening. Some would say, as Egyptian Parliament spokesman Salah Hasaballah did, that music is more dangerous than coronavirus.[1] The Egyptian government's concerns are rooted in the early 20th century when music was used to carefully craft a new Egyptian identity. The concerns transformed into fears as music effectively rallied dissidents at Tahrir Square in early 2011. Music was used to unify the people around a common understanding of their shared grievances, and mobilize them to action, leading to the toppling of the Mubarak regime. Yet, the music did not stop there, as its criticisms of the regime continue today. As a result, Egypt's Musicians' Syndicate—an organization under the culture ministry—banned *mahraganat* (festival) songs earlier this year, going so far as to contact YouTube and SoundCloud demanding that such music be eliminated from the platforms. It is curious that a nation that prides itself on a rich, musical heritage should become so averse to what many consider folk art and an expression of national identity. Such a contradiction leads one to wonder how music comes to threaten a regime.

Regarding the *mahraganat* ban, Egypt's Musicians' Syndicate, in fulfilling its responsibility to define and enforce the moral codes to which musicians must adhere, cited a concern that the lyrics of such music promote immorality and promiscuity. A syndicate official, Mansour Hendy, explained, "We are trying to preserve the traditions and values of a whole nation. We are not fighting against art. We are fighting against this decadence."[2] Lyrics during a Valentine's Day concert referencing the consumption of alcohol and hashish appear to be the impetus for a battle over the cultural and moral identity of Egypt.[3] Thus, it would seem that the Egyptian regime is threatened by musicians and their performances because of the questionable moral character of said music.

However, common in each performance is the use of music to emphasize political disparities inflicted on a minority group by the majority. Perhaps the Egyptian regime, via the Musicians' Syndicate, is more concerned with where this music came from and what it highlights, than with a handful of lyrics referencing alcohol consumption. *Mahraganat* originates in the slums of Egypt as artists combined *shaabi* folk music with hip-hop and electronic music.[4] Because of its origins, the music highlights the economic turmoil which has hit the lowest classes of Egypt especially hard. Unemployment, a declining economy, poverty, corruption, and repression are key features in this street music. The lyrics can be deeply personal, describing one individual's daily struggle or another's love lost as a result of economic hardship. Fans of the music explain, "They speak about our neighborhood, our people. This is our culture. It represents us. They speak about the young people who cannot find jobs, about our living standards. The lyrics are true."[5] This personal approach enabled *mahraganat* music to highlight the disparity suffered by the lower classes, which was simply dismissed as a promotion of promiscuity. Therefore, this regime is not threatened by music because of a supposed celebration of questionable morals, but because of the underlying political messages communicated through the music.

The regime's fear is not a sudden occurrence but has been established over decades of revolutionary activity and transitions. Considering these recent events, this paper endeavors to explore the central role music plays in instigating and perpetuating a social movement. More specifically, it seeks to answer the question: What does the music of the Egyptian protests from 25 January 2011 to 11 February 2011 reveal about the attitudes surrounding Egyptian revolutionary activity? These eighteen days comprise the Egyptian contribution to the Arab Spring, culminating in the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak. Understanding first, how different songs define the message of the revolution, and second, what symbols are used to communicate that message, will aid in drawing a clear conclusion as to the attitudes surrounding Egyptian revolutionary activity during this timeframe. The sample of songs selected highlight five themes, or calls to action, that are common across Egyptian music from this period, which could be termed Egyptian revolutionary music. These themes are: (1) A call for unification, (2) a call for Mubarak to step down, (3) a call for change through truth,

(4) a call for freedom, and (5) a call for the people to fight. Each of these calls reveals the attitudes, motivations, and perceptions regarding revolutionary activity of Egyptians during this period.

In order to understand the potential that music has to influence a nation, I will first begin by discussing the essential criteria for a successful revolution and how music fits therein. That discussion will be followed by the history of Egyptian identity through music, to understand the broader context and roots of the selected sample of songs. Next, the context of the protests from 25 January 2011 to 11 February 2011 will be explained, followed by a discussion of the five calls listed above. Finally, I will draw conclusions based on the calls in relation to their implications about the future of Egypt.

Music in Theories of Revolution

Music has the potential to play an integral role in instigating and perpetuating revolutionary activity. It can serve to highlight the failures of the state, to illustrate mass frustrations, to provide intellectuals an opportunity to lead societal restructuring, and to unite the populace in a cross-class movement. To see the part that music plays in revolutions, a proper understanding of both how and why revolutions occur must be demonstrated. Such an understanding begins with the factors that are necessary for a revolution to take place, as identified in the work of James DeFronzo[6]. These factors are: (A) a state crisis that causes the administrative and coercive aspects of the state to be rendered ineffective; (B) mass frustration as a result of discontent, typically regarding economics; (C) elite dissidence characterized by divisions between elites and the government; (D) a unifying motivation that crosses class dynamics. Utilizing these factors, one can identify which theories of revolutions most adequately explain the state-level and individual-level processes that lead to revolution. It is essential to note that while music is not likely to be influential during the state-level processes, it can be a vital component for building the cohesion necessary for the individual-level processes to take place.

Given these elements, Theda Skocpol's structural theory of revolutions[7] provides the clearest explanation of the state-level circumstances that are likely to cause a revolution. She explains that revolutionary potential depends on how the state is structured to meet challenges. A revolution is probable when a state faces a

difficult, external challenge either in the form of war or economic competition. Such a challenge would be labeled "state crisis" by DeFronzo. Unable to meet this challenge directly, the government imposes unbearable taxes to extract the resources necessary to meet the external threats, resulting in mass frustration. Intellectuals, government officials, or other members of the upper class, perceive their economic position as being in jeopardy and either withhold resources from the government—leaving it vulnerable—or they become the leadership and main funding source for revolutionary activity. This is the "elite dissidence" characterized by DeFronzo.

Though necessary factors, mass frustration and elite dissidence are not themselves sufficient for a revolution. The cohesive interaction of these groups in response to a state crisis, however, is both necessary and sufficient to result in a revolution. Music can facilitate this interaction by giving a voice to mass frustrations and providing intellectuals an opportunity to lead societal restructuring. As John Street explains, musicians mastered the art of "encoding political discussion of society within metaphorical lyrics"[8] through which they were able to unite different segments of society around a singular set of goals. Craig Robertson notes that in North Africa, both musicians and non-musicians utilized music as a means of establishing group identity, rapidly sharing up-to-date information, and communicating the broader goals of the movement.[9] Music is capable, therefore, of being the vehicle for communicating the unifying motivation identified by DeFronzo. It is a vital resource for joining the mass frustrations of the populace with the dissent of elites.

The individual-level processes are best explained by the modernization theory of Samuel Huntington[10] and the psychological theories of James Davies[11] and Timur Kuran.[12] Huntington theorized that as countries embraced modern systems over traditional systems (capitalism over clientelism), they would experience social and economic growth as well as a larger middle class. Yet, the mechanism that would lead individuals to change the regime as a result of growth remained unclear. Davies introduced a "j-curve" theory, which highlighted the mechanism, showing that as economic and social development occurs, there is a gap between citizens' expectations and reality. This gap is tolerable as long as citizens' real economic development is occurring at the same rate as their expected economic development. However, when the

state experiences a crisis and begins to extract resources, actual economic development regresses in a sharp reversal—hence the j-shape of the curve. At this point, the gap between reality and expectations is intolerable, resulting in mass frustration. Music is a tool that can serve to highlight the expectation gap, broadcasting the economic failures of the state and the grievances of its citizens. As mentioned with *mahraganat* music, artists can draw attention to the disparities between what the people expect, and what they are actually able to achieve. Musicians are empowered to narrate the story of an anonymous, or even imagined, individual that is strikingly similar to the personal stories of most listeners. However, a step is missing between Davies' intolerable gap and mass participation in revolutionary activity. How exactly do people get from frustration to rebellion?

Kuran's psychological theory explains the process by which an individual determines if the gap between expectations and reality is sufficiently intolerable to warrant participation in revolutionary activity. Kuran explains: under an authoritarian regime, citizens falsify their social and economic preferences;[13] outwardly, they support the regime, while inwardly hoping for something different. These preferences remain hidden as dictators violently attack those who speak out, assigning a dangerous cost to criticism. In a potentially revolutionary setting, citizens weigh the cost of participation against their true preferences.

As personal preferences are considered, it becomes clear that the definition of intolerable is dependent on the individual. For some, any loss of economic development is intolerable, and the cost of participation is fairly low. These are the elites who have enough resources to be independent of the government. In Egypt's case, these were the famous musicians who had enough wealth and social status to produce music critical of the regime, without having to worry about retaliation.[14] For others, while the loss of economic development is not good, it is tolerable so long as no one else is complaining. The middle and lower classes are dependent on the government and vulnerable to its strength; thus they have a higher cost of participation. Yet, if others who are less dependent are willing to engage, their activity will lower the cost for others as it provides sufficient obfuscation to protect dependent participants from reprisals. For the average Egyptian, listening to the anti-government music of well-known artists is a low-cost activity that

could simply be excused as merely listening to popular music. But how do individuals take the step from listening to music and engaging in revolutionary activity? How do they know that there are sufficient numbers to warrant engagement?

The philosophical arguments of David Lewis concerning "common knowledge"[15] provide sufficient explanation as to how individuals determine that they are safe to participate in revolutionary activity. At its most basic level, common knowledge is one individual knowing that another knows that both know the same information. Steven Pinker applied the logic of common knowledge to arguments surrounding the freedom of speech in the context of an authoritarian regime.[16] He explained that for people to coordinate their behavior and effect change, common knowledge must be held between them. If that knowledge is not held, mutually beneficial behavior cannot take place:

> The reason that citizens don't resist their overlords en masse is that they lack common knowledge. …[I]n the case of civil resistance, people will expose themselves to the risk of reprisal by a despotic regime, only if they know that others are exposing themselves to that risk at the same time, and that the others know that they know. …[T]he common knowledge that emboldens collective action is created by public information like a broadcasted statement.[17]

For revolutionary activity to take place, each participant must know that the other participants are willingly opening themselves up to retaliation by the regime, and that the other participants know that each participant knows this. Without certainty of this knowledge, individuals are not likely to risk unsupported exposure to a brutal tyrant.

Pinker illustrates this concept further via Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes."[18] All of the townspeople fear two things: first, that they may be too stupid to see the clothes, and second, the punishment of the emperor if they are found to be stupid. Therefore, each person pretends to see the clothes, until a boy is willing to laugh at the emperor, pointing out that he is naked. When he does so, all the people simultaneously know that everyone else knows that the emperor is naked. This common knowledge removes both fears for the townspeople, and at the same time, removes power from the emperor. Connecting this story to

authoritarian regimes, Pinker explains that "humor is no laughing matter."[19] Humor, in this case, is the "broadcasted statement" necessary to enable citizens to achieve common knowledge. Engaging with humor and satire has a low participation cost, especially when compared to physical sit-ins, protests, and other demonstrations. But once common knowledge is acquired, the people are able to see that the true cost of participation is much lower than previously assumed, especially when measured against their collective intolerable gaps.

Applying the logic of common knowledge to the Arab uprisings, one can see that, similar to humor, music is a part of the information provided which starts everyone on the path of discovering the true preferences of those around them. Although some have highlighted the internet as the key cause of the Arab uprisings, it is alone unable to facilitate the process of establishing common knowledge. Various forms of media—satire, poetry, literature, graffiti, and music—are the vehicles for broadcasting public information, while the internet is simply an amplifier for that information. The revolutionary utility of the internet is not based in its global connectivity, but in its domestic network. The global opinions surrounding Mubarak were not as crucial to the Egyptians as the media created by Egyptians proclaiming that other Egyptians wanted the fall of the regime. As Egyptians created music about Egypt and shared it for all of Egypt to see, they had the ability to identify that each other knew that the other knew that both wanted the fall of the regime. Such common knowledge enabled them to act in cohesion during their demonstrations in Tahrir Square.

In summation, four factors are necessary for a revolution to take place: a state crisis, mass frustration, elite dissidence, and a unifying motivation. A state crisis causes a sharp regression of economic development. This regression increases the gap between expectations and reality, resulting in mass frustration when it reaches an intolerable point. Each individual has his or her own preferences which determine whether a gap has become intolerable. But in an authoritarian regime, although there may be mass frustrations, citizens are forced to falsify their preferences to remain safe. If preferences remain hidden, nothing will change. However, if preferences are revealed publicly, common knowledge can be acquired, and revolutionary activity can begin. Artistic

media, such as satire and music, highlights the intolerable gap publicly. Typically, this media is created by elites who have the lowest participation cost in speaking out against the government. As other individuals with a low participation cost engage with that media, their preferences are revealed. When they speak out, they enable others to gain common knowledge, which in turn lowers the participation cost for other classes, whose participation lowers the cost for everyone else. When this cross-class unification is achieved, the revolution is in full swing. Therefore, a unifying motivation plays an integral part in instigating a revolution.

In Egypt's case, this motivation for revolution was reflected in music, one of the many tools that were used to highlight the failures of the state, illustrate mass frustrations, provide intellectuals an opportunity to lead societal restructuring, and unite the populace in a cross-class movement. While satire, literature, poetry, and other media certainly also were used with similar aims, each deserves its own treatment and should be described individually. I will focus the balance of this paper on an illustration of how music reflected the revolutionary attitudes of Egypt. Musicians wanted to highlight state failures, illustrate frustrations, and unite the people. Given the scope of this paper, I am unable to show that music did accomplish these aims. However, I can show what was reflected in the music and that these reflections were part of the first steps toward revolution. I cannot show that music caused the revolution, but it was certainly used as a means of calling the people to action.

History of Egyptian Identity Through Music

Egypt has maintained a historical claim as the cultural center of Arab music. The roots of the music which effected revolutionary change in 2011 date back to the Ottoman Empire and extended into the 20th century via five major icons: Sayed Darwish, Mohammed Abdel Wahab, Umm Kulthum, and Sheikh Imam. During Ottoman rule, Mohammad Hasaballah, an Italian-trained clarinet player in the military band, began his own group when he retired from military service. His brass band performed formal music for ceremonies and in the palace of Mohammed Ali Pasha. They also performed Egyptian love songs of the period at weddings and folk celebrations. Their music transformed the two types of music into a genre all to itself, today known simply as Hasaballah music. Mohammed Shabana of the Popular Performance Department

at the Academy of Arts explained, "The Hasaballah band was an important development. They transformed their music from its Western style and formal role into popular Egyptian music."[20] The work of Hasaballah came to establish a particular identity among Egyptians as different from the rest of the Ottoman Empire. Establishing that the people were a unique segment of the Empire is the first Egyptian communication of common knowledge regarding identity. This concept became the foundation for the Egyptian nationalist movement, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 20th century.

The first music icon of the 20th century is Sayed Darwish, who carries the honorary title "father of Egyptian popular music."[21] Darwish built upon the work of Hasaballah, weaving Egyptian folk music with Western instrumentation, the result of which was a cross-class appeal that united the Egyptian populace. Darwish is so influential that his 1923 composition "بلادي بلادي بلادي," (My country, my country, my country) was adopted in 1979 as Egypt's national anthem. Most importantly, the music of Darwish encapsulated the lives of the oppressed and marginalized—his music was for them because he felt their pain.[22] As technology developed, so too did the reach of Egyptian music. Mohammed Abdel Wahab, the second icon of the 20th century, is well known for not only his singing and compositions, but also his acting. Despite his musically Western orientation, Abdel Wahab was not rejected by Middle Eastern audiences, but was rather widely accepted. His compositions became the national anthems for countries such as Libya, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.[23] Together, these first two icons cemented the concept that each nation was composed of different groups—that Arab culture and identity was not monolithic.

Known as "The Voice of Egypt,"[24] Umm Kulthum is perhaps the most integral part of Egyptian culture and history of music. Not only did she appear in Egyptian films and musicals, but her concerts were broadcast live throughout the nation. Such broadcasts enabled Egyptians across all classes to enjoy her music, which concerts previously would have been reserved for only the elite members of society. Her status shifted from music icon to political symbol after the revolution of 1952 and the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Abdel Nasser would air his speeches and government messages directly after Kulthum's concert broadcasts, as all of Egypt would be listening. She would also sing songs in support of Abdel Nasser,

including "والله زمان يا سلاحي" (It has been a long time, oh my weapon). The song evoked a deeply nationalistic sentiment during the 1956 to 1957 Suez Crisis, calling for soldiers to:

> Rise and close ranks,
> With lives ready for sacrifice.
> Oh! the horror that the enemy shall suffer,
> From you in the fire of the battlefield.
> [...]
> Who shall protect Free Egypt?
> We shall protect her with our weapons.
> Land of the Revolution, who will sacrifice for her sake?
> We will, with our souls.[25]

It later became the national anthem from 1960 to 1979. The music of Umm Kulthum built upon the concept of a particularly Egyptian identity established through the music of Hasaballah and strengthened with the feats of Darwish and Abdel Wahab. But the identity took on a life of its own that began to establish a distinction between the government of Egypt and her people.

The separation between the Egyptian government and the Egyptian people was championed by Sheikh Imam, who gained the epithet "The Voice of the People,"[26] for his willingness to publicly challenge the regime. Together with poet Ahmed Fouad Negm, Sheikh Imam targeted the regimes of Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat, highlighting the brutalities inflicted on the poor and working-class Egyptians. They sang about state violence, terrible living conditions, and the plight of the average Egyptian. Their criticism led to their imprisonment several times, which would later become inspiration for new generations of musicians. The music of Sheikh Imam and Negm lives on today and bred hope in the hearts of those who sang their songs, choosing to engage in revolutionary activity in Tahrir Square.

Through this history of Egyptian identity through music, one can understand the role music and musicians played in formulating and strengthening a unique, Egyptian identity over time. Nationalistic attitudes, which first stood in opposition to an empire, were later the focal point of the regime, eventually returning as a symbol of defiance against autocracy. The Egyptian youth who rose up from 25 January 2011 to 11 February 2011, utilized the music of their heritage as a means of resistance and a calling back to the history of their Egyptian identity.

25 January 2011 to 11 February 2011

The Egyptian protests in Tahrir Square from January to February of 2011, took place in an atmosphere ripe with the potential for revolutionary activity. The Cedar Revolution of Lebanon, the Green Revolution of Iran, and the Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia all occurred within quick succession from February 2005 to January 2011. After watching Syria withdraw from Lebanon, mass demonstrations in Iran, and the end of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's rule in Tunisia, the concept of demonstrations and regime change was present in the minds of Egyptians. During that same time period, Egypt experienced significant economic growth that quickly took a downturn as government corruption spread. The people suffered unemployment and a shrinking middle class coupled with a growing, educated youth population.[27]

In response to these challenges, Egyptians started to speak out. Marc Lynch notes that "significant changes in youth activism had been taking place for some time. In some ways, the wave that would become the 25 January protest began as early as June 2010."[28] During that month, state police tore Khaled Said from an internet cafe just around the corner from his home and brutally beat him to death.[29] Although not uncommon, this case became a symbol for the youth of Egypt as some created a Facebook page called "We Are All Khaled Said," which was used to share graphic photos of how disfigured his face became.[30] The page was also used to coordinate peaceful demonstrations in solidarity with Said's family, in addition to being a space for political debate. As these and other groups formed demonstrations and protests, they were met with violence by the regime via the police forces—a pattern that led to the "Day of Anger" demonstration of 25 January 2011.

Organizers chose this date to protest police brutality because it is a national holiday celebrating the police forces of Egypt.[31] The demonstration at Tahrir Square, near the Ministry of Interior, was meant to be peaceful. However, the Ministry met tens of thousands of protestors with tear gas, water cannons, and more police brutality.[32] For most of the eighteen days, the pattern of protest and brutality continued as police, military, and pro-regime mobs attacked the square. Yet, as reporter, artist, and musician Reem Kelani noted, the square was filled with the music of Sayed Darwish, Sheikh Imam, and other Egyptian icons.[33] Other artists created new music which

encapsulated the atmosphere of the square. She explains, "music was their way of sustaining the protest. They fought with song."[34] The generations' long establishment of identity, pride, and love for Egypt became a weapon against the regime. Thus, music demonstrated the power of common knowledge in Tahrir Square. Despite the disparity of force, the people were united in song and willing to sacrifice whatever was necessary for their goal. In the words of one blogger:

> This is a losing battle and they have all the weapons, but we will continue fighting until we can't. I am heading to Tahrir right now with supplies for the hundreds injured, knowing that today the attacks will intensify, because they can't allow us to stay there come Friday, which is supposed to be the game changer. We are bringing everybody out, and we will refuse to be anything else than peaceful.[35]

Protestors stayed in the square day and night, setting up their own checkpoints and security measures to protect themselves against the regime. They remained there until, on 11 February, Mubarak resigned and forfeited control of the government to the military. The events spanning from 25 January 2011 to 11 February 2011 are clear evidence of the power of music to topple a regime.

Sample Selection

Because music created during the protests of early 2011 is vital for understanding why Egyptians chose to participate in revolutionary activity, I have selected five songs that represent the vast body of music present in the square. Such music defines the unifying motivation of Egyptians, enshrined in the songs which highlight the failures of the state, illustrate mass frustrations, provide intellectuals an opportunity to lead societal restructuring, and unite the populace in a cross-class movement.

It should be immediately acknowledged that selecting a sample that was, first, able to represent a vital portion of Egypt's history and, second, was small enough to cover in this paper, proved to be challenging. Though countries like the United States have regular Top 40 charts recorded annually in Billboard and other magazines, Egypt—and the Middle East generally—does not have a reliable source tracking such information. Furthermore, the music created in the early months of 2011 necessarily came from subversive sources. The concept of creating music critical of a violent regime, though present in modern Egyptian history, was a behavior that

assumed significant risk. The genres willing to take that risk are those already known for being underground. Heavy metal, rap, and other genres are familiar with creating music that challenges norms in a space separate from the mainstream. As a result, uncovering which songs were especially moving, or popular, during January and February of 2011 is not as simple as looking at the top charts.

Therefore, particular segments of the revolution were identified that were necessary for understanding the movement as a whole, and songs were selected that appeared to represent these areas. These segments were: early revolutionary music, the response of famous artists, the Egyptian diaspora, and post-revolution. The sample selected for this research covers these areas. I then consulted with Egyptian, Palestinian, and Jordanian students to know if they felt the sample was representative of their experience. This process was inherently limiting given my access to Arab students, the ages of the students, and the frailties of recalling information from nearly a decade ago. However, the students emphasized the popularity of four out of the five songs selected as being constantly on the radio or sung in the streets. The fifth is in English, created by Egyptians living abroad, and thus it makes sense that it was not as popular in Egypt. Nevertheless, the song was included as a representation of the Egyptian diaspora.

Five songs were selected that represent different facets of the revolution. Ramy Essam's "ارحل" (Irhal)[36] and Amir Eid's "صوت الحريه" (Sout Al Horeya)[37] represent early revolutionary music. Mohamed Mounir's "إزاي؟" (Ezzai?)[38] represents well-known and retired Egyptian artists with historic reputations returning to music as a result of the revolution; Aida El Ayouby also fits in this category. "#25Jan Egypt," produced by Sami Matar and performed by Omar Offendum, The Narcicyst, Freeway, Ayah, Amir Sulaiman,[39] represents the Egyptian diaspora and its response to the revolution. "يا الميدان" (Ya El Medan) by Cairokee featuring Aida El Ayouby[40] takes a post-revolution look at what was achieved.

Early revolutionary music encapsulated the call and response chants common to revolutionary activity. As demonstrations began on 25 January, a major portion of these protests were chants that inspired unity. "الشعب يريد اسقاط النظام" (The people want the fall of the regime), filled Tahrir Square from the first day of the protests.[41] Similar chants, such as "خبز وحرية وكرامة" (Bread, freedom, and dignity), were repeated daily as more individuals joined the protest. On 6

February 2011, Ramy Essam, a heavy metal musician, performed his song "ارحل" (Irhal) on a makeshift stage in the middle of Tahrir. The song itself is remarkably simple, just four chants repeated in call and response fashion between Essam and the crowd. Yet, its influence proved substantial as the chants were repeated throughout the revolution and continued in subsequent revolutions, though the target of the chant changed from Mubarak to Morsi.

The lyrics and translation of "ارحل" (Irhal: Leave!)

كلنا ايد واحدة طلبنا حاجة واحدة ارحل ارحل ارحل ارحل	We are all one hand, we ask one demand Leave leave leave leave
يسقط يسقط حسنى مبارك يسقط يسقط حسنى مبارك	Fall, fall Hosni Mubarak Fall, fall Hosni Mubarak
الشعب يريد اسقاط النظام الشعب يريد اسقاط النظام	The people want the fall of the regime The people want the fall of the regime
هو يمشي مش حنمشي طب هو يمشى مش حنمشى	He walks, we don't walk Okay, he walks, we don't walk

Irhal was chosen because of its simplicity in addition to its fame, being called "The Anthem of the Revolution," by journalists and scholars alike.[42] As a result of the performance, Essam became a target for the Mubarak and Morsi regimes, both in the Jan25 protest and in subsequent demonstrations. He was later arrested,[43] beaten,[44] and forced into exile[45] by the government security forces.

Amir Eid's "صوت الحريه" (Sout Al Horeya), posted to YouTube on 10 February 2011, is another early revolutionary song that utilizes the call and response structure of protest chants. The majority of the lyrics focus on the aspirations of the protestors, their sacrifices, and the idea of becoming a part of history. The chorus, however, is frequently repeated as a call and response to the separate verses: "في كل شارع في بلادي \ صوت الحريه بينادي" (In every street in my country / the sound of freedom is calling).

The lyrics and translation of
"صوت الحريه" (Sout Al Horeya: The Sound of Freedom)

نزلت وقلت انا مش راجع وكتبت بدمي في كل شارع سمعنا اللي ما كانش سامع واتكسرت كل الموانع	I went out and said I'm not coming back I wrote with my blood in every street We made those who couldn't hear, finally listen We broke down all the barriers
سلحنا كان احلامنا وبكره واضح قدامنا من زمان بنستني بندور مش لاقيين مكانا	Our weapon was our dreams And tomorrow is clear in front of us For so long we've been waiting We're looking, we can't find our place
في كل شارع في بلادي صوت الحريه بينادي في كل شارع في بلادي صوت الحريه بينادي	In every street in my country the sound of freedom is calling In every street in my country the sound of freedom is calling
رفعنا رسنا في السما والجوع مبقاش بيهمنا اهم حاجه حقنا ونكتب تاريخنا بدمنا	We raised our heads to the sky And hunger no longer worries us The most important thing is our right And writing our history with our blood
لو كنت واحد مننا بلاش ترغي وتقولنا نمشي ونسيب حلمنا وبطل تقول كلمه انا	If you were one of us Better not blabber and tell us To go away and leave our dream And stop saying the word "I"
في كل شارع في بلادي صوت الحريه بينادي في كل شارع في بلادي صوت الحريه بينادي	In every street in my country the sound of freedom is calling In every street in my country the sound of freedom is calling

Fortunately for Amir Eid, his band Cairokee was able to embrace fame without facing the same negative experiences which plagued Essam's rise to fame. The main reason for the difference in outcome lies in the lyrics of each song. Essam was willing to conspicuously call out Mubarak, demanding he leave the presidency. Eid's lyrics are broader in their application. No leaders are mentioned specifically, and the actions called for by the song are spoken of in general terms. "Irhal" and "Sout Al Horeya" together encapsulate

the feeling of early revolutionary music and the call and response chants of Tahrir.

The response of famous, and retired Egyptian musicians to the revolution is manifested in Mohamed Mounir with his song "إزاي؟" (Ezzai?). The song was recorded in November of 2010 but had been banned by the government, given its content.[46] In "Ezzai?" Mounir sings of the love that the people of Egypt have for the country:a love that is never returned to them. The song emphasizes the lengths to which the people are willing to go to prove their love for Egypt, while the only response they receive is force, violence, and rejection:

The lyrics and translation of "إزاي؟" (Ezzai?: How?)

إزاى ترضيلى حبيبتى أتمعشق إسمك وانتى عماله تزيدى فى حيرتى وما انتيش حاسه بطيبتى إزاى؟	How can you accept for me, when I deeply love your name and you are keeping me confused, and can't feel my kindness, how?
مش لاقى فعشقك دافع ولا صدق فى حبك شافع إزاى أنا رافع راسك و انتى بتحنى فى راسى إزاى؟	I can't find a reason to love you, and my sincerity doesn't even count How can I keep your head high when you keep forcing me to bow my head down?
أنا أقدم شارع فيكى و آمالك م اللى باليكى أنا طفل اتعلق بيكى فى نص السكه و توهتيه	I am the oldest of your streets, your hopes from those who have destroyed you I am a child who got attached to you, and you led me astray halfway
أنا لو عاشقك متخير كان قلبى زمانه اتغير و حياتك لفضل أغير فيكى لحد ما ترضى عليه	Had I loved you out of choice, my feelings would have changed a long time ago I swear by your name, to keep changing you till you accept me the way I am
ازاى سيبانى فى ضعفى طب ليه مش واقفة ف صفى وأنا عشت حياتى بحالها علشان ملمحش فى عينك خوف	How can you leave me this weak, why aren't you standing by my side? When I have dedicated my entire life to not catch a glimpse of fear in your eyes

وفى بحرك ولا فى برك ازاى أحميلك ضهرك وأنا ضهرى فى آخر الليل دايما بيبات محنى ومكشوف	Over land and sea, how can I protect your back? When I spend every night with a back that's bare and arched
أنا أقدم شارع فيكى و آمالك م اللى باليكى أنا طفل اتعلق بيكى فى نص السكه و توهتيه	I am the oldest of your streets, your hopes from those who have destroyed you I am a child who got attached to you, and you led me astray halfway
أنا لو عاشقك متخير كان قلبى زمانه اتغير و حياتك لفضل أغير فيكى لحد ما ترضى عليه	Had I loved you out of choice, my feelings would have changed a long time ago I swear by your name, to keep changing you till you accept me the way I am

Because "Ezzai?" places the government in a negative light, it was banned from being released. However, on 6 February 2011, it was posted to YouTube and sung in Tahrir. While the lyrics speak to the feelings of the average Egyptian, Mounir is in the upper-class, or considered elite in status. During an interview in July 2011, Mounir explains that he never thought that his position was in jeopardy, or that he would be targeted by the regime for speaking out. He explained:

> …I can't claim that I was venturing [sic] with my career because I've always believed that change would come, and so I wasn't actually scared of anything. …Maybe I was lucky because I was never stopped from saying what I wanted. Throughout my career I've seen what it's like for other countries to live in democracy. I learned what democracy is and that it's a huge responsibility and I know that it costs a lot to be able to deliver this [sic] feelings and knowledge to the people.[47]

Mounir was equipped with the history, position, and self-reliance to stand up and speak out against the regime. Compared to Essam, the cost of doing so was nearly non-existent—having Mounir's song banned, while Essam was arrested and tortured as a result of his music. Furthermore, Mounir experienced democracy firsthand

throughout his life, while Essam was only to speak of it as an ideal to strive for. Each of these factors set "Ezzai?" apart as a unique perspective of the revolution as seen through the eyes of an artistic elite.

The Egyptian diaspora and its response to the revolution are represented in the song "#25Jan Egypt," produced by Sami Matar and performed by Omar Offendum, The Narcicyst, Freeway, Ayah, Amir Sulaiman. Because the majority of the lyrics are in English, the song was not majorly popular among the protestors of Tahrir Square, but it did find popularity among Arab-Americans in the U.S. and Europe.48 The song represents the solidarity felt by those who could not be present in the square, but were willing to speak out and be virtually present in support of the movement. Released to YouTube on 7 February 2011, the song now has over 350,000 views on that platform alone. Given its format as a rap song, the lyrics are too lengthy to provide in this paper. Nevertheless, the lyrics demonstrate a fully uncensored opinion of the revolution. Partially because the regime had not possible reprisal against Arabs living in the West, and partially as an inherent trait of the rap genre, the artists remove all ambiguity from their message. For example:

> From Tunis to Khan Younis
> the new moon shines bright
> as The Man's spoon was
> as **masses demand rights**
> **and dispel rumors of disunity**
> **communally removing the tumors**
> **of rotten 7ukoomas***
> we're making headway
> **chanting down the dictators**
> **getting rid of deadweight**
> opening the floodgates
>
> [...]Pillars of the State can now hear their own souls,
> Karma waits for no man,
> **your presidential charm and armor break,**
> **out of place in your own homeland,**
> Now Dip like Mezza...

[...]this is Egypt
home of the ruins last time we needed change it took Musa to move em
operation get rid of the pharoah [sic]
now we getting rid who ain't willing to share no
bread with the people we are all equal
true men of God, Fear God, don't fear no
person that's walking on the face of the earth

[...]they want democracy
what them arabs thinkin
the world leaders now can see when
keep people from eating
the people will eat them

*Arabic translated as governments; emphasis added

The lyrics of "#25 Jan Egypt" are clear and aggressive. They do not hint at ousting the regime, but directly call for "removing the tumors," "chanting down the dictators" and "get[ing] rid of the pharoah [sic]." Such lyrics frame Essam's "Irhal" as tame by comparison. Thus, the ability of the Egyptian diaspora to speak bluntly concerning the revolution provides the clearest of perspectives found in Arab-produced music.

A post-revolution understanding of what was achieved during the revolution is represented by Cairokee, along with Aida El Ayouby, in their song "يا الميدان" (Ya El Medan). At first listen, Cairokee and El Ayouby appear to be lamenting that the revolution did not achieve enough, with the first lyrics singing "Oh, you, the Square. Where have you been all this time?" But understanding the context of its release alters such an interpretation. The song was released on 29 November 2011 during the first stage of Egyptian parliamentary elections, which came as a direct result of the revolution. Rather than lament all that had not been achieved, the song becomes a celebration of what was accomplished, rhetorically asking, "Why did we take so long to do it?" Similar to "#25Jan Egypt," the lyrics are too long to provide here, but there are key sections which communicate the celebration felt on 29 November.

A portion of the lyrics and translation of
"يا الميدان" *(Ya El Medan: Oh You, the Square).*

[...]معاك غنينا و معاك شقينا و حاربنا خوفنا و دعينا ايد واحدة نهار و ليل مفيش معاك شئ مستحيل	[...]With you we sang. And with you we labored We fought our fears and we prayed All as one hand, Day and night And with you nothing is impossible.
[...]مفيش رجوع صوتنا مسموع الحلم خلاص بقي مش ممنوع	[...]Our voices are heard And the dream is not forbidden anymore
[...]نتجمع نشرب الشاي والحق عرفنا نجيبه ازاي خليت العالم يسمعوا والجيران يتجمعوا	[...]We get together drink tea And now we know how to get our rights You let the world hear us And you let the neighbors get together

Tahrir Square became a symbol of unity and achievement for Egyptians. The people were finally able to be heard by the regime and effect real change in their lives. What had felt forbidden for decades now became a reality as the first wave of Egyptians cast their votes and moved toward the reality of democracy. Looking back from a post-revolution perspective, "Ya El Medan" identifies that the people were able to unite, find a voice, and accomplish their dream of democracy.

Each of these five songs represents a separate facet of the revolution. "Irhal" and "Sout Al Houreya" encapsulate the call and response chants of early revolutionary music. "Ezzai?" manifests the response of famous musicians—the artistic elite—to the protests. "#25Jan Egypt" represents the perspective of the Egyptian diaspora, especially its ability to speak openly and directly—if even aggressively—about the revolution. "Ya El Medan" looks celebratorily in retrospect of the revolution and its achievements. Together, they provide a full view of the Egyptian revolution from 25 January to 11 February 2011.

The Five Calls

When considered as a whole, these facets of the revolution communicate a specific message through five calls to action: (1)

a call for unification, (2) a call for Mubarak to step down, (3) a call for change through truth, (4) a call for freedom, and (5) a call for the people to fight. Each call reveals the attitudes, motivations, and perceptions of Egyptians during this period of revolutionary activity. They reveal the hidden preferences of the people, enabling them to gain common knowledge regarding their grievances and their goals. A stanza from "Ya El Medan" succinctly states all five:

[...]فكرتنا هي قوتنا وسلاحنا في وحدتنا ميدان بيقول الحق بيقول للظالم دايما لا	[...](4)Our idea is our strength (5)Our weapon is (1)our unity (3)The square says the truth It always says no [to] (2)the oppressor

The protestors of Tahrir knew that to be successful, the people had to be united. Only then would they be able to force Mubarak to step down. To do so, the truth of the regime's brutality had to be revealed, which would enable real change to take effect. The largest change with which they were concerned was the opportunity to claim freedom from the regime. That freedom could only be realized if the people were willing to fight for it.

The first step of Tahrir had to be unity. For too long, the people had been kept separated and segmented by the regime in order to maintain its control over them. Once the people were united, they would be able to press forward in achieving their dreams. Through the theories of DeFronzo, Skocpol, Davies, and Kuran, it is clear that the cohesive interaction of all societal segments in response to a state crisis is both necessary and sufficient to result in a revolution. Each of the songs highlights the importance of unity, typically singing in the first-person plural "we." The most repeated phrase used to communicate unity for Egypt is "one hand." Where other movements have highlighted becoming one mind, one heart, or even simply one nation, Egypt emphasized the hand. The people of Tahrir intended to accomplish more than think alike, feel alike, or be alike; they intended to work, do, and fight alike. "Irhal" explained from the start, "We are all one hand, we ask one demand." In response to that call, Cairokee reflected:

معاك غنينا و معاك شقينا	With you we sang. And with you we labored
و حاربنا خوفنا و دعينا	We fought our fears and we prayed
ايد واحدة نهار و ليل	All as one hand, Day and night
مفيش معاك شئ مستحيل	And with you nothing is impossible.
[...]لازم بايدينا نغير نفسينا	[...]We have to change ourselves with our hands
اديتنا كتير و الباقي علينا	You gave us a lot and the rest is up to us.

The music of Tahrir called for Egyptians to come together and be unified beyond platitudes and feelings—it called for unification in action. More importantly, it called for elites and working-class citizens to act together regardless of their economic differences. As Egyptians met together, sang together, and labored together, they became united.

Nevertheless, becoming "one hand" can sometimes be more difficult than chanting together. Cairokee touched on this with the words "We've disagreed with good intentions, Sometimes things weren't clear." Given the various groups that participated in the protests, goals and aspirations conflicted and debates ensued. Additionally, those in Tahrir faced criticism from those who opted out of the protests. Amir Eid responded to these criticisms directly:

لو كنت واحد مننا	If you were one of us
بلاش ترغي وتقولنا	Better not blabber and tell us
نمشي ونسيب حلمنا	To go away and leave our dream
وبطل تقول كلمه انا	And stop saying the word 'I.'

If those who were speaking disparagingly about the protests really considered themselves Egyptian, Eid felt they could not tell them to leave the Square. It seems that such criticisms and differences of opinion, however, only strengthened the bond of the protestors, building greater unity. The chorus of "#25Jan Egypt" repeats "[...] we are all we have now. Do you hear [me] Calling out for back up..." explaining that their purpose is to "dispel rumors of disunity Communally." Cairokee describes the protests illustrating "The square is like a wave. There are people riding it, others pulled in." Those who stood on the edges of the protest, unsure of whether to join in or not, possibly participating in the criticism, were

themselves woken up to the need to unite as one hand and act for the future of Egypt. They gained common knowledge and were mobilized.

The second step was to call for Mubarak to step down. Essam unambiguously chanted with the rest of Tahrir, "Fall, fall Hosni Mubarak" and "The people want the fall of the regime." This phrase was repeated frequently in Tahrir until the day finally came that Mubarak stepped down. Prior to this, the Egyptian diaspora warned, "Um il-Dunya's living proof / That its [sic] a matter of time / before the chicken is home to roost." Mubarak could not have continued to rule without expecting his actions to come back to bite. These Egyptians continued, "Pillars of the State can now hear their own souls, / Karma waits for no man, / your presidential charm and armor break, / out of place in your own homeland." They warned Mubarak that he was not welcome in his own land and that the people would come for him if he did not step down. The music of the revolution illustrated the mass frustrations of the people embodied in Hosni Mubarak. Therefore, the people were united in demanding his removal.

The third step of Tahrir was to bring about change by revealing the truth. The violence of the regime had silenced the people and prevented them from speaking out about what they had been suffering. To explain why Mubarak had to leave, the music of Tahrir highlighted their pain. The diaspora called for, "operation get rid of the pharoah [sic] / now we getting rid who ain't willing to share no / bread with the people[...]" a clear reference to Mubarak who was seen as being at fault for the expansive starvation throughout Egypt. Western Arabs continued their rap: "the leaders aint helping them feeding their kids / the leaders helping pigs eating their kids [...] the world leaders now can see when / keep people from eating / the people will eat them." The corruption of government officials, gluttons in their private pursuits, are revealed as leaving the rest of Egypt to die. In this way, the failures of the state are displayed for all to see.

Yet, starvation was not the only violation committed by Mubarak. Mounir laments in "Ezzai?" all of the love and soul the people have given to Egypt, while they receive nothing in return. He sings, "I can't find a reason to love you, / and my sincerity doesn't even count. / How can I keep your head high when you keep forcing me to bow my head down?" Egyptians are unable to live with pride

for their country when the regime is constantly oppressing them. This oppression is highlighted later in the song with the words "Over land and sea, how can I protect your back? / When I spend every night with a back that's bare and arched." Mubarak was guilty of neglecting and oppressing the Egyptian people. Once that truth was brought to light, those in Tahrir were enabled to call for change.

The fourth step was to achieve freedom from the regime's oppression. The people yearned for the day that they would be able to be free and able to have power over their future. Amir Eid— indeed, all of Egypt—sang "In every street in my country / the sound of freedom is calling. In every street in my country / the sound of freedom is calling." The people of Tahrir were not alone in their call as they realized that others were willing to join in. As artists were willing to speak out and reveal the truth about Mubarak, the call for him to step down became obvious, and freedom appeared to be achievable. Cairokee sang about this key turning point:

صوت الحرية بيجمعنا	The voice of freedom brings us together
خلاص حياتنا بقي ليها معني	Finally our lives have a meaning.
مفيش رجوع صوتنا مسموع	There is no going back
الحلم خلاص بقي مش ممنوع	Our voices are heard
	And the dream is not forbidden anymore

Now that they saw the truth and demanded change, they could never go back to being oppressed. Those outside Egypt joined them in singing:

we've been empowered to speak
and though the future is uncertain
man at least it isn't bleak.
when our children can be raised
not in a cage—but on a peak
the inheritors of mother earth are meek.

While the future would be unclear, at least it was in their control. With democracy, Egyptians could determine their own destiny rather than have it dictated to them by an autocracy. In retrospect,

the people of Tahrir were thankful for the opportunity to unite in the Square: "You brought down the wall / You lit the light / You gathered around you a broken people / We were born again / And a persistent dream has been born." Protesting together in the Square brought the Egyptian people closer to their potential as a people possessing their own freedom.

The final step of Tahrir was to fight for their freedom. Now that freedom was within reach, those within the Square recognized that it could only be realized if they were willing to fight for it. The brutal violence of the regime had to be resisted, which required Egyptians to accept that they would need to be willing to sacrifice themselves if necessary. Those outside Egypt encouraged their counterparts:

> true men of God, Fear God, don't fear no
> person that's walking on the face of the earth
> if he got a tank, knife, gun, bow or an arrow.
> long as there's breath
> then there's still hope left
> so let hope rise like the eye of a sparrow.

Those within Egypt readily responded, willing to sacrifice whatever was necessary. As they left their homes and joined their brothers and sisters in the Square, the people of Tahrir knew what was at risk, but also what was at stake. Amir Eid explains:

نزلت وقلت انا مش راجع	I went out and said I'm not coming back
وكتبت بدمي في كل شارع	I wrote with my blood in every street
سمعنا اللي ما كانش سامع	We made those who couldn't hear, finally listen
واتكسرت كل الموانع	We broke down all the barriers.
سلحنا كان احلامنا	Our weapon was our dreams
وبكره واضح قدامنا	And tomorrow is clear in front of us
من زمان بنستني	For so long we've been waiting

They knew when they left their homes that there would be violence in the Square. They knew that the regime would attempt to silence them, permanently if necessary. But they also knew that that meant the regime had heard them. Therefore, they were willing to

write history in their blood. Essam chanted along with them "He [Mubarak] walks, we don't walk. Okay, he walks, we don't walk." They would not leave the Square so long as Mubarak remained in office. The Egyptian diaspora, upon witnessing the regime change in Tunisia and the increase in revolutionary activity throughout the region, concluded:

> Freedom isn't given by oppressors
> It's demanded by oppressed
> Freedom lovers—Freedom fighters
> Free to gather and protest
> for their God-given rights
> for a Freedom of the Press
> we know Freedom is the answer
> The only question is...

> Who's next?

The culmination of Tahrir was to fight until their freedom could be obtained. In their demonstrations, in their chants, and in their music, the Egyptian people never forgot those who gave their lives for the cause. After all, it was the death of Mohamed Bouazizi that ignited the Arab Spring in Tunisia, and that of Khaled Said in Alexandria that ignited the same in Egypt. If freedom is to be obtained by an authoritarian regime, it must be fought for by those who seek it.

The protestors of Tahrir knew that in order to be successful, the people had to be united. Only then would they be able to force Mubarak to step down. To do so, the truth had to be revealed, which would enable real change to take effect. The largest change with which they were concerned was the opportunity to claim freedom from the regime. That freedom could only be realized if the people were willing to fight for it. This pattern is enshrined in the songs of Tahrir that called for unification, Mubarak to step down, change through the revelation of truth, freedom, and the people to fight. The Egyptian people followed this path in acquiring common knowledge as music highlighted the failures of the state, illustrated mass frustrations, provided intellectuals an opportunity to lead societal restructuring, and united the populace in a cross-class movement.

Conclusion

Music is a source with the potential to enable individuals to discover the common knowledge necessary to engage in revolutionary activity. Once a person can recognize that others understand and see the regime in the same negative light as him, the perceived cost of speaking out is lowered for him. His participation brings others to the same understanding, in turn lowering their cost of participation, and building upon the movement. The protests in Tahrir Square harnessed music, among other forms of media, to communicate a specific message regarding the Mubarak regime and to call others to action. The music called for the people to be united so that they could force Mubarak to step down. The truth about regime oppression was revealed through music, with the hope of leading to lasting change. The key to any change would be the freedom of the people from the regime. To realize that freedom, the music called for the people to fight against their collective oppressor. Whether common knowledge in music led to these results remains unclear, but there is strong evidence that music was used to generate common knowledge in Tahrir Square.

The willingness of artists such as Ramy Essam, Mohamed Mounir, Amir Eid, Cairokee, and Aida El Ayouby to speak out and risk their positions enabled everyday Egyptians to do the same. Each artist was supported by the Egyptian diaspora who blatantly called out the regime's brutality in the clearest of terms. Although their music and performances were accompanied by the sacrifice of lives, these artists stand revered as the patrons of the revolution. They demonstrated to the world and to every other authoritarian regime the real power and threat posed by live music.

Moreover, the music of Tahrir Square has become a point-of-no-return. Every Egyptian knows that all other Egyptians share the same knowledge regarding the decades of oppression, corruption, and brutality of past regimes. While full-fledged democracy has not been achieved as of yet, the inertia of the revolution continues to affect real change. It resulted in the eventual ousting of President Mohamed Morsi (Mubarak's successor) when he failed to meet the demands of the people. It has the potential to affect the same result on Egypt's current president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi if he gives in to corruption and commits human rights violations. The inertia of the revolution enables the people of Egypt to recognize the power

that they have and their ability to strip the regime of control. Additionally, the government recognizes and acknowledges that this is common knowledge. Thus, the recent ban on *mahraganat* music and the fixation of the Musicians' Syndicate on controlling what musicians are able to create, sing, and perform. The regime is threatened by music because of its ability to empower the people.

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The logic of common knowledge may be difficult to fully understand. I would explain it using the following example: two people are placed in one room, each with a hat on her head. They both see that the other is wearing a red hat, but are unaware of their personal hat color. A man enters the room and declares that at least one of them is wearing a red hat and asks the red-hat-wearer to raise her hand. Neither woman raises her hand because she believes that the man is referring to the other. At this point, each woman understands that both she and the other are wearing a red hat. The public statement enables the discovery of common knowledge as both become aware that the other understands the same information as herself.

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Hannah Miller

Gender Equality and Democratization

How Greater Gender Equality Helps Explain Tunisian Success in the Arab Spring

On March 8, 2017, millions of men and women filled the streets of dozens of the world's major cities to commemorate International Women's Day. Many speculated that the election of Donald Trump, with his misogynist statements and obscene behavior towards women, contributed to the unprecedented numbers of these marches. It was the event's twentieth anniversary, the United Nations having designated March 8 as International Women's Day in 1977 to celebrate progress and invite all nations to continue to increase gender equality.

Tunisia celebrates two women's days. The second, August 13, is also a public holiday celebrating the landmark Code of Personal Status, which gave unrivaled rights to women in the Middle East/ North African region. The law outlawed polygamy and declared that women were neither "secondary nor complementary" to men (Coleman, 2018).

Tunisia is unique in the region for other reasons. First, Tunisian women have historically enjoyed higher relative levels of equality than their regional neighbors. Also, besides Israel, Tunisia is the only democracy in the MENA region. Could these two anomalies be linked?

This paper explores the status of Tunisian women before, during, and after its 2011 revolution that launched a wave of regional revolutions and mass protests known as the Arab Spring. Only in Tunisia's case (the so-called Jasmine Revolution) did the Arab Spring result in democracy, a result that has puzzled social scientists. I argue that the variable that seems obvious but is most often forgotten—gender equality—could be the most significant factor in explaining Tunisia's success and the failure of its neighbors.

Tunisia's case demonstrates that a certain level of gender equality, before a revolutionary process, is a significant variable in creating positive results for democracy and post-revolutionary stability. In this paper, Egypt will serve as a counterexample to show how low gender equality can generate negative results. Egypt's existing culture of low gender equality, rampant sexual violence, and the exclusion of women from political processes doomed the aspirations of their revolutionaries, both male and female.

Gender Equality is an Essential Factor for Democratization

Democracy has had multiple global waves, but the Middle East has failed to catch any of them. In the Arab Spring, it seemed as though the region's time had finally come. However, almost all efforts for democratization ultimately failed. This raised the question of why Middle Eastern states are so resistant to transition to democratic systems. According to data from the Arab Barometer, Arab citizens broadly support democracy with 86%, stating that despite its drawbacks, democracy is the best system of government (Jamal et al. 2008, 98). Most Arabs want democracy but have not been able to achieve it.

Not only desire for, but action towards change and revolution blossomed in many countries during the Arab Spring. The uprisings began soon after December 17, 2010, when Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, publicly self-immolated in a shocking demonstration of his frustration with the limited economic opportunity in Tunisia. Grievances about the low standard of living and the lack of political freedoms led thousands of Tunisians to protest against President Ben Ali's 23-year repressive regime.

Tunisia succeeded in toppling its government in 29 days. The quick and impressive topple of the regime in Tunisia ignited hope in many other Arab peoples with similar economic and political grievances towards their authoritarian governments. A few weeks after Ben Ali's demise, Egyptians flooded Cairo's main square to protest the Mubarak regime. Mubarak was similarly ousted after only a few weeks of protests, but Egypt's political woes were far from over. By this time, news of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt reached many other Arab peoples via news media and social media outlets. Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain also saw major uprisings and violence. Additionally, sustained uprisings reached most other states in the region, including Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan.

Unfortunately, the rate of success of the Arab Spring was low. Nine years after the uprising, solely Tunisia succeeded in establishing a lasting democratic regime with substantial political liberalization and expanded rights. The anomaly of Tunisian success has been debated by many social scientists. Academic Ghazi Al Tuba wrote an opinion piece for Al-Jazeera expressing the importance of the adoption of secularism. After winning Tunisia's post-revolution elections, the Ennahda party, although an Islamist party, accepted secularism and decided to separate the state and religion. Consequently, the new 2014 Tunisian constitution did not include Islamic Shari'a law. Contrastingly, the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood rejected secularism after winning the post-revolution elections in Egypt. They opted to include Shari'a jurisprudence in the new constitution and gave Muslim clerics power to interpret religious, and subsequently, civil law (Al Tuba, 2016).

Existing theories as to why Middle Eastern states have been unable to realize democracy are inconclusive and contradictory. Some arguments are economically based. Samuel Huntington argues that modernization is an important prerequisite to democratization (Huntington, 1996). However, multiple Middle Eastern states, especially the oil states, are blatant exceptions to this theory. Some cite oil wealth and the rentier effect as primary obstacles to democratization. Melanie Cammett claims that the "governance gap," where resource-rich countries can pay their citizens in exchange for political acquiescence, inhibits the potential for democratic transitions (Cammett, 2015).

The pervasiveness of the public sector in Middle Eastern economies could also stunt democratic transitional potential. Modernization theory emphasizes the role of the middle class in pushing for expanded political rights. However, the middle class in much of the Middle East is unique in the sense that it is mostly employed by the state and therefore risks much more by rebelling against the state (Waterbury, 1994). Authoritarian statecraft, clan governance, ethnic and religious sectarianism, and the effects of colonialism and imperialism are also among contributing factors, according to many political scientists.

Steven Fish published a unique argument. He says that, generally, Islamic countries have lower female literacy, less representation in government, and male-dominated sex-ratios; he argues that this gender gap is the main obstacle to democratization.

Fish's argument would have been stronger if he said Middle Eastern countries have this problem instead of Muslim majority countries. Multiple Muslim majority states, including Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, are either full or partial democracies and have even had female heads of state. Additionally, many non-Muslim states suffer from greater gender inequality than some Muslim majority countries. What is more broadly valid is that any country with a large gender gap is very unlikely either to be a democracy or to democratize. Overlooking the status of women as a significant variable for contemporary democratization has been a lamentable omission by political scientists and other theorists alike.

While many variables contribute to democratization, most democratization literature and dialogue fail to acknowledge gender equality as a significant variable or even a factor at all. It is often assumed that gender equality is more typically an effect of democratization instead of a prerequisite. What if the opposite is true? Well-established democratization theories state that the process of political liberalization, meaning the extension of civil liberties and the reduction of state repression, tend to precede a democratic transition (Wang, et al., 2017). This process suggests that in order to gain democracy, a country must first give civil liberties to both men and women. "The granting of rights—specifically the freedom of domestic movement and discussion, participation in labor market and property rights—is especially necessary for women to generate civic skills that are crucial for the development of opposition movements" (Wang, et al., 2017, 737). Without these rights, half of the population would remain in the private sphere, uninvolved in political activities. The expansion of women's civil liberties can enhance civil society's pressure and demands on authoritarian governments for political change by increasing the number of stakeholders in the society

Female participation in the democratization process is important for other reasons as well. As Wang and his co-authors argue, the process of political liberalization that leads to democratization includes not only the extension of civil liberties but also the reduction of state repression. The possibility of a democratic transition is often conditional on a state's ability or willingness to repress the opposition pushing for democracy. States calculate and weigh the cost of repression compared to the costs of

concessions and democratic reform. Political scientist Robert Dahl argued that if the political costs of suppression exceed the costs of toleration, regimes will appease opposition groups by making democratic reforms (Dahl, 1971).

The involvement of women in opposition movements increases the cost of repression. Wang explains the logic behind the heightened cost that female participation brings;
"when half of the population—that is, women—increasingly gain the rights to move, voice demands, discuss, and hold material and immaterial assets, the calculation of repression cost is significantly changed. Conversely, countries where women are denied their basic rights—that is, highly gender unequal societies—are less likely to democratize as fewer people have the capacity to express opposition to the system, and thus the relative cost of repressing revolts is lower" (Wang, et al., 2017, 737).

Additionally, female participation in opposition has a unique effect in raising the cost of repressing opposition movements. Various "mother's movements" have had substantial effects and significant success in opposing authoritarian regimes and injustice. Mothers in Chile continuously protested publicly against the military regimes and military dictator Pinochet in the 1970s and 80s to know where their disappeared children and husbands were. These mothers gained international recognition when the band U2 ended their 1998 nationally televised concert in Santiago by inviting many of these protesting mothers onto the stage to show pictures of their disappeared loved ones and say their names into the microphone. This display sparked international sympathy for these mothers, and an international arrest warrant led to Pinochet's arrest in London several months after the concert for his connection with many human rights violations.

Mothers in Turkey have similarly challenged various repressive governments, with groups like the Saturday Mothers who have held over 700 demonstrations demanding answers from the government about their disappeared family members. Women, especially mothers, have a unique effect on opposition movements because there is often a sacred status accorded to them. (Karaman, 2016). Therefore, using violence against them is much more costly since it casts increasing shame on the regime.

The link between gender equality and democracy is inescapable. Since women generally account for half of a population, such a large

social category without full political rights would be inherently undemocratic. Traditional cultural attitudes tend to present major barriers to women's participation in government offices, and countries with Islamic backgrounds fall towards the bottom of global rankings for the percentage of women in Parliament (Inglehart et al., 2002). Inglehart and his co-authors find that a cultural shift of attitudes towards women's roles and freedom of self-expression drive the process of democratization. Their study concludes that "cultural changes seem to bring rising female representation in parliament regardless of whether or not democratization occurs." (Inglehart, et al., 2002, 328). Rising gender equality improves the chances of democratic institutions to emerge and thrive. Countries with more liberal views towards women's roles and their freedom in self-expression are more stable democracies (Inglehart et al., 2002, 329). Gender equality then works in a positive feedback loop: a certain level of gender equality is necessary for democracy to begin, the democracy begets more gender parity, strengthening the democracy, and so on.

In her book, The First Political Order, Hudson and her co-authors point out that a society's oppression of and violence towards women are a microcosm for the use of oppression and violence of regimes against their people. They state that societies built by male kin groups that monopolize resources by subordinating women, "will not be predisposed to evolve as democracies, but rather as male dominance hierarchies in the form of autocracy" and that "political autocracies not only seem natural when women are subordinated, but men actually may feel a vested interest in the acceptance of autocracy at the group level to justify the use of autocracy at the household level. (Hudson, 2020, 119)

They identify a "syndrome" that exists in many societies where men subordinate women by monopolizing decision making power, monopolizing the control of resources, and using force and violence to coerce the women into submission. According to their data, the syndrome dominates the society in nearly all of the middle East and North Africa. Tunisia is the only country in the region where they site, the syndrome is "present, but somewhat mitigated". All other MENA states are either dominated by it completely, or the syndrome is "hardly mitigated". (Hudson, 53). Evidence pointing to the existence of the syndrome in a society could be the prominence of bride price and/or dowry, child marriage, high female illiteracy,

and rampant and unchallenged violence against women, to name a few.

Pamela Shifman quoted in The First Political Order says, "until families are safe and democratic, society will not be. You have to address one before you can the other" (Hudson, 167). Looking at measurable variables, like female economic participation, female literacy and school enrollment rates, physical security of women, rights for women in divorce, inheritance, and custody cases, and more, could point to higher levels of democratic attitudes and practices in families. The existence or lack these variables reflect familial democratic attitude because they demonstrate an equal distribution of rights and resources between the men and women of families. Families that hold more gender equal attitudes, will produce democratic societies. Therefore, the mechanism for democratic transition may be a democratic family structure.

Looking at democratization in the Middle East through gender equality theories' frameworks may offer an enlightening explanation for the issue at hand. The Middle East generally suffers from not only long-lasting authoritarianism but also low levels of gender equality and female liberation. Middle Eastern and North African countries consistently rank in the lowest quartile of the Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2020). The 2010 Global Gender Gap Index shows that in the year prior to the Arab Spring uprisings, the Middle East ranked the lowest of all global regions in both overall rank and gender equality progress on the Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2011).

Using data from the World Bank (Figure 1), I compared the five major participants in the Arab Spring: Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain (Libya, another major participant, does not have sufficient data). All these countries ranked below the global medium. However, comparatively, Tunisia scored the highest.

Adding the other regional countries that saw sustained protests, again we see each of them lagging behind the world medium (Figure 2). And again, we see Tunisia coming out tied at the top with Kuwait (TCdata360, Overall Global Gender Gap Index). Does the above evidence suggest that a threshold of gender equality was indeed a significant factor in the success of Tunisia's revolution? A second country that the world had high expectations for during the Arab Spring was Egypt. However, Egypt failed in sustaining a democratic transition. Egyptians, like Tunisians, revolted against a long-time
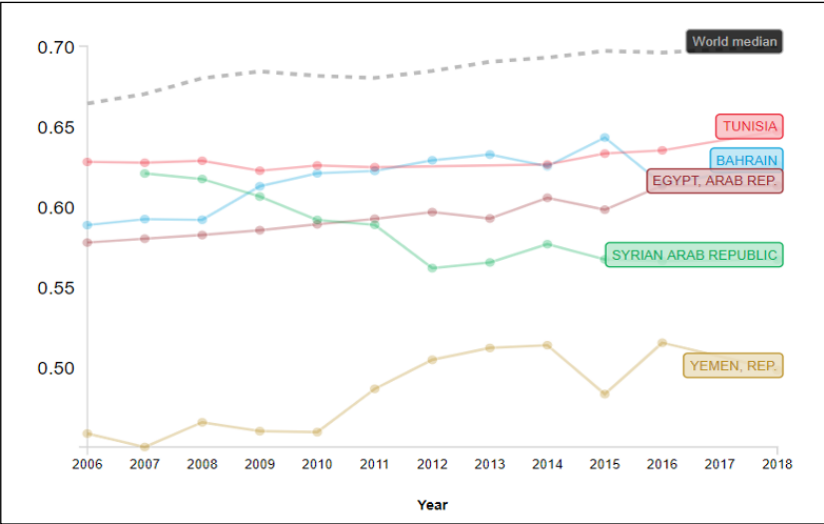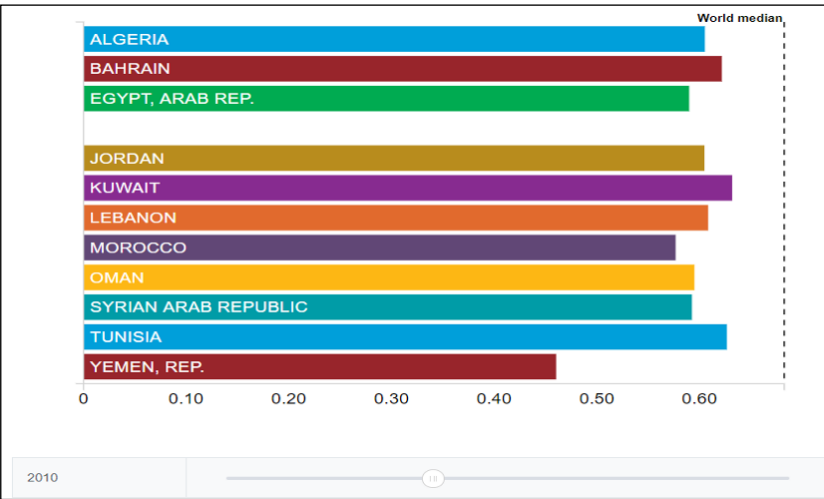
Fig. 1

Fig. 2

authoritarian dictator. Both states succeeded in overthrowing their old regimes and instigating democratic elections. Both states saw Islamist parties win these elections. However, while the Tunisian democratic government is now relatively stable, Egypt quickly reverted to authoritarianism after a military coup in 2013.

Democracy is not only an institution but also a culture. Thus, democratization cannot succeed if the regime is the only thing to change. Rather, culture must also transform until societies are more democratic-like, with guaranteed liberties, rights, security, and equality for all. In this paper, I assume a comparative analysis using Tunisia and Egypt as two cases to show that the chance of a democratic outcome increases when the culture of the transitioning country is more egalitarian. As stated previously, one of the most rampant and obvious inequalities in the Arab world is inequality between men and women. Therefore, successful democratization is more likely when gender equality is higher prior to and during the transitional phase is higher.

I use process tracing to measure gender equality levels in Tunisia and Egypt prior to their 2010/2011 revolutions. I measure the status of women by measuring multiple variables under five different factors; political factors, economic factors, social factors, civil/legal factors, and lastly, educational factors. I measure each factor by measuring one or more specific variables to show gender equality levels prior to the start of the respective revolutions. To measure civil/legal factors, I look at existing laws that either discriminate against or expand the rights of women. I specifically look at laws surrounding marriage, abortion, property, divorce and custody rights, and the personal status or family code laws. To measure political factors, I look at the percent of female participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian state governments. I measure economic factors by recording the percentage of female participation in the labor force and the unemployment gap between men and women. I measure social factors by (a) ranking the levels of sexual violence as very prevalent, prevalent, or less prevalent, (b) ranking female physical security as high, medium or low, and (c) sex ratio demographics of each nation-state. Lastly, to measure education, I use data on (a) female literacy rates and (b) gender gaps in school enrollment, specifically at the gender demographics of university enrollment.

After comparing the pre-revolution conditions of Tunisia and

Egypt, I focus on female participation and mobilization during the protests themselves. Based on academic accounts and journalistic data, I rank the level of participation of women in each revolution as high, medium, or low. Secondly, I inspect how welcome and/or safe female participants were in each revolution by looking at the prevalence of gender-based or sexual violence in the protests.

Lastly, I compare the outcomes and effects of the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions. I re-measure the same variables for the political, social, and civil measured prior to the revolution to see if women's rights and democracy have expanded. I look specifically at how involved women are in the post-revolution phase measured by the number of women serving on constitutional councils and serving in the new governments. I also look at the new constitutions and laws that either expand or narrow gender equality.

The Higher Status of Tunisian Women in Pre-Revolution Society

Pre-existing political rights for women in Tunisia reflected a society that already had democratic ideals—a society ripe for democratization. At the Independence of Tunisia in 1956, the government adopted the Personal Status Code (PSC) that instituted a series of laws increasing gender equality in several areas. The PSC was revolutionary in many ways, giving Tunisians unprecedented rights compared to the rest of the region. Under the PSC, Tunisian women had greater guaranteed rights than any other Arab women. The PSC abolished polygamy (making Tunisia the first Muslim country to do so), guaranteed protection for women against abuse from their husbands, and established women's equality in divorce, property rights, marriage, and child custody (Megahed, 2011, 405). The PSC also abolished the right of a father to force his daughter into marriage.

Since its adoption, many more liberal reforms and amendments have been added to the PSC. In 1962, the state allowed access to birth control, and in 1965, Tunisia legalized abortion. It was the first Muslim state to do so and also granted this right to women eight years before the United States did (Saifuzzaman, 2017, 230). As of 1973, it is legal for women to have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. In 1985, a new law stipulated death as a possible penalty for perpetrators of rape. In 1993, the Code was modified to give wives/mothers the right to give her patrimony and citizenship to her children in the same capacity as husbands/fathers. Women in other Arab countries, including Jordan, still do not have the right to pass on their citizenship to their children.

Women in Tunisia also acquired rights to represent their children in judicial procedures and manage their own bank accounts.

As Inglehart and his co-authors pointed out, a cultural shift in perception of family and gender roles is what creates social changes strong enough to create political changes. Among the 1993 reforms to the PSC, maternal grandparents became equally entitled as paternal grandparents to receive support payments for children. This legal change reflected social trends that were working to eliminate the concept of the patriarchal family.

The Personal Status Code alone shows that Tunisian women had more political liberties than many of their regional counterparts. The 1957 PSC guaranteed many rights to Tunisian women that other Arab women still do not have today. Therefore, I conclude that Tunisian society enjoyed greater gender equality in its civil and legal frameworks before the Arab Spring than any other MENA country.

While Tunisia aggressively reformed the status of women in the family law, Egypt has expanded civil liberties to women more slowly and conservatively. In 1979, President Anwar Al-Sadat's wife Jehan initiated a Personal Status Law granting women more legal rights in marriage, divorce, and custody, which was opposed by Islamist parties. President Sadat implemented the law anyway, some say, to undermine the legitimacy of Islamist groups (Megahed 2017, 405).

However, under Mubarak's regime, the gains towards gender equality included in this law went away, as the law was repealed in 1985. The new law still gave women expanded divorce rights and the right to give their Egyptian nationality to their children, but it did not change the law to allow women to travel without the permission of a male relative (Megahed, 2017, 408). This 1985 law also stipulates that "if the wife refuses to show obedience (ta'a) to the husband, without lawful justification, her maintenance (nafaqa) shall be suspended from the date of refusal." Another article of this law states that a woman's right of custody ends when a minor boy turns ten and when a girl turns twelve. After this age, a judge may allow the mother to keep custody of her children, but without custody payments from the father (El Alami, 1994).

While Egyptian women enjoyed greater liberties than women in some other MENA nations, significant institutionalized gender discrimination was still present prior to 2011. Therefore, Egyptian

society prior to 2011 did not reflect a democratic society tolerant of female's civil liberties.

The extent of female political participation in government is another important factor indicating the level of gender equality in Tunisia before the Jasmine Revolution. Tunisian women gained the right to vote and run in elections in 1957. In 2010, Tunisia topped other MENA states and even outranked many Western countries with women constituting almost 28% of Tunisia's parliamentary deputies in President Ben Ali's government. This 28% was 3% above the quota that Ben Ali implemented in 2004. Additionally, in 2005, women constituted 28% of the nation's judges, 30% of its lawyers, 23% of regional governments, and 25% of municipal governments even under the dictatorial regime (Chambers, 2014).

Historically, female political participation in Egypt has been low, only surpassing 5% with the help of gender quotas. In 1956, Egyptian women were granted the right to vote and run for elections. In 1964, 2.3% of parliamentary seats were held by women. The rate reached 9% in 1979 after President Sadat issued a law allocating thirty seats for women. After the removal of the quota in 1984, women's representation declined and remained stagnant at about 2% (OECD, 2018, 12). Among local councils and governments, in 2008, only 5% of the appointed officials were women. From 1979 until after the Arab Spring, women have never represented more than 10% of local Egyptian governments (OECD, 2018, 14).

According to the Global Gender Gap Report of 2009, MENA countries are behind global averages in many factors of education. Quantitative studies considering the past 25 years recognize that greater equality distribution of education between women and men contributes to democratization (Wang, et al., 2017, 736). Tunisia has historically made education a priority, universalizing it in 1958 and making it compulsory for all children in 1991. Women and girls benefited greatly from these educational reforms, as reflected in Tunisia's educational statistics prior to its democratic transition in 2011. According to the Tunisian National Institute of Statistics, by the 2009-2010 academic year, female enrolment in pre-university education reached 98.5% (Megahed, 2017, 407). In 2008-2009, 59.5% of all university students were women (Megahed, 2017, 412). Additionally, Tunisia implemented a literacy program early on that raised female literacy from approximately 4% in 1956 to 71% in 2010 for all adult women and 96% for girls age 15-24 (Index Mundi).

Egypt's education statistics lag behind Tunisia. The Global Gender Gap Index lists Tunisia as 109th on the global education gender gap ranking while ranking Egypt 126th. This table compares pre-university and tertiary education in Egypt and Tunisia and shows disparities in female education rates in both countries. Tunisia does significantly better in both pre-university and tertiary enrollment rates. Additionally, Egyptian adult female literacy rates in 2010 were 64.9%, over six percent less than their Tunisian counterparts.

Pre-University Education	Tunisia (2009)	Egypt (2005
Total enrollment rate	97.7%	90.1%
Male enrollment rate	97.4%	90.0%
Female enrollment rate	98.5%	90.3%
Tertiary Education	Tunisia (2009)	Egypt (2008)
Percentage of female students	59.5%	46.0%

Another way to measure female empowerment and a society's inclusivity of women is by looking at the rate of participation of women in the economy. Measuring both the percentage of female participation and the unemployment gap between men and women can help rank the status of women in Tunisian and Egyptian society prior to the revolutions. Tunisia rapidly increased its percentage of women in the labor force over the last half-decade. The female labor force was a mere 5.5% in 1966. By 1990, the ratio was 29.6%, and by 2010, women represented 34.8% of the labor force (Data World Bank, 2020d).

Female participation in Egypt took a different trajectory. While Egypt was nearly on par with Tunisia in 1990, with women making up 29.4%, it steadily declined until it hit 23.6% in 2002. By 2010, it had risen back up to 29%. Unemployment rates among women were higher than men in both countries, but the unemployment gap was significantly larger in Egypt, where in 2008, 19.2% of females versus 5.9% of males were unemployed. In Tunisia in 2005, female and male unemployment rates reached 17.3% and 13.1%, respectively (Wang, 2017).

On the eve of the revolutions, Tunisia's female labor force participation was 34.8% juxtaposed to Egypt's at 29%. Egypt's ratio was on par with the regional average, while Tunisia was above it (Data World Bank 2020f, Figure 3).
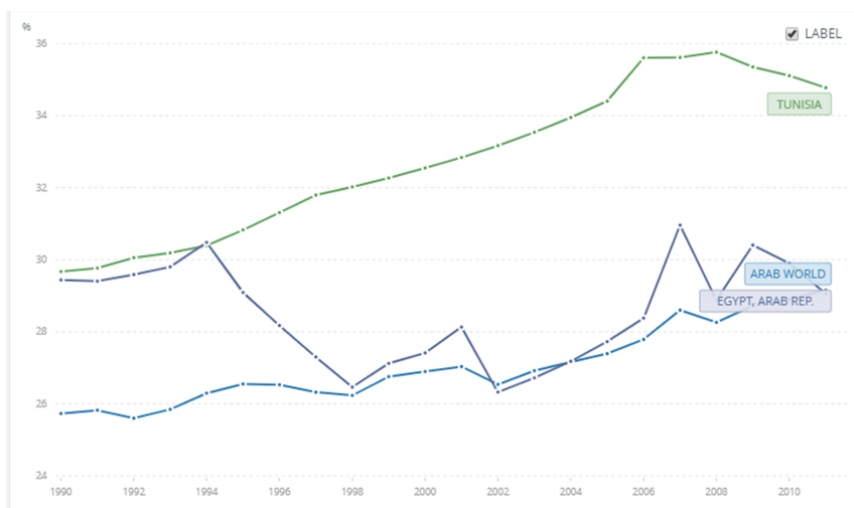
Fig. 3

When measuring female empowerment, Valerie Hudson, a political scientist at the Bush School of Government, says that we often overlook the factors and variables that more truly reflect female empowerment. Looking at literacy rates or the percentage of seats in parliament held by women can be misleading. Afghani women hold 28% of national parliament seats, more than the corresponding 23.5% in the United States. However, most people would not argue that Afghani women are more empowered than American women. Women claiming higher government involvement does not always translate to greater gender equality and empowerment. According to Hudson, some of the more telling variables of gender empowerment and equality are the physical security of women, divorce and custody laws, and the prevalence of female infanticide, to name a few (Hudson, 2012).

Looking at the physical security of women both before and during the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia should be a significant indicator of their status. Data from the Womanstats Project categorized Egypt in 2009 as a place where "women lack physical security." In that same year, Womanstats categorized all other MENA countries in this same category except for Tunisia and Israel, who were ranked among nations with "low levels of physical security." Tunisia and Israel were not free of physical attacks on

women, but the rule of law offered relatively more protection than other regional states (Womanstats, 2009).

Looking at the rates of sexual violence in Egypt reflects a very unequal, undemocratic society, where nearly 50% of the population was physically insecure, highly prone to physical and psychological attacks. In 2010, women's rights activist Abul Komsan surveyed 1,010 women in Egypt and found that 98 percent of foreign women and about 80 percent of Egyptian women said they had been sexually harassed in some way. Additionally, two-thirds of men said that they had harassed women. This type of gendered violence on the basic societal level creates a broader culture of violence and exploitation at the political and state level.

While it would be inaccurate to say that Tunisian women experience no or even low levels of harassment, they did fare marginally better. Additionally, Womanstats ranked Tunisia as a regional leader in lower rates of child marriage, marital rape, and female genital cutting.

Regarding sex-demographics, unbalanced sex-ratios can show how women are unequal in several factors, from female selective abortion and female infanticide, higher rates of murder of women, and the greater ease of men in migration. A natural sex ratio would have more women since women tend to live longer. However, in 2010, about 50.5% of the Egyptian population was male. That may seem insignificant, but with a population of about 83 million people in 2010, there were approximately 1 million more men than women in Egypt (Plecher, 2020a). In 2010 49% of the Tunisian population was male—a more natural balance (Plecher, 2020b).

At the end of this section, I summarize the most important data in a simple visual. This graph recaps the relatively greater gender equality that existed in Tunisia before the Jasmine Revolution. This narrower gender gap shows that at least a partial democratic cultural transition in Tunisia had already taken place—thereby facilitating the intuitional transition.

	Tunisia	Egypt
% of women in parliament	28.0	2.0
% of labor force that is female	34.8	29.0
% of male/female unemployment gap	4.2	13.3
Basic Rights guaranteed in PSC or Family code	Yes	No
% of female literacy	71.0	64.9
% of university students that are female	59.5	46.0
Physical Security of Women	Low	None

Female Participation in the Jasmine Revolution Facilitated the Democratic Transition

On the eve of the Arab Uprisings, women in Tunisia were poised to be significant stakeholders in political change. They had accumulated substantial legal, social, and economic rights and had a greater capacity to express opposition to the system, while Egyptian women were still very much marginalized. However, despite the apparent political and social marginalization of women in Egypt, both Tunisian and Egyptian women showed up in large numbers to participate in demonstrations against their autocratic governments.

To portray the extent to which women participated and were welcome in the demonstrations, I measure the presence and participation of women in the protest, ranked low, medium or high, and secondly, how welcomed/safe women were in protests by looking at the prevalence of sexual violence in demonstration activities.

While historically political protests are often male-dominated, both Tunisian men and women filled the streets, demanding the end of Ben Ali's 24-year autocratic reign in December of 2010. Female voices in the protests created a conundrum for the state. Ben Ali's government had been the biggest champion of women's rights in the region over the past few decades. But instead of cooperating with or defending their alleged protector, women joined the men in demanding the fall of the regime. One Tunisian woman described the solidarity between all Tunisians, male and female, saying, "there was not the smallest difference between the men and the women…

we were in the squares, facing bullets with the men and even on their shoulders chanting for freedom, we were with the young men in the front lines, us protecting them and they protecting us. It brought us together for one goal—the fall of the regime" (Al fara'ai, 2017).

Multiple news accounts and international NGO's repeatedly emphasized the strength and numbers of the women in Tunisian protests. Women of all kinds participated—students, grandmothers, professionals, etc., wearing veils, jeans, and everything in between (Morgan, 2011). Therefore, I comfortably rank female participation in the Jasmine Revolution as high.

Egyptian women likewise showed up in huge numbers to the first protest in Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011. One Egyptian man described the first days of the protests as an "incredible time in Egypt." He said, "women and men were comrades in the protests… women were not afraid…. There was a sense of [male demonstrators'] complete respect, complete support, and complete solidarity towards the women" (Johansson-Nogues, 2013, 398). In the initial days of the protests, female participation was high and female mobilization was pivotal, adding to the weight and seriousness of the anti-Mubarak protests. However, the initial welcoming of women's participation in demonstrations began to diminish as women became victims of sexual harassment from both state actors and other protestors.

The relative safety and acceptance of women in anti-regime demonstrations also point to the level of social inclusiveness of women. As Tunisian women's roles became more visible via social media and famous Tunisian blogger, Lina Ben Mhenni, the state launched gender-specific deterrents. In some final efforts to disperse protestors, the regime security forces used sexual harassment or rape against female demonstrators. However, the quick fall of the regime prevented the continuation of attacks. The Tunisian people quickly realized that women were an essential part of their transition and included and protected them in the transitional period.

After the fall of Ben Ali's regime, women actively participated and were welcomed in the transitional period and the building of a new Tunisia. Right after the ousting of Ben Ali, Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi formed the Higher Political Reform Commission, (in Arabic اللجنة العليا للإصلاح السياسي) in charge

of overseeing legal and constitutional reform, hailed as one of the most effective consensus-building bodies in democratic transition history (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, 93). The commission, which included various males and females from varying civil society groups, discussed the things they considered the most important in moving forward with democracy. One of those things was the preservation and even development of civil liberties and protected status for women. The commission wanted to aim for male-female parity in politics, and therefore suggested that every other name on party candidate lists must be a female. The religious Ennahda party was the first party to accept this gender parity provision (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, 93).

Soon after the beginning demonstration in Tahrir Square, the state started targeting women, seeing gendered violence as a highly effective tool for repression. Allegedly, the policy of Egyptian security forces was to harass and sexualize female protestors and to impugn the women's respectability (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, 3019). Government-paid thugs would enter protest crowds and assault women. It was impossible to tell these thugs from other protestors. Despite these challenges, the Egyptian masses succeeded in pressuring Mubarak to step down only a few weeks after Tunisians ousted Ben Ali. However, the fall of Mubarak did not signal the end of the revolution, nor the end of violence towards women.

Mubarak was not replaced by an open civilian body like Tunisia, but rather by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF)—composed entirely of male military officers. Protests and violence towards women, including sexual harassment and assault and threats of rape, continued under the SCAF interim government that lasted from February 11, 2011, to June 30, 2012. On March 9, 2011, several women's organizations marching in Cairo, demanding the protection and expansion of rights for women, were attacked by state-paid thugs. The thugs arrested 19 women who were then tortured and sexually degraded in state dependencies, forced to submit to virginity tests. Egyptians today are still worried about the existence of such groups, referred to as *magmua'at baltagia* (in Arabic, مجموعات بلطجية) who undertake thug like activity such as theft, sexual harassment, mugging, etc. and consistently avoid legal consequences.

Egyptian protestors and international media recorded multiple instances of especially harsh treatment of female demonstrators.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton responded to horrid scenes of women being beaten and stripped to their underwear in the streets by police forces saying, "women are being beaten and humiliated in the same streets where they risked their lives for the revolution only a few months ago..." (Koppelman, 2011).

Women were essentially marginalized and terrorized out of reaching their full potential for participation in Egypt's 2011 revolution. Both Mubarak and the interim government after his fall used sexual violence to terrorize and wipe out the respectability of female demonstrators by sexually assaulting them in public, arresting them as prostitutes, raping, and sexually torturing them in jail (Johansson-Nogues, 2013). Many male protestors refused to let their female family members participate in demonstrations for fear their women would be sexually assaulted. Two years after the start of the revolution, 99.3 percent of Egyptian women said they had experienced some form of harassment (UN Women, 2013).

Inclusion/Exclusion of Women in the Transitional Period

So far, we have looked at the status and inclusivity of Egyptian and Tunisian women before and during the revolution in each respective state. The political, civil, social, educational, and economic factors measured in the first section of this paper show that Tunisia was more egalitarian than both Egypt and all other MENA states. Alternatively, Egypt reflected a more conservative society that undermined women's rights in many ways. Egyptian society largely ignored developing the status of women and likewise permitted the exploitation of women in many ways. Just as a culture of a hierarchical male dominance controlled the social, economic, political, and civil spheres of society, the Egyptian interim government (SCAF) and later elected government (The Muslim Brotherhood and Mohamed Morsi) continued a vertical structure of ruler and ruled. The more vertical a society is in its hierarchical power structure, the harder it will be to flatten into a horizontal, egalitarian, and democratic structure. Tunisia already reflected a less severe hierarchy, with women participating more equally with men than most MENA societies.

Eventually, both Tunisia and Egypt saw democratic elections after the fall of their authoritarian regimes. In both elections, Islamist parties won the largest percentage of votes. However, each respective Islamist party took different stances on women's rights.

When the moderate Islamist party Ennahda party won the Tunisian elections of 2011, many in the international community worried that the party would try to reverse Tunisia's progressive family code. But instead, the party assured continued protection of women's rights, and Ennahda party leader, Rachid Ghannouchi, called himself an "advocate of absolute equality of men and women" (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, 95). The other outcomes of the elections, however, did not produce total parity. All running parties failed to put females at the top of their zippered candidate lists (except for Ennahda); therefore, women only won about 27 percent of the Tunisian Constituent Assembly (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, 102). Despite these less-than-ideal outcomes, this percentage is still noticeably higher than the global average.

The election results did not fully reflect gender parity, but to hope for such an outcome would be quite unrealistic, even in the parliaments of the most liberal democracies. It is apparent, however, that women were politically and socially involved in Tunisia's democratic transition. Women participated in protests, founded rights-based organizations, and mobilized around the writing of the constitution. On August 13, 2012 (Tunisia's Women's Day), both men and women filled the streets to protest controversial wording in the first draft of the new constitution. Article 28 referred to women as "complementary" to men. Protestors chanted, "Women are complete, not complements!" (Charrad, 2014). This clause was removed in the next draft. Today, the Tunisian Constitution states that men and women are equal under the law.

In Egypt, the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood won the first democratic elections in January 2012, but ensuring women's rights was not on their agenda. Women and women's organizations had to fight to keep the Muslim Brotherhood from reversing the civil liberties they had before the revolution, like the right of women to travel alone without the consent of a male relative. The Muslim Brotherhood also attempted to cancel the family law providing women with the right to custody, amend the article granting children born to an Egyptian mother and a foreign father the right to Egyptian nationality, legalizing female genital cutting and abolishing 18 as the legal age of marriage (Hafez, 2019).

Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood championing or attacking women's rights is not only a reflection of the parties' attitudes towards gender equality but rather also reflects the

permissiveness of the respective societies to tolerate discriminatory policy. In Tunisia's case, we see how civil society mobilized to reject proposed discriminatory language in the draft of Article 28. Contrastingly, Egyptians, except for a few women's rights organizations, did not mobilize to limit the deterioration of women's rights under the Muslim Brotherhood. The fact that the MB and President Morsi won a free and fair democratic election show that much of Egyptian society was tolerant of the party's gender discriminatory ideologies. Morsi's government called for Egypt to re-evaluate its support for CEDAW and "re-consider whether the terms of the convention were suitable 'to our [Egyptian] culture, traditions and [...] established values'" (Dyer, 2013). Many of the MB's policies reflected the "culture, traditions and established values" of Egyptians.

Turnout for the Egyptian parliamentary election was unprecedented, but only 2% (12 of 498) of the seats in both upper and lower houses of parliament were occupied by women, even despite electoral law stipulating that all political parties must have women on their ballots. The first Constituent Assembly in 2012 only had six women out of a 100-member panel. The second Assembly initially included more women, "but all walked out before the draft was finished on the grounds that they were either reportedly being intimidated by their male homologs or found their views being ignored in the drafting of the text" (Johansson-Nogués, 2013, 402). The nearly all-male committee drafted a constitution that did not protect nor prevent gender discrimination nor guarantee women's rights inherent in the Personal Status Law. This constitution was adopted in December 2012.

Popular demonstrations continued in 2013 due to grievances with the results of the 2012 elections. The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Egyptian women's rights group, Nazra, said that during 2013, dozens of gage rape cases were reported, and testimonies indicate that the rapes were organized isolated attacks against female protestors designed to scare and shame women into abandoning demonstrations. This prevented women from practicing their democratic right to participate in Egypt's transitional democratic process (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 2019). The Muslim Brotherhood's government took no measures to prevent, punish, or investigate such brutal violations.

Reflecting on female participation in the revolutions and in the transitional period, the men and women of Tunisian society, along with the new political power holders, proved to be more democratic-like by including women in these political processes. While certainly not all Egyptians support or promulgate sexist views, the Egyptian revolution and transitional process, in general, excluded women.

	Tunisia	Egypt
Participation of Women in Demonstrations	High	High
Sustained Sexual Violence Toward Female Protestors	No	Yes
Participation of Women in Writing New Constitution	Moderate	Low
% of Females Elected to New Government	27.0	2.0
Guaranteed Gender Equality in New Constitution	Yes	No

Conclusion

The status of women in these two countries today is starkly different. Tunisian women enjoy more legal protection, civil liberties, and social inclusivity than women in all other MENA countries. Political power in Tunisia has peacefully alternated between different parties more than twice—a good sign of a stable democracy. Egyptian women experience even harsher political marginalization than before. A military coup in 2013 overturned Egyptian democracy, and women still live under a government that disregards adequate measures to protect their physical security, leading to Thompson Reuters ranking Cairo as the world's most dangerous megacity for women in 2017 with rampant sexual harassment and limited access to good healthcare, finance and education (Reuters, 2017).

To say that gender equality is the only variable that mattered for the success of the Tunisian revolution would be an oversimplification. A puzzle as complicated as a democratic transition will surely have many other important pieces. Some scholars say that Tunisia's commitment to greater secularism compared to its regional counterparts both before and after the

revolution greatly aided the success of democratization. Tunisia had several religiously neutral state structures and laws giving rights to women since its independence. However, these religiously neutral structures and laws were not created nor promoted by secularists, but by many Islamic thinkers who argued for the expansion of women's rights from within Islam. Tahar Haddad, an early Tunisian Islamic thinker, wrote *Notre femme dans la Législation Musulmane et dans la Société* in which he argued that a correct reading of the Quran would lead to women's equality. Many of his ideas were adopted into Tunisia's first Family Code.

Alfred Stepan argues that secularism itself is not what is necessary for democracy, but rather what he called "twin tolerance" where religious citizens tolerate the state and its authority in making laws while states also tolerate religious citizens and their right to express their views and values within society and politics (Stepan, 2012). He points out that the success of both Islamic and secular organizations is contingent upon not enforcing their views on others. However, the real important twin tolerance that existed in Tunisia was civil and religious society's tolerance of women's rights.

Another potentially important variable in the success of Tunisia was the lack of international intervention. International intervention played a significant role in thwarting political change in the other Arab Spring states. Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Egypt all saw significant attempts by other states to affect the results of their popular uprising movements. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates vehemently opposed the fall of their Sunni monarch ally in Bahrain and sent military troops to disperse protestors. Intervention from numerous countries resulted in devastating and bloody proxy and civil wars in Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Contrastingly, Tunisia avoided international intervention in all its forms. Certainly, this variable should also be considered in Tunisia's successful democratization.

We return now to the initial question raised in this essay—why have the Middle Eastern states in general struggled to democratize, and why was Tunisia the only successful Arab state to successfully realize a democratic transition during the Arab Spring? This is largely because Middle Eastern societies and regimes oppress their women. And as they suppress their women, they suppress their possibility and probability for democracy. When societies oppress

women, it invalidates those societies' calls for better treatment and equality from their governments.

Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, said, "Women's full participation in national and local politics, in the economy, in academia and the media is fundamental to democracy..." She continues, "Indeed, true democracy is based on the realization of human rights and gender equality... Women's rights must be part of the foundation of these new beginnings" (Puri, 2011). Gloria Steinem once said, "the family is a microcosm of the state... only democratic families can produce and sustain a real democracy" (Hudson, 2019, 119).

Democratization cannot just be an institutional change but must be a social/cultural change first. This cultural change cannot be implemented from a top-down approach, but rather must be the result of a long-time cultural shift in perceptions of gender roles and women's freedom that later mobilizes to create political change. This type of cultural shift had gained significant momentum in Tunisia before its democratic transition. Since its independence in 1956, to before the revolution in 2011, Tunisians reflected this cultural change as they adopted more liberal laws and practices for women in custody, marriage, property-owning, divorce, etc. Tunisia also achieved significant gains for women in education, health, and economic sectors. This resulted in greater equality and the sharing of resources on all levels of Tunisian society.

We can think of democratic transition as making a jump from an authoritarian culture to a more egalitarian culture. Tunisia was able to make the jump because it had worked since its foundation to narrow the inequality gap, while the gap in Egypt was still too wide to cross. The Tunisian case demonstrates the importance of the link between gender equality and democratization. Female status in Egypt suggests a society unready for democracy.

Egypt, on the other hand, much like the rest of its regional counterparts, had a deep gender inequality gap at the onset of the Arab Uprisings. Egyptian women's rights campaigners ascribe centuries of tradition and culture as the reason for rife discrimination and inequality (Reuters, 2017). The other major states where democratization did not ensue after mass protests in 2011 also exhibit significant gender inequality in both law and practice, and therefore, the realization of democracy, a political system based on equality of all citizens, was an unrealistic expectation.

This conclusion presents a few important implications for Middle Eastern countries, revolution/democracy theorists, and U.S. foreign policymakers. First, Middle Eastern societies that hope for democracy might best start with tenacious efforts to enable women and treat them fairly. Egypt specifically should have a truth and justice commission for crimes and violations suffered by women during the conflict and transitional periods if it wants to create more stability, equality, and the rule of law under its current regime. Middle Eastern societies should not wait for governments to change laws surrounding women's rights but should initiate cultural changes in families, communities, workplaces, media, and literature. Certain societies have already begun to do so. A small group of women called Sadaqa in Amman, Jordan, have unrelentingly campaigned and lobbied for both the government and civil society stakeholders to increase female participation in the labor force by providing workplace daycares, improving public transportation, and eliminating sexual harassment. Men and women in other countries can undertake similar efforts.

When social scientists study revolutions and democratization in a country, they should always consider and measure the social and political status of women in the country, along with the prevalence of female participation in the protests and transitional period. To ignore the level of contribution and/or marginalization of a counties' largest identity group—women—makes no sense. Additionally, this variable should strongly indicate the likeliness of a country to democratize. Saudi Arabia, for example, likely has many years until it democratizes, despite any political challenges the monarchy may experience. The fall of Saudi's monarchy would not likely result in a democratic transition at the present time. If Saudi Arabians want democracy, they should start by empowering their women.

This argument also has considerable implications for U.S. foreign policy. If the U.S. is interested in increasing and strengthening democracy in the world, it should support political groups and movements that promise to champion women's rights. The U.S. should also invest in projects that empower women globally. It is also an issue of national and world security. More democratic and liberal states are much less likely to go to war with each other. The chain reaction that women's empowerment would initiate could likely increase world peace.

Lastly, gender in politics should be included in broader political dialogue with other democratization theory arguments instead of circulating in gender studies circles only. This paper is about democratization, not gender issues. But it points out the importance of gender in politics. If political scientists and politicians start to pay attention to the factor of gender, it could have significant positive implications for the world.

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معروفاً لصوته القديم والمميز

من المرّة الأولى التي سمعت فيها صوت العود عرفت أن هناك شيئاً خاصاً بالنسبة لهذه الآلة الموسيقية الفَذَّة. فكان معروفاً لصوته القديم والمميز كهمسة صديق مألوف تذكرك بأحلامك بالسفر الى أبعد حدود العالم بحثا عن أسرارها. يغني العود:

«يا رَايح وين مسافر تروح تعيا وتولي
شحال ندموا العباد الغافلين قبلك وقبلي»

وانت تسمع الرحلات الممكنة والتي لم تكن. وعندما يغني العود:

«لما بدا يتثنى
حبي جماله فتنا
أمر ما بلحظة اسرنا
غصن ثنا حين مال»

وتذكرك بالحب وبالحبيب الذي رغبت في أن تتعرف عليها رغم عدم الاستعداد. وبالخطط المستقبل التي كانت لديك عندما لم تكن المسؤوليات بعد، مسؤوليات الكبار العاقلين. يغني العود:

«كنا بنقول إن الفراق دا مستحيل
وكل دمعة على الخدين كانت بتسيل
مليانة بأمل إن احنا نبقى موجودين
فى بحر الحب على الشطين
كلمة حلوة وكلمتين حلوة يا بلدي»

وتذكرك بالخطط لتغيير العالم والتأثير في قلوب الناس خشية ألّا يقبلوا بعضهم البعض. بالرغم من أنك ترغب في تحقيق كل هذه الطموحات بكل قدرتك، ولكن مع مرور الوقت الثابت--السنوات الشديدة المهلكة --تمر ويتلاشى أملك كما تلاشت أصداء هذا العود القديم المميز كهمسة الصديق المألوف الميّت في آخر الأمر.

هل من الممكن العزف على هذا العود مرة أخرى لإيقاظ الأفكار العميقة في صميم الروح؟ هل من الممكن تقوية قلبك وعقلك حتى تستطيع أن تحلم وتخطط مرة اخرى ولو كان في مشيئة الله أن تستطيع أن تغير العالم؟ هل هذا ممكن؟ هل الموسيقى تغير المستقبل؟ خلنا نشوف...

وقتما أعزف على العود صوته يذكرني بمدينة عمّان وجمالها. يذكرني بالشوارع المليئة بالقطط والسيارات وأنا ذاهب الى السوق لشراء العود, المعروف لصوته القديم والمميز. يصرخ التجار «ليرة! ليرة!» وأنفي يملأ برائحة الذرة المحمصة وأنا أخوض في بحر التجار والمشترين حتى أصل إلى متجر الموسيقى الهادئ الفارغ. هناك كانت المرة الأولى التي سمعت فيها ذلك الصوت الواضح والعليم. كان واضحاً رغم السوق وضجته، ولم يكنْ صراع بالرغم من الفوضى، أو الارتباك الذي كان في كل وجه آخر من حياتي حتى لو وُجدتْ فيها احلام وخطط وحب. كان صوت العود عليم نتيجة لتاريخه وبفضل جميع العازفين العرب الذين كتبوا حياتهم على أوتاره بنغمات الصراع والفوضى والارتباك, من أجل الأحلام والخطط والحب. عندما حملت هذا الصديق القديم والحكيم بين ذراعيّ للمرة الأولى فكرت في تغيير العالم...

ذهبت الى معهد الموسيقى «كريشندو» مرات عديدة في الأسبوع وتعلمت المقامات العربية وحاولت أن أعزف أغاني فريد الأطرش ومحمد عبد الوهاب وفيروز وعبد الحليم حافظ بطريقة أشادت بهؤلاء الفنانين العظماء، أو على الأقل بطريقة مفهومة. ذهبت الى البيت وعزفت صباحا في الحديقة «اهواك» ومرارا وتكرارا عزفت «بعدك على بالي» حتى رفضت الطيور أن ترجع. وليلا مارست عزف المقامات حتى فقدت كل الوقت وعزلتْني زوجتي في الجانب الآخر من الشقة -- أفترض أنه لا يزال هناك جزء منها يكره صوت العود, أو على الأقل عندما أعزفه. حتى كنت أسير إلى المعهد مع آذان مليئة بصوت العود. ومع هذا الهوس فكرت في تغيير العالم...

مهما كانت رغبتي لم أحقِّقها.

ذهبت الى فلسطين وأيقظني الألم. شاهدت بنتاً صغيرة باسمة تضحك مع زوجتي في الشوارع عندما نتجول وفي والأحياء. بقلوب ثقيلة عرفنا ما لا تعرفه: بعد قليل هي وعائلتها وجيرانها -- وهم أكثر من خمسين عائلة -- سوف يكونون دون منازل بحكم القوانين الاسرائيلية وبسبب سياسة تهويد القدس. تكلمنا مع صديقها الصغير والبريء وكان عمره اقل من ست سنوات عندما اعتقلته الشرطة لشتائمه في العبرية التي لم يفهمها، كلمات قيلت له بالعبرية ------ كان يكررها فقط. ألَمْ الأطفال الذين لديهم سجلات جنائية وأجبرت عائلات على ترك منازلها -- ألم الفلسطينيون -- هذا الألم ملأ روحي وتركت العود ومعه الأحلام والخطط والحب. كيف أغني والأطفال في السجن؟ كيف أعزف على العود والعائلات دون منازل؟ كيف أغيّر العالم وليس لي إلّا صوتي وهذه الأوتار؟ لن أستطيع أن أفعل ولذلك يجب أن أترك العود والأحلام والخطط والحب مثلما تركت فلسطين: دون تغير.

الحملتان اللتان كسرتا الصمت حول التحرش الجنسي

التحرش ظاهرة عالمية وتعاني منها أغلبية النساء أينما كنّ دون استثناء، سواء في الدول النامية أو المتقدمة، في الدول الغربية أو غيرها. والتحرش الجنسي موضوع من مواضيع تعتبره الكثير من المجتمعات من التابوهات أو العيب، ولذلك حاولت المجتمعات تكميم أفواه النساء والفتيات اللواتي حاولن أن يشاركن تجاربهن عن تعرضهن للتحرش أو الاعتداءات الجنسية. يفضل البعض من عامة الناس التستر عن التحرش أو التمييز ضد النساء وتركه يمر مرور الكرام بدلا من فضحه. إن حملتي «تايمز اب ناو» و «#انا أيضاً» كسرتا حاجز الصمت حول التحرش الجنسي وأعطتا صوتاً للنساء ومنصّة لمشاركة قصصهن التي لم تكن موجودة من قبل. لقد عملت هاتان الحملتان على الانترنت أكثر لرفع مستوى الوعي والتعاطف والفهم حول قضية التحرش من أي قانون سابقاً. بينما تقريبا كل بلدان العالم شاركت في هاتين الحملتين، فاختلفت المشاركة وردود الفعل في كل البلدان والمجتمعات التي وصلتا إليها. في هذا المقالة، سوف أركز حصراً على المشاركة والنتائج في مجتمعين رئيسين، وهما المجتمع الامريكي والمجتمع العربي.

لقد بدأ هذا الضجيج مع الهاشتاغ «أنا أيضاً» الذي انتشر كالنار في الهشيم على مواقع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مثل تويتر وفيسبوك وانستاغرام بعد أن غردت الممثلة الأمريكية آليسا ميلانو على تويتر «إذا كنتِ تعرضتِ للتحرش الجنسي أو تم الاعتداء عليكِ، يرجى الرد على هذه التغريدة بكتابة أنا كمان.» وهدفها كان إظهار مدى انتشار وحجم العنف الجسدي ضد المرأة.

ارتفعت أصداء شكاوى ملايين من النساء والرجال بعد ٢٤ ساعة من تغريدة ميلانو، وقد أكد تويتر أن ١,٧ مليون شخص غردوا تحت هذا الهاشتاغ من ٨٥ بلداً كما أكد الفيسبوك صدور ١٢ مليون منشور على الأقل يحوي هذا الهاشتاغ. شاركت العديد من النساء على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي قصص تجاربهن المتعلقة بالتحرش، بينما اكتفى بعضهن بمجرد استخدام الهاشتاغ، شاركت أخريات وروين قصصاً شخصية. مع إن حملة «أنا أيضاً» بدأت مع شخص واحد، إلا أنها اكتسحت منصات الانترنت كلها وألهمت حملة «تايمز اب ناو» كرد على فضيحة «هارفي واينستين» بعد أن اتهمته نساء عديدات بالاعتداء الجنسي عليهن.

وكرد على هذه الفضيحة ارتدت الممثلات المشهورات اللون الأسود في «جولدن جلوبز» في عام ٢٠١٨ متضامنات مع ملايين من الشابات اللواتي يتعرضن للتحرش الجنسي من أجل رفع الوعي حول هذا المرض الاجتماعي. وقد نشرت المجلة الامريكية «تايم» أن شخصية العام لسنة ٢٠١٧ هي «كاسرات الصمت» وهن بعض النساء اللواتي تحدثن علناً عن التحرش الجنسي وما مررن به.

وأوردت المقالة في المجلة «تايم» : «لـــقد بدأت كاسرات الصمت ثورة الرفض التي باتت تشتد يوماً بعد آخر. وفي الشهرين الماضيين فقط، قد حقق غضبهن نتائج مفاجئة ومباشرة: يتم تقريبا كل يوم فصل مديرين من وظائفهم، ويُطـاح بالزعماء وتُفضح الشخصيات الكبيرة، وقد أدت هذه الحملة في بعض الحالات إلى اتهامات جنائية.» يمكننا أن نرى أنه مع العلم أنه لم تكن هناك تبعات قانونية من قبل، فإن هذه الحملات والمشاركين فيها استطاعوا أن يولدوا وعياً وتبعات اجتماعية جدية وفي غاية شديدة.

وبالإضافة إلى التقبل الاجتماعي غير المسبوق لهاتين الحالتين، لا يفوتنا أن نذكر المكتسبات اللافتة الأخرى التي نجمت عن هاتين الحملتين. فقد جمعت حملة «تايمز اب ناو» أكثر من ١٥ مليون دولار من أجل دعم النساء العاملات اللواتي يشعرن بأنهن لسن قادرات على دعم أنفسهن في حالات التحرش. وقد جاءت هذه المساعدات المالية بفضل دعم شخصيات مشهورة عديدة مثل «أوبرا وينفري» التي قالت في خطابها في «جولدن جلوبز» إن التحرش والعنف الجنسي يمثلان مشكلة «تتجاوز الثقافة والجغرافية والعرق والديانة والسياسة وأي مكان عمل.» وهنا يكمن هدف الحملتين: أن تثير التغيير على كل صعيد وأن تتجاوز اختلافات ثقافية واقتصادية وسياسية وتصل إلى التكافؤ بين الجنسين في كل المجتمعات.

لم يستثن العالم العربي من تأثير هاتين الحملتين، لقد وصلتا إليه، حيث شاركت العديد من النساء تجاربهن على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي متحدثات عن تعرضهن للتحرش والاعتداءات الجنسية. ولكن واجهت هؤلاء النساء حواجز اجتماعية ضخمة ومستعصية إذ إنهن يعشن في مجتمعات محافظة جداً وفي العموم، يعتبر حديث النساء في المجتمعات العربية عن تعرضهن للتحرش «تابو» أو عيب لأنه قد يؤثر على «سمعة الفتاة». فقد قالت نساء كثيرات أخريات إنهن حتى الآن لا يجرؤن على نشر ما مررن به ويلجأن إلى الصمت بسبب طبيعة المجتمع المحافظة. ولكن بينما لم يشارك العالم العربي في هذا الحراك الاجتماعي العالمي بنفس القدر كالولايات المتحدة، فما زال هناك الكثير من النساء الشجاعات اللواتي رفعن أصواتهن وساهمن في الحملتين غير آبهات بـالانتقادات الاجتماعية. وجاءت أغلبية المساهمة من مصر، حيث يتعرض ٩٩ بالمئة من النساء للتحرش في حياتهن.

أخذت بعض النساء خطوات جريئة وتحدثن على صفحات الفيسبوك وتويتر عن حوادث تحرش
مررن بها. وإحدى هؤلاء النساء الشجاعات كانت الصحفية الاستقصائية السورية «ميس» كتبت ميس
عن أول حادثة تعرضت فيها للتحرش عندما كان عمرها ١٤ سنة.

كان هذا الحادث أحد الحوادث العديدة عن التحرش التي مرت بها. وقالت ميس إن ذلك كان
«حدث عادي وبسيط يحصل بأي زاوية وبأي شارع أو حارة.. يحصل لصبايا ونساء كل يوم عشرات
المرات في بلادنا.. وينتهي بصمت»

وكذلك غردت روى سابا وهي صحفية ومعدة برامج تلفزيونية من لبنان عن تجاربها وقالت بعد ما
غردت إنها تلقت أكثر من ١٢٠ رسالة على فيسبوك من أشخاص لم يكونوا مجرد متضامنين معها،
بل شاركوها قصص تحرش مروا بها. قالت روى في منشورها   «كرهت جسمي من بعد هالحادثة»
وأن «بلبس تيابي من بعدها، حتى بين أصغر وما الفت نظر الشباب. ما عشت مراهقتي متل كل
البنات» بل كانت تعيش في الخوف والخجل.

مع أن روى شعرت بالوحدة بعد هذه الحوادث، لا نبالغ إذا قلنا إن هناك بنات ونساء كثيرات
يتعرضن للتحرش ويشعرن بنفس شعورها. ولذلك، نحتاج إلى عدد أكبر من نساء شجاعات مثل روى
وميس ليرفعن أصواتهن ويشاركن قصصهن لكي يزيد الوعي والتعاطف حول التحرش والاعتداءات
الجنسية ولإظهار ليس فقط مدى انتشار العنف الجنسي عالميًا، بل ايضاً لكي يظهر للضحايا الأخرين
أنهم ليسوا وحدهم.

في الختام، أود أن أنوه إلى مرة أخرى إلى أن هاتين الحملتي كانتا فاعلتين أكثر من أي قانون لرفع الوعي والدعم حول هذه القضايا. وأبرز تأثيراتهما رئيس تحرير مجلة «تايم» إدوارد فيلسينتال عندما قال إن «هذه الحركة عملت أسرع تغييرات اجتماعية عرفناها على مدى عقود».

إن هاتين الحملتين باشرتا بتغييرات مهمة للغاية ولكن الطريق لم تنته بعد. من الواجب علينا كلنا أن نرفع أصواتنا مع بقية العالم ضد التحرش الجنسي ونستنكره استنكاراً شديداً، ونكسر الصمت حوله. فنحتاج الى انتفاضة نسائية لمكافحة التحرش. ربما إذا استمررنا في الحديث عن هذا الموضوع فإننا نستطيع أن نغير الثقافة حول التحرش حتى نتعاطف مع الضحايا ونصفهم بدلاً من أن نهاجمهم. يجب علينا ألا نسكت عن هذه القضايا.