Middle East – Topics & Arguments

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CONTENT

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EDITORIAL

Critical Area Studies

Ines Braune and Achim Rohde

Keywords: Area Studies; Middle East Studies; Challenges; Power Structures

Its cold war legacy and the ascent of academic trends like global studies and global history notwithstanding, the concept of area studies has witnessed a remarkable renaissance in Germany in recent years, as regionally focused institutes and centers have been formed in various universities and research institutes all over the country.[1] Significant resources have been channeled into relevant research units through funding schemes like the DFG's (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft/German Research Foundation) *Exzellenzinitiative* and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research's area studies program. The DFG is the most important funding institution for academic research in Germany. It is financed by the federal state and the *Länder* (regional states).[2] The growth of area studies in Germany is mirrored in the formation of special interest groups within academia working to further institutionalize this approach, such as CrossArea e.V. From a macro-perspective on the political economy of funding in academia, this trend might be interpreted as a reflection of Germany's re-entry to the stage of world politics and the global interests of an export-oriented economy that necessitates the development of soft skills like expert knowledge in various world regions. Still, this trend has opened new opportunities for scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and regional orientations to pursue their research interests and develop state-of-the-art approaches towards knowledge production in the context of area studies. At the same time, this policy arguably reproduces and intensifies inequalities between academic systems in the Global North and those in regions that are being studied in area studies programs (Boatcã). This issue of META aims at taking stock of these developments and contributes to this ongoing endeavor from a perspective of Middle East studies. We thereby intend to contribute to the broader discussion regarding how and to what extent the institutionalization of knowledge production shapes its content. How do educational, economic and political policies on a global, regional, and local level shape the institutional body of knowledge production in this specific field of inquiry? What are the challenges for a critical area studies approach in the face of ongoing processes of globalization, and specifically with regard to Middle East studies, the impact of the Arab uprisings of 2011 and subsequent developments?

Challenges

The process of globalization has effected an increasing focus on transregional comparative questions and a reassessment of our understanding of world regions, which has moved away from container concepts of regions as seemingly congruent and separate entities and their concomitant epistemological othering in scholarship, towards emphasizing comparative aspects and global entanglements in terms of migration, knowledge flows and economic ties. In a globalized world that is often seen as consisting of fluid and interconnected spaces, geographical and epistemological borders, which may define an area, would seem to be blurred. Yet at the same time, and in a notable departure from this globalizing trend, rigid border regimes are being (re-)installed between specific countries and whole regions in multiple parts of the world, thereby calling into question the assumption of an increasingly integrated world system. This contradictory dynamic is particularly visible in recent years with regard to the MENA region and Europe.

In fact, this is the latest incarnation of an old debate in a contemporary context. The longstanding debate on Edward Said's *Orientalism* and subsequent developments like the rise of postcolonial studies have reverberated vividly in Middle East studies circles all over the world, challenging perceptions of Middle Eastern exceptionalism and established legacies of Oriental studies. In response to this challenge, scholars have been re-assessing their methodologies and assumptions, and it has become an established best practice to conduct collaborative research with partners working in or emanating from the MENA region.

Scholarship on the MENA region has gradually moved outside its former narrow academic niche further into the mainstream of academic knowledge production both in terms of funding and in terms of public interest after 9/11 and again after the Arab uprisings of 2011. A wealth of scholarship on the MENA region has sought to analyze the different forms of transformations triggered by the 'Arab Spring' on the institutional, political, legal, economic, social, religious and cultural levels. Initially, these works seemed to be infused by optimistic expectations of a gradual transition to democracy. However, since 2012 at the latest, in view of the Syrian civil war and the restoration of the old order in Egypt, developments on the ground have been viewed in increasingly pessimistic terms sometimes reminiscent of the paradigm of Arab exceptionalism. Several reasons have been noted for the demise of the Arab Spring. Some pointed to failed nation building processes in countries created in a top-down manner by colonial powers and post-colonial state-building elites, and the divisive effects of decades of oppressive rule.[3] After the removal of *anciens régimes*, in this line of thought, long repressed tensions, primordial loyalties and unresolved conflicts inevitably re-surfaced in these societies. Others have highlighted in part externally induced processes of state erosion and state failure following prolonged wars, economic crises and stalled transitions to more inclusive forms of governance as crucial factors underlying the politicization of ethnic and sectarian identities in the MENA region. Transregional comparative and global perspectives are crucial in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the specificities of current developments in the MENA region.

Still, a multitude of developments are registered in various spheres, which show the ambivalent and often contradictory dynamics of cultural, societal and political change taking place in MENA countries beyond the undeniable impact of communalism, the restoration of authoritarian rule or civil war. We need to move beyond a binary understanding of the developments in the MENA region as either rupture or continuity by conceptualizing them as re-configurations of power and society,

which take place in a gradual and fragmented, yet profound manner. Instead of focusing on spectacular events, relevant cases in periods both prior to and after uprisings or regime change need to be scrutinized in order to discover a multitude of developments and patterns of social interaction, which show the ambivalent and often contradictory dynamics of change in everyday life as well in strategies of political decision makers. Such an approach highlights fluidity and provides a comparative, diachronic and interdisciplinary analysis of the interplay between continuity and change in the MENA region (and beyond), thereby developing new perspectives on the causes and effects of the Arab uprisings within a broader context of the modern and contemporary history of the MENA region.

Towards Critical Area Studies

Against this background it remains to be seen what a Middle East studies perspective may contribute to broader debates on area studies. Without claiming to present a comprehensive answer to this question, we would argue that the waning of the emancipatory impulse which pulsed through the early days of the 'Arab Spring' should not be discussed in isolation. Increased levels of interaction between the MENA region and Europe mean that we are dealing today with a socially constructed ensemble of interdependent social, cultural and economic spaces across and beyond physically or politically defined areas. Some developments within both Europe and the MENA region seem to follow a comparable trajectory, namely the rise of identitarian movements whose reactionary politics seem like a distorted mirror image of the ideas of liberation that fuel popular struggles in both regions. All of these developments suggest that political-economy perspectives and critical theory help to adequately conceptualize these interrelated developments as part of a 'critical area studies' approach.

It seems safe to assert that the destructive mode of the regional reconfiguration currently underway is at least to some degree an effect of neo-liberal reforms introduced to varying degrees in most MENA countries over the last few decades. Starting in the mid-1980s, many MENA states gave up their previous state-centered development policies in favor of large scale privatizations, cutting of subsidies, incentives for direct investments from abroad, etc. This meant the abolishment of the old social contract by the ruling elites and MENA's increasing integration into the world market. This process led to the demise of local economies, the erosion of state infrastructure, the emergence of crony capitalism and the erosion of salaried middle classes, all of which increased socioeconomic cleavages within MENA societies. Far from fostering democratization, as was often presumed by Western proponents of market-oriented reforms in countries of the Global South, they "helped rebuild coalitions of support during the reconfiguration of authoritarian rule in certain states of the Middle East and North Africa" (King 459). Unsurprisingly, popular discontent in view of the effects of such 'authoritarian upgrading' was crucial in fuelling the Arab uprisings (Pierret and Selvik).

Beyond the comparative approach, which tends to leave the notion of areas as more or less separate units intact, 'post area studies' or 'critical area studies' aim at "rethinking area studies epistemologically to avoid thinking in container entities such as 'nation states' or, for that matter, 'regions' and to focus instead on the mobility patterns and communicative processes of human interaction" (Derichs). One crucial characteristic of the contemporary world relevant for any critical understanding of area studies is that "there is no longer a tight coherence between physical and cultural space"(ibid.). As a consequence, scholars started to "move human action and interaction and its role in communicatively constructing space

into the center of attention" (Mielke and Hornidge 18). The relational dynamics between IS style jihadism and European Muslims clearly constitute such a case of entangled history between MENA countries and Europe. We are facing a multiplicity of partly interconnected and fluid cultural spaces existing alongside one another and sometimes in conflict with one another in various local environments across regions.

Yet all this does not take place in an empty space or in an ideal setting of equality between all players involved. It is always embedded in and shaped by material and institutional structures, hierarchies, power relations. First, the sheer material destruction and the decreasing accessibility of the field might be a specific feature of the MENA region that is not as pronounced in other parts of the world. This situation impacts on levels of transregional human interaction and communication as well as on mobility patterns. In order to grasp such figurations, our analysis should incorporate a center-periphery perspective which is conscious of power relations existing between various players. The fact that rigid border regimes are currently being (re-) installed between specific countries and whole regions in multiple parts of the world calls into question the assumption of an increasingly integrated world system (Allen). Thus, there is ample need to investigate how the current transformations in MENA countries are part of a contradictory process of blurring and transcending boundaries, while at the same time reasserting them violently. Moreover, vast differences exist between different kinds of mobility within and beyond the MENA region. In this sense, Arjun Appadurai distinguishes circulation of forms and forms of circulation in order to explain junctures and differences in global cultural flows. He argues that "different [cultural] forms circulate through different trajectories, generate diverse interpretations, and yield different and uneven geographies" (2). These different kinds of mobilities as well as the nexus of increasing mobility and the simultaneously intensifying immobility point to uneven and contradictory patterns of social, cultural and political change unleashed by the current globalization process (the Arab uprisings are one particular expression of this process), which need to be taken into account more systematically if we want to arrive at something that might be adequately termed 'critical area studies'.

In the German context, the generic term Middle East studies has long been used to designate research on political social and economic aspects of the contemporary MENA region, as contrasted to the legacy of Oriental studies dating back to nineteenth century philology and religious studies. This polarity is institutionally anchored in Germany in two existing professional roof organizations, the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft/German Oriental Society (DMG), founded in 1845, and the Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Vorderer Orient/German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO), founded in 1993. The formation of regional studies centers uniting all of these various disciplinary traditions under one roof, such as Marburg University's Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS), as well as conceptual debates in the humanities regarding the need for inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration of scholars, have challenged the self-perceptions and modes of cooperation among scholars working on the MENA region in one form or another. While the need for interdisciplinary and comparative approaches has reached a degree of consensus among scholars in this field, translating this consensus into our daily practice as researchers is still a challenging endeavor, as disciplinary structures and legacies remain influential (Freitag).

Knowledge production on the contemporary MENA region remains a contested discursive field in which a variety of players jockey for influence. Apart from West-

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ern academic institutions, local universities as well as local and international non-governmental Organisations produce relevant knowledge as well, but their status is often deemed inferior. Differences between these various players can also be detected in regards to the character of knowledge deemed 'scientific', and existing power structures are sometimes subtly reproduced when inclusion and exclusion in a specific scientific community or field of research is dependent on the use of a certain highly specialized jargon or specific expressions that symbolize adherence to a relevant school of thought. Such inequalities and differences cannot be easily bridged, and collaborative research with partners in the region therefore remains a challenge in practice.

Obviously, the ongoing massive transformations within the MENA region known as the 'Arab Spring' have a material as well as a non-material impact on the institutions of knowledge production in Europe and Northern America (e.g. a higher interest of third party funding vs. withdrawal of third party donors, special issues of journals and lecture series, new MA programs, etc.). But, first and foremost, these upheavals have substantial effects on the universities and research centers within Arab and other neighboring countries where similar developments are taking shape. In this issue, we therefore encourage an open debate on the institutional landscape of knowledge production within the MENA region itself, particularly against the backdrop of the Arab uprisings. The current trends towards the restructuring of universities in the MENA region are of particular interest in this context. We are also interested to learn more about the impact of the ongoing transformations in the MENA region on working relations between scholars and academic institutions located there and those in the Global North, including the effects thereof on the production of relevant knowledge on the MENA region in both parts of the world.

One factor that is strongly impacting the work of scholars from both backgrounds is the decreasing accessibility of more and more countries in the MENA region due to civil wars, state failure and/or the return of *anciens régimes* under a new guise and heightened levels of repression. We have yet to find satisfactory solutions to this problem in order to ensure the diffusion of knowledge, particularly on countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and the Gaza Strip. Different academic cultures and a lack of connectedness to the international scene on the part of universities in the MENA region are a further factor that negatively impacts the exchange of knowledge and transregional academic collaboration, while visa restrictions make it increasingly difficult for scholars working in those countries to set foot on the golden shores of 'Merkel's paradise' (EU).[4] This issue of META is as much an expression of such structural factors and constraints as it is an attempt to challenge them by assembling a distinguished group of authors who engage in critical and informed debates of the issues at hand.

Outline of this Issue

This issue addresses both the historical evolution of area studies and related disciplines (in this case: Islamic studies, Oriental philology, Middle East studies, etc.) as well as contemporary developments on a conceptual as well as an empirical level. Some contributions critically engage with historical lineages, concepts and methods used in area studies programs (and related disciplines) and discuss the changing relations between area studies and systematic disciplines over the years.

Several articles deal with contemporary conceptualizations of area studies developed in the German context in recent years. While **Anna-Katharina Hornidge** and **Katja Mielke** (Thesis 1) are proposing an approach they label 'crossroads studies' by emphasizing mobility and the move from regions as spatial containers to fluid and socially constructed spaces, **André**

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Bank (Thesis 2) underlines the necessity of comparisons in the sense of comparative area studies.

The Meta article of this issue, written by **Claudia Derichs**, focuses on epistemological questions in area studies. She stresses the fact that area studies are not fixed in geographical terms but are politically constructed entities. Here, the move from space to scale is claimed.

Anika Oettler leads the discussion of comparative area studies within the context of transitional justice research and advances the argument for the reconsideration of intersecting relations.

Following these contributions on different approaches to conceptionalize area studies, the next articles deal with the institutionalization and transformation of certain research areas throughout different historical periods.

Larissa Schmid writes about the School of Oriental Languages in Berlin and explores two opposite approaches to deal with Oriental languages between the two world wars. **Denis V. Volkov** follows the traces of Iranian studies in Late Imperial Russia, Soviet and post-Soviet periods and relates this with Foucault's power and knowledge relation. **Steffen Wippel** focuses on the research of economic issues of the Arab world and the Middle East within German academia and refers to structural and methodological challenges.

The article of **Karim Malak** and **Sara Salem** takes the Arab uprisings as a starting point. The authors argue that the shaping of the events by academia, think-tanks, donor institutions, etc., serve the reorientalization of the Middle East and are informed by (neo) liberal concepts.

As the Arab uprisings and other events have also had a decisive impact on universities and research centers within the Arab world, the next three contributions deal with perspectives and developments in the Arab research landscape on very different levels. **Heba M. Sharobeem**, as a researcher and lecturer in an Egyptian university, reports and reflects on her personal experiences in her taught courses and activities during the revolution and thereafter. **Jonathan Kriener** leads us to the Lebanese higher education landscape and shed lights on two different important institutions of knowledge production in Beirut. In doing so, he addresses questions of interconnectedness and deficiencies within the social sciences in the Arab world.

In the Interview section, **Sari Hanafi**, a prominent social scientist from the American University of Beirut, answers questions related to the impact of the Arab uprisings on Arab higher education and the restructuring of universities in the MENA region. The positionality of the American University of Beirut as an elitist "Western" university within the Arab region is also scrutinized.

The last five contributions are not related to the topic of area studies but widen the geographical horizon of this issue. With this issue META introduces its review section with the primary and overarching objective to make research on and from the MENA region widely visible. In this issue one review by **Fadma Ait Mous** of a French-language book by the reputable Moroccan author and anthropologist, Hassan Rachik, on one century of anthropology in Morocco is published. The second review is written by **Erdem Evren** and discusses an edited volume on the Gezi-park protests and the protest movement in Turkey.

In the section Close Up, the author **Jens Heibach** provides a political biography of Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil, a pioneer of the human rights movements in South Arabia, an outstanding personality and important intellectual in Yemen.

The articles in the section Off-Topic discuss social movements in the broadest sense: **Wietse van den Berge's** focus is on Kurdish activism in Syria and **Dimitris Soudias** analyzes the spatial component of Egypt's 2011 uprisings.

Notes

[1] A signpost for this development was a report by the Wissenschaftsrat (Council of Science and Humanities, an advisory body to the German Federal Government and the regional governments), "Empfehlungen zu den Regionalstudien (area studies) in den Hochschulen und außeruniversitären Forschungseinrichtungen", published June 2006. See also, Birgit Schäbler.

[2] For the Ministry's funding scheme, see <http://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/13101.php>.

[3] This approach seems reminiscent of a school of thought in European historiography that saw a twisted transition to modernity, belated nation building and authoritarian cultural legacies as reasons for a German *Sonderweg* that was to explain the rise of Hitler. The approach has since been widely criticized and more or less discarded (see Kershaw).

[4] Thus, despite the symbolic importance often attributed by Western donors to issues of gender equality in countries of the South, such considerations seem to have little impact in practice, as was experienced by several Iraqi scholars invited to Marburg for a conference on 'Gender in Iraqi Studies' in May 2015, who never managed to attain a visa to enter Germany for this purpose (<www.uni-marburg.de/cnms/forschung/re-konfigurationen/aktuelles/news/gender_in_iraqu_studies>.).

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ANTI/THESIS

How to Conceptualize Area Studies?

Anna-Katharina Hornidge
Katja Mielke 13–19
André Bank 20–27

Thesis 1 Crossroads Studies: From Spatial Containers to Studying the Mobile

Anna-Katharina Hornidge
Katja Mielke

The research network Crossroads Asia, funded by the BMBF, started off in March 2011 with the aim to question the validity of the conventional 'world regions' of Central and South Asia as defining bases for area studies as conceptualized, organized, and taught at German universities. The increasing mobility of people, goods and ideas along Asia's crossroads—so the network's underlying assumption—can no longer justify a division of the world in territorially fixed 'areas', defined by certain character traits to be found on the 'inside', but instead demands concepts of 'area' that take these dynamisms into account. For doing so, the network chose a novel approach with Norbert Elias' figurations at its conceptual centre. After three years of largely empirical, ethnographic research, the network has indulged in a process of bringing the different empirical insights on the role of mobilities and immobilities in the spatialities of everyday life together by discussing the conceptual, methodological, and epistemological research outcomes and lessons they offer for conventional area studies approaches. This text offers a brief summary and overview, hoping to invite other interested scholars into the debate.

Keywords: Rethinking Area Studies; Crossroads Studies; Follow the Figuration; Multi-sited Ethnograph; Mid-range Concepts; Decolonising the Academy

Charlie Hebdo, Ebola, and Crossroads Asia

The year 2015 was still young when the deadly attack on the French satirical magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' continued a series of events that—since the early summer of 2014—hold the world in motion. Events such as the renegotiation of the political border between Russia and the Ukraine or the activities of the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria point us to the relevance of Crossroads Asia's research foci on the mobile dimension of people's everyday practices and how these practices scrutinise existing categories of spatial and social organisation. The mobility of people, goods, ideas, and viruses inherently questions political borders and socio-cultural, ethnicity- and religion-based boundaries. The recent appearance of Da'esh', or 'Islamic State', graffiti all over Pakistan is just the most recent indicator of how symbols travel; the events in Paris illustrate how powerful symbols are in guiding human action. Looking at Africa, the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus in its western part illustrates how a virus spreading along the main transport routes and nodes leads to the compartmentalisation of cities into affected and non-affected parts, a tightening of border controls, but also to the drawing of new cognitive boundar-

ies, equating the region of Western Africa with 'the Ebola region'.

In line with our research within the competence network of Crossroads Asia, these events indicate that different types of mobility, just as much as immobility, and thus different types of borders and boundaries are negotiated, take on shape, come into being, or are deconstructed again in and as a consequence of human interaction, which is also always communicative interaction. The everyday practices of livelihood provision in the border regions between Pakistan and India, Iran and Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and western China, as well as at the verge of socio-cultural boundaries and modes of social differentiation and ordering in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, suggest that some of the geographically fixed categories that our world operates in are increasingly characterised by degrees of dynamism that transcend territorial fixity. This holds true for the conventional world regions identified after the Second World War, such as Central and South Asia within the Crossroads context. Yet, the above-mentioned events additionally infringe upon the sovereignty of nation states and their possibilities to act as territorially fixed entities. Ebola—as well as regional Jihadism—does not stop at political (national or regional) borders.

The competence network Crossroads Asia, funded by the Area Studies Initiative of the German Ministry of Education and Research, started off in March 2011 with the aim to scrutinise the conventional spatial concepts—the 'world regions' of Central and South Asia—underlying today's conceptualisations and teaching of area studies at German universities. The newly obvious and increasing mobility of people, goods, and ideas along Asia's crossroads—so the network's underlying assumption—does not justify a division of the world into territorially fixed 'areas' as 'containers', defined by certain character traits to be found on the 'inside', but instead demands conceptualizations of 'area' that take these dynamisms into account (Mielke and Hornidge). For doing so, and with the broader aim of rethinking conventional area studies approaches, the network brings together area studies expertise from Central, South Asian, and Iranian Studies with the social sciences and humanities, namely geography, political science, sociology, linguistics, social anthropology, and history.

Crossroads Studies: Research Lens, Toolbox, and Approach

Drawing on Norbert Elias' concept of figurations (*What is Sociology*?), the network took on a relational perspective on space underlining not only the constructed character of social and physical spaces and 'areas' as manifestations of power relations, but in addition the interdependence of multiple spatialities, such as places, scales, networks, distances, and mobilities (Leitner et al.; Jessop et al.). Following the more general idea of a social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann), the network attributes importance to how social and spatial, 'subjective' (emic) and 'objective' realities are constructed through communicative action and interaction in correspondence with each other (Knoblauch, *Kommunikationskultur*, "Diskurs", "Konstruktivismus"; Keller, *Diskursanalyse*, "Approach to Discourse"). Building on local perceptions of reality and their manifestation in the construction of different types of spaces, the network's focus at the content level shifts to a more in-depth analysis of the dynamic processes of geographic and social mobility and immobility and the interactive negotiation of political, socio-cultural, and ethnic boundaries and borders in processes of boundary drawing and weakening. Besides this conceptual pillar on the 'figurative construction of space', we develop a methodological approach called 'follow the figuration' and—as a third (ethical) pillar—reflect on the potential impact of us as researchers: our own socio-spatial and

disciplinary positionality in the process of knowledge generation and the effect it yields on our results. The three pillars are each contributing to the development of 'Crossroads Studies' as an interdisciplinary research paradigm in the making.

Conceptual: Figurative Construction of Space

The debate on area studies versus 'systematic' disciplines has repeatedly revolved around two criticisms of the respective 'other', regarding (1) area studies as theory-distant and without 'proper' methodological tools; and (2) 'systematic' disciplines as Euro- and Western-centric, thus in fact being nothing other than area studies of the global North and West, the world regions that acted as their empirical bases (Mielke and Hornidge "Crossroads"). These criticisms have in the past 4-5 years evoked increasingly concerted efforts in the area studies themselves to self-confidently analyse their empirical data and conceptualise, developing non-Western, non-Northern 'mid-range concepts' (Houben). Robert Merton here speaks of 'middle-range theories', abstractions that "lie between the minor but necessary working hypotheses […] and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behavior, social organisation, and social change" (Merton 39). Crossroads Asia's research so far has resulted in abstractions that could become stepping stones for 'mid-range concept-development', based on Asian empirics collected in difficult environments. These include concepts such as the 'Kashmir space' (Mato Bouzas "Space"), 'social order' (Mielke et al. "Dimensions"; Mielke "Constructing the Image") 'linguistic conflictuality' (Rzehak), as well as 'forms of functional-strategically motivated social differentiation' (Hornidge et al. "Boundary Management"; Hornidge et al. "Uzbekistan").

The concept of the 'Kashmir space' (Mato Bouzas "Space") assesses how the production of Kashmir as a specific spatiality draws heavily on boundary-strengthening processes linked to feelings of 'belonging' that also explain the cultural and social heterogeneity of Kashmir. Here also the dichotomy of being at a certain place and at the same time feeling to 'belong' to another is unveiled. The 'social order' concept (Mielke et al. "Dimensions"; Mielke "Constructing the Image") enables us to analyse local politics as processual and relational negotiation of interests based on emic rationalities and a qualification of the category of 'the state' as the dominant factor in people's everyday lives and as the epistemological base for understanding governance. The concept of 'linguistic conflictuality' (Rzehak) assesses this human aim to structure and order the social reality that we live in—and by doing so constructing it—by assessing conflict as a universal aspect of social action and interaction in the functional semantics that we employ. These studies on the languages of Dari and Pashto thus offer a contribution to the field of linguistics of communication and functional grammar. Practices of functional differentiation—and the boundary-drawing and weakening practices that constitute these—also stand at the centre of 'forms of functional-strategically motivated social differentiation' (Hornidge et al. "Boundary Management"; Hornidge et al. "Uzbekistan"). The concept aims at developing ongoing debates of formal/informal forms of social differentiation further by differentiating formal (along formal rules), strategic (along formal and informal rules), as well as discursive practices (discursively compensating the deviations from the formal rules through strategic practices).

All of these early-stage 'mid-range concept' developments study processes and practices of boundary-strengthening and -weakening and their role in determining or simply shaping mobilities as well as immobilities of people, goods, ideas, and symbols. They suggest that a social

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and temporal-spatial concept of reality is constructed in and through communicative action and interaction, one which not only relates to local cultural knowledge reservoirs and practices, but also takes on relevance in transnational relationships. Encapsulated in language, such spatial representations transcend physical borders and the margins of traditional communities of speech, such as when the BBC service in Pashto coins neologisms that find currency in both Afghanistan and Pakistan; the figurative ties here stretch beyond Asia to London and all the way back (Sökefeld and Bolognani "Kashmiris in Britain").

Methodological: Follow the Figuration

In order to capture the dynamic of the mobile, Crossroads Asia's research empirically builds on two methodological advancements: conducting research in multiple locations belonging to one figuration or one journey studied—in the sense of a 'multi-sited ethnography' (Marcus)—and joining the people, goods, and ideas with (im-)mobilities under study and thereby deriving the research space from the their space(s) of interaction. In line with Elias' figurational approach, and inspired by a participatory and dynamic innovation development approach named 'Follow the Innovation' (Hornidge et al. "Transdisciplinary Innovation"; Ul-Hassan et al. "Guidelines"), 'Follow the Figuration' as a dynamic, qualitative methodology for studying the mobile and the interdependencies that enable and restrict mobilities is being developed. The approach entails following travelling people, goods, and ideas and basically letting the mobility of the studied determine the researcher's next moves. Points of departure of these subjects, objects, and ideas so far have been located in the geographic region between eastern Iran and western China as well as the Aral Sea and northern India, yet following the mobile took Crossroads Asia's researchers far beyond these geographies. A study into the silent mobilities of women in northern Afghanistan, for example, assessed marriage networks crossing different ethnic and social groups. From the point of departure, namely Mazar-e Sharif, the research extended to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkey—all sites part of the studied marriage figurations. An interesting—and for the research, fruitful—implication of the multi-sited ethnography was that many respondents were substantially more open to being interviewed and observed when outside of their home environments (Durdu). Besides the enabling aspects of 'mobile methodologies' for knowledge generation, several research experiences in 'difficult environments', characterised by mistrust, high levels of self-censorship, and lack of physical safety, in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran led us to start reflecting on the method's limitations in conflictual environments (Crossroads Asia Working Group Conflict) as well as on the limitations of ourselves as researchers trapped in not only our own worldviews (disciplinary, western, etc.), but also epistemologies.

Epistemological: Reflexivity and Positionality

Rethinking area studies as they are practiced in German teaching and research as of today requires a reflection on global and national knowledge structures, facilitating and to a large degree determining what type of and whose knowledge is heard, on academic disciplinary to interdisciplinary (maybe even postdisciplinary) knowledge production, as well as on our own researcher's position in reaffirming or changing existing epistemologies (keyword: positionality; Mielke and Hornidge, "Crossroads"). How do the theories and methods, largely originating from Western/Northern empirical contexts, while claiming to be of universal value, influence how we approach our research objects and subjects? How are we ourselves shaped by our disciplinary/area studies backgrounds, by our own socio-

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cultural, ethnic origin, our sex, age, position within the academic sector, etc.? Are we (i.e. a German sociologist/Southeast Asianist, etc.) at all able to develop non-western 'mid-range concepts'? Are we able to leave our epistemological trap– e.g. through team research in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams? Or are we indeed trapped, and only the Tajik social scientist and the Kyrgyz anthropologist amongst us can call their work non-western 'mid-range concepts'? And finally, what are the research ethical considerations of this for our research? How do we overcome the 'us' and 'them' divide in the research process?

The communicative negotiation and relational construction of spaces also has a non-negligible impact on how acting subjects self-identify and what positionality they claim for themselves (Alff) or attribute to others (Boboyorov). And just as people in their everyday actions position themselves in translocal figurations involving, for example, educational mobility, researchers in their fields are also participants in a distinct figuration and must negotiate their own positionality.

Outlook

The three separate research components introduced above are contributing to the development of an interdisciplinary research paradigm for knowledge generation in different 'areas' of the world; we call it 'Crossroads Studies'. Based on Elias' concept of figurations, the tracing of human interdependencies in interactions across socio-cultural and physical spaces enables the identification and analysis of real and virtual spheres of activity that are opened up and dynamised by social, economic, political, cultural, and religious interactions. In the coming years, further systematic exploration will be required to uncover the limitations of the concept of figurations and how they can be compensated for or supplemented with complementary methodological approaches. In advancing this approach, our concern continues to lie on finding productive answers to frequently heard criticisms of what are perceived as deficits of area studies: thinking in pre-defined territorial research spaces and 'containers', the epistemological peripheralisation of particular geographic locations within 'areas' (van Schendel), and, more broadly, ignorance of the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences (Schroer; Ingold; Löw). By synthesizing the empirical insights generated in the first four years of research, we expect to expedite the content-focused debates on area studies and space/spatialities, discussions on methodology, and the elaboration of theory in the respective specialist disciplines, and deliver on the frequently-heard demand that research on the global South should be more prominent within specialist disciplines (i.e. Lackner and Werner, Braig and Hentschke; Hentschke). The bundling of conceptual, methodological, and epistemological considerations under the notion of 'Crossroads Studies' as programme for research and teaching is not intended to lead away from 'areas', but rather to focus on the dynamic and (im-)mobile element that determines the social and communicative construction of spatial realities and to underline how the (re-)negotiation processes of physical, social, and thus also epistemological spaces have to stand at the centre of area studies research and teaching in the twenty-first century.

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How to Conceptualize Area Studies?

Thesis 2 Comparative Area Studies and Middle East Politics after the Arab Uprisings

André Bank

The Arab uprisings have brought about a new wave of Middle East political science research that seeks to comparatively account for the different political trajectories in the region. In order to situate these diverse post-2011 scholarly studies, this paper introduces Comparative Area Studies (CAS) as an analytical perspective which combines the context sensitivity of area studies with the explicit and systematic use of comparisons. It finds that while intra-regional comparisons are the mainstay of political science studies of the Arab uprisings, there is also an emerging, very promising strand of cross-regional comparisons that draws on insights from, for example, the post-Soviet space or from European history. The paper concludes by evaluating the promises, risks and prospects of following a CAS perspective in the study of Middle East politics.

Keywords: Comparative Area Studies; Arab Uprisings; Middle East Politics; Cross-regional Comparisons

The Impact of the Arab Uprisings

The Arab uprisings of 2011 have not only brought about the fall of the heads of state in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, all-out wars in Syria, Libya and, subsequently, in Yemen, but also the survival of all eight monarchies in the region.[1] In the academic field of Middle East studies and in particular in Middle East political science, the dramatic political processes during and since 2011 have contributed to a basic questioning of the mainstream theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches that guided research in the 1990s and the 2000s. While some pundits have renewed their earlier attacks against Middle East political science—first for not predicting the Islamist terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (9/11) and now for not grasping the Arab uprisings—most observers have actually been more cautious in arguing, for example, that the prominent perspective on authoritarian regime durability had failed to adequately address diverse, bottom-up social mobilization as well as the complexity of intra-regime politics (Hinnebusch; Lynch).

In a recently published article entitled "Reflections on Self-reflections," Morten Valbjørn combines these individual perspectives into an impressive meta-study of the different ways in which scholars of Middle East politics have debated the analytical

implications of the Arab uprisings over the course of the last three to four years. He identifies three different kinds of framings (5-14): First, the so-called "*who-has-been-vindicated-and-made-obsolete framing*" describes the tendency to pick winners and losers in the scholarly debate. Especially in the initial period of surprise and partly even euphoria in early-to-mid 2011, the dominant research strand of authoritarianism was deemed to have decisively lost in explanatory power. Early on, authoritarianism research indeed had difficulties in accounting for the ousting of Presidents Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt, Saleh in Yemen as well as Colonel Gaddafi in Libya. With the authoritarian durability in the eight Arab monarchies, in Algeria and in particular with the military coup in Egypt in July 2013, however, these voices have subsided again. Second, the so-called "*how-do-we-synthesize-and-upgrade framing*" revises existing analytical frameworks and combines insights from different research perspectives in order to arrive at better understandings of the post-Arab uprisings' political trajectories in the Middle East. Revisiting older scholarly debates, such as those on civil societies, social movements or the relationship of religion and politics (8-9) helps to avoid repeating earlier mistakes and simplifications. Third, the so-called "*how-do-we-get-beyond-the-democratization/authoritarianism-paradogma framing*" is more radical than the two other variants. It takes the Arab uprisings to be a fitting political and historical juncture to fundamentally reconsider the dominant analytical focus of mainstream Middle East political science on macro-structural questions of democratization and authoritarianism. Prominent scholars such as Lisa Anderson who argue within this framing have for a long time advocated for broadening the understanding of Middle East politics and more systematically tackling

> [q]uestions relating to *nation-building and identity formation, insurrection, sectarian and tribal politics, the resilience of monarchies, the dynamics of rentier-states, the role of the military in politics, the politics of informal economies, and transnational networks*. (11; italics in the original)

While cognizant of this interesting (meta-) debate within Middle East political science, this paper takes a somewhat different route: It introduces Comparative Area Studies (CAS) as a broad analytical perspective from beyond Middle East studies with the aim of locating important new research themes and preliminary findings on Middle East politics after the Arab uprisings. CAS' explicit and systematic use of *comparative* methods is explored here to highlight some of the extant research along three ideal-typical forms of comparison: intra-regional, cross-regional and inter-regional. In particular, CAS' cross-regional and inter-regional foci deliberately connect to insights from beyond the Middle East. The paper concludes by evaluating the prospects of CAS vis-à-vis Middle East politics after the Arab uprisings and beyond.

Comparative Area Studies and the Three Forms of Comparison

In recent years, the analytical perspective of Comparative Area Studies has gained in prominence in the discipline of political science, both in its subfield of comparative politics (Basedau and Köllner; Berg-Schlosser) as well as in discussions about (mostly qualitative) research methods (Ahram, "The Theory"). Like traditional area studies, including Middle East studies, CAS is based on the strong context knowledge and detailed expertise of the histories, cultures, languages and spatiality of the respective "area" (Mehler and Hoffmann). Beyond traditional area studies, the CAS perspective explicitly and systematically employs different forms of comparative methods—hence the capital "C." I follow the definition of CAS that was developed at my academic home institution, the GIGA

German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg:

> Comparative Area Studies (CAS) (…) combines the context sensitivity and knowledge of area studies with the explicit use of comparative methods as the appropriate means to generate both contributions to broader disciplinary and theoretical debates, and better insights into the cases. ("Idea")[2]

Together, the interest of CAS encompasses both generalization and specification, i.e. the generalization of findings beyond the "classical," intra-regional area studies perspective and the better specification of single-case findings within it. It does so via three ideal-typical forms of comparison: intra-regional, cross-regional, and inter-regional.[3] First, in *intra-regional comparisons*, "[a]spects or phenomena of different geographical entities within a given region are compared" (Basedau and Köllner). This means that even though the very notion might insinuate a comparison beyond a certain single area, CAS can actually be pursued within just one area. Intra-regional comparisons usually have the analytical advantage that a number of background conditions pertaining to geography, history, culture and sometimes also socio-economic profiles or political structures are more frequently similar. Second, *cross-regional comparisons* "involve the comparison of analytical units across different regions" (Basedau and Köllner). Cross-regional comparisons are often analytically more challenging because they simultaneously demand concrete field or context knowledge in different areas and strong methodological rigor, irrespective of the chosen method(s). In political science in general and in its subfield of comparative politics in particular, cross-regional comparisons have usually focused on the country level, but they can also be carried out on sectorial or sub-national levels or in terms of specific state institutions or social groups. Third, *inter-regional comparisons* take whole areas or regions as the units of analysis. They usually try to "identify regional patterns and to compare them to each other" (Basedau and Köllner). Inter-regional comparisons serve mainly to describe and analyze similarities and differences in the paths, sequences, relevant actor constellations and outcomes of important global political dynamics (e.g. processes of democratization or patterns of regional cooperation).

CAS and the Arab Uprisings

In this section, I employ the three CAS-related forms of comparison to situate current research on Middle East politics after the Arab uprisings. An important caveat is warranted here: My selection of the current political science research is not all-encompassing or representative. Rather, it is admittedly skewed towards my own research focus on the sub-field of comparative politics, with a view on state-society and regime-opposition relations in the Middle East.[4]

Beyond the many single-case studies, by far most of the current comparative political science research on the Arab uprisings after 2011 consists of *intra-regional comparisons*. This is not surprising, given that the comparison of different units within the same area has traditionally been the most common form of CAS-related comparisons—and the one closest to the "classical" area studies perspective. This has also been the case for studies belonging to comparative politics of the Middle East. What is new, however, is that the dynamics of the Arab uprisings have brought to the fore research fields that were previously peripheral or almost non-existent. Given the scale and diversity of social mobilization during the Arab uprisings within a rather short period of time in 2011, one research trend that has grown massively has been the study of social movements, in particular youth movements, and of societal activism writ large (Beinin and Vairel; Gertel and Ouaissa). Often drawing on concepts and methods from social movement studies, many researchers have ana-

lyzed the protest repertoires in different settings (Beinin and Vairel), thereby also regularly blurring disciplinary boundaries of political science, sociology, anthropology and Middle East studies. Relatedly, the relationship between secularists and Islamists as well as the differentiation between types of activists, e.g. labor organizations, political parties and the plethora of previously often overlooked "non-movements" (Asef Bayat), have become mainstays of research after 2011. In addition, the role of new social media in mobilization, such as the Internet, Facebook or Twitter, has massively gained in influence (Lynch, *The Arab Uprisings*). Connected to both activism research and studies on social media are new studies that draw on insights from political geography and that focus on issues of the spatiality of protests as well as the role of implicit knowledge and changed identities (Schumann and Soudias; Schwedler and Kingas; Gertel and Ouaissa).

Intra-regional comparisons have not only increased with regard to societal dynamics. There is also a new trend of more regime- or state institution-centered analyses after the Arab uprisings employing different types of intra-regional comparisons. First, given the massively increased relevance of the Arab militaries since 2011 in either ousting authoritarian presidents (Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak in Egypt), violently putting down mass protests (e.g. Bahrain, Syria) or taking over power themselves (Egypt under al-Sisi), studies of the military, political-military or civil-military relations have clearly experienced a massive renaissance in Middle East political science (Albrecht; Lutterbeck; Makara). Second and related, there is also a new trend to study regime repression as a decisive tool to counter oppositional mobilization in its own right (Bellin). The most recent intra-regional comparisons differentiate between "constraining" and "incapacitating" forms of repression (Josua and Edel) and disentangle state security agencies such as the military, the secret services, the police, gendarmerie, etc. Third, another strand of regime-centered research focuses on the striking survival of all eight authoritarian monarchies during the Arab uprisings (Derichs and Demmelhuber). Extant studies understand this monarchical survival in configurational terms, i.e. as the differential interaction of factors including family rule, external support, material distribution and procedural or religious-nationalist legitimation (Bank, Richter, and Sunik; Yom and Gause). Fourth, an emerging strand of intra-regional comparative research has tackled the political dynamics of learning and adaptation of the authoritarian regimes, comparing for example the lessons drawn by the Syrian regime from the failed counter-insurgency in Libya (Heydemann and Leenders) or, more broadly, regime learning in the cases of Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan and Syria (Bank and Edel). Taken together, intra-regional comparisons of the Arab uprisings have clearly diversified over the course of the last three years or so. We can observe a clear upsurge in the quantity and, arguably, also the quality of studies addressing previously rather marginalized topics—e.g. research on social movement dynamics or monarchical rule in the Middle East. In addition to this, some exciting new themes have emerged that had not been part and parcel of Middle East political science immediately prior to the Arab uprisings: One is the new focus on the role of the military and other state repressive organs, while another is the newly emerging interest in cross-border regime learning and adaptation.

Cross-regional comparisons pale in number with intra-regional comparisons of the Arab uprisings, but they have also increased quite markedly since 2011. A central field in this regard are comparative studies of diffusion processes in regional waves of contention (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik) or, seen from a different angle, of "regime change cascades" (Hale). The popular uprisings that quickly spread

across many Arab countries in 2011 suggest that oppositional protest repertoires quickly diffused across national boundaries. Not only were slogans such as "the people demand the downfall of the regime" ("ash-sha'b yurīd isqāṭ an-niẓām") actively taken up by activists across the region, but core protest practices such as the mass sit-ins in central squares could also be observed from Cairo to Manama, and from Dar'a and Homs to Sana'a. In their article "Diffusion and Demonstration," David Patel, Valerie Bunce, and Sharon Wolchik contrast these dynamics in specific Arab countries with similar ones in Eastern Europe post-1989 as well as during the so-called "Color Revolutions" (Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan) from 2000-2005. For this study, a Middle East political scientist (Patel) teamed up with two renowned comparativists specializing on the post-Soviet space (Bunce and Wolchik) to combine their different "area experiences" in a fruitful kind of cross-regional division of labor. In a similar vein, a number of prominent comparative politics scholars working on other areas have begun to view the Middle East in the context of the Arab uprisings as an interesting object of study that is able to inform broader disciplinary debates of regime transitions and the prospects for democratization (Way) or on anti-regime protest dynamics (Weyland). Kurt Weyland, a comparativist specializing on Latin America and 19th and 20th-century Europe, has contrasted the "wave-like" nature of the spread of anti-regime protests in the Middle East in 2011 with Europe during the so-called 1848 revolution. Despite the obvious structural differences between, for example, the cases of Egypt in 2011 and Germany in 1848, he finds interesting similarities in the cognitive shortcuts that oppositional activists and "ordinary people" took to make sense of the surprising "forerunner"—France in 1848, Tunisia in 2011—and to start engaging on a mass scale in high-risk anti-regime protests.

These examples of protest-related cross-regional comparisons between cases from the Arab uprisings and those from other areas are indicative of a broader trend that emerged during and immediately after the initial phase of mass mobilization in the Middle East. "2011" became a symbolic denotation that could be contrasted to earlier symbolic years standing for emancipatory mass protests and regime breakdown but also regime re-stabilization in other regions: 1848, 1968, 1989.[5] Against the backdrop of the CAS discussion in this paper, the previous observation reinforces the idea that findings from cross-regional comparisons can be generalized and thus transformed into *inter-regional comparisons*, thereby underlining the often blurry boundaries between cross-regional and inter-regional comparisons. However, "truly" *inter-regional comparisons* of the Arab uprisings taking the whole area of the Middle East or of the Arab states as the units of analysis in political science studies have continued to be almost non-existent. One exception in this regard is a fascinating working paper by Ariel Ahram, which combines all three CAS-inspired comparative perspectives to study cross-border diffusion during the Arab uprisings (*Comparative Area Studies*). To account for macro-structural background conditions prior to the beginning of the Arab uprisings, Ahram includes an inter-regional comparison of patterns of coup attempts and longitudinal development of quantitative "Polity2 democracy scores" between the Arab countries and data on Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America (9-10).

In sum, while most of the new comparative politics studies of the Middle East after the Arab uprisings can still be subsumed under the intra-regional form of comparison, there is also an emerging and very promising strand of cross-regional comparisons that draws on insights from, for example, the post-Soviet space or from European history. As with political science research on other regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia or Latin America,

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inter-regional comparisons have remained very rare.

Summary and Outlook

The Arab uprisings of 2011 represent the most massive social and political mobilization in the Middle East since the 1950s and 1960s. The different political trajectories of these uprisings—from the liberalization in Tunisia to the authoritarian-military rollback in Egypt, and from the all-out wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen to the continuation of the authoritarian status quo in Algeria and the Arab monarchies—have also brought about a new wave of scholarly research that seeks to account for dynamics of current Middle East politics post-2011. Importantly, the Arab uprisings have awakened the interest of political science scholars with different, non-Middle East area backgrounds, allowing "external" expertise to enrich debates about political dynamics in the Middle East. At the same time, the global emanation of the Arab uprisings—rendering 2011 a symbolic year similar to 1848, 1968 or 1989—has allowed Middle East-related research themes and findings to make inroads into broader theoretical debates in political science and other disciplines. This development constitutes one of the main scholarly promises connected to the analytical perspective of CAS, in particular when it comes to cross-regional comparisons.

However, the increased interest of non-Middle East comparativists in the Arab uprisings and the widened representation of the Middle East area in broader political science debates is not without risks: CAS' cross-regional and inter-regional comparisons entail the danger that studies simplify often very complex contextual conditions in order to make strong general, usually causal claims that are relevant beyond the respective cases in one area. To address this challenge, scholars are strongly advised to put much effort into the process of selecting appropriate cases that are capable of answering the guiding research questions and into defining the scope conditions of their studies (Ahram, *Comparative Area Studies* 5-6).[6] One way to find fitting cross-regional cases is to work together in research teams composed of different area experts who share an interest in research questions, concepts and methods (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik). While potentially yielding very interesting results, pursuing more collaborative team or cluster research is not without risks, especially for scholars at the beginning of their academic careers: In spite of the increased and mostly also commendable establishment of inter-, multi- or trans-disciplinary research centers, such as the Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) at Philipps University in Marburg, individual academic careers "are still [commonly] made in the disciplines," as the old dictum says. This potential contradiction will arguably not easily be solved, at least in the short- to medium-term.

To end on a somewhat positive note: Despite the "modest harvest" (Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds) in terms of emancipatory, democratic politics and social justice in the years following the Arab uprisings, politics in the Middle East continues to be a fascinating area of study, and one that should be explored even more thoroughly and critically in the future.

Notes

[1] I will use the notion of *Arab uprisings* here and refrain from engaging in a more detailed discussion about the pros and cons of alternative notions such as *Arab Spring, Arab revolt(s)* or *Arabellion*.

[2] giga-hamburg.de/en/idea.

[3] giga-hamburg.de.

[4] For more comprehensive studies on post-2011 developments in Middle East politics cf. the already mentioned contributions by Valbjørn , Hinnebusch and Lynch, "Introduction" as well as the recently published *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring* and a number of edited volumes (Gerges; Gertel and Ouaissa; Jünemann and Zorob; Kamrava; Lynch, *The Arab Uprisings*). This list is of course also far from exhaustive.

[5] I will refrain here from a long discussion of the kinds of comparisons that have been drawn between 2011 and the other symbolic years. If one were to engage in this debate further, I think that one important differentiation would need to be made between the different meanings of, for example, 1968 or 1989: Does 1968 refer to the kind of emancipatory social movements in different parts of the globe or rather to the "Prague Spring" with its ensuing repressive clampdown by Soviet troops? Or does 1989 signify the fall of the Berlin Wall or Peking's Tiananmen Square? Or both in both cases?

[6] Weyland's 1848-2011 comparison is a positive example in this regard.

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META

Shifting Epistemologies in Area Studies: From Space to Scale

Claudia Derichs

Area studies suffer from various epistemic borderlines which have been drawn and grown during decades of constructing a 'world order' that is ultimately defined by political power relations. The question of what constitutes an 'area' or a 'region' is a timely and contested one. Moreover, epistemic borderlines have been constructed by a hegemonic way of identifying academic disciplines. The separation between area studies and disciplines, too, is a decision based on global epistemic power relations. The following paper addresses the constructivist dimension of area studies and disciplines. The main argument is that area studies and disciplines are not primarily bound to geographical settings but derive from a politically-informed defining and 'scaling' of localities, ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures.

Keywords: **Area Studies; Disciplines; Hegemony; Epistemology**

A debate that is well established and continues to arouse attention is the debate over the questions of how, why, and to what end disciplines and area studies approaches should find a 'healthy' relationship with one another.[1] The background to the narrative of area studies and disciplines as 'strange but complementary bed fellows' goes back to the decades preceding World War II, and has recently garnered fresh attention in the course of alleged 'crises' in both the disciplines and the area studies. The status of area studies is, moreover, related to (if not dependent on) the political importance with which its academic endeavors are bestowed—boiling down to an assignation of the relevance of area studies by either increasing or reducing the public funding for it. The ups and downs in area studies funding become evident in various shapes and are currently visible in the huge sums that are allocated for studies on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region). They are mostly earmarked for projects that serve to accompany and flank political and social change in the wake of the Arab Spring. This does not come as a surprise. Development, political transition, social change, conflict resolution, post-conflict politics, transitional justice, state-building, peacebuilding, institution-building and the like are topics of constant attention which re-

quire a solid foundation in local and contextual knowledge. And accordingly, the disciplines of social sciences (and humanities to a lesser extent) have become almost 'natural' partners of area studies. Yet the partnership is not always working smoothly. A tension in the relationship between disciplines and area studies revolves, for instance, around the issues of theory and methodology. Does area research have to make use of disciplinary-based theories, concepts, and methods? Or can it do without them, relying instead on a paradigm that takes the 'field' as a realm of encounter and thus dispenses with a translation of 'unconceptualized' phenomena into the theoretical terminology of a particular discipline? While these are vital questions that evoke considerable contention in academic debates, the days of mutual accusation—with the disciplines claiming that area studies are free of theoretical and methodological reflection, and area studies scholars rejecting the arrival at allegedly universal theories without their being grounded in proper local expertise[2]—have passed. Today, a shared understanding exists at least with regard to the necessity of empirical findings. In Europe, it is almost commonly accepted that an overtly Eurocentric perspective on 'the rest' of the world will not lead to clear pictures, but that at the same time, a staunchly defended cultural relativism is equally misleading. The parameters of global knowledge production have arrived at a critical juncture and concepts do not travel as easily any more from one part of the world to another. On the part of both disciplinary-oriented scholars and area experts the necessity of rooting the generation of theory in empirical findings is acknowledged. The same accounts for the exercise of testing theories and examining the possibility of conceptual 'travel.' Still, some questions regarding the relationship remain.

Areas, Area Studies, and Social Sciences

The grammatical *compositum* 'area studies' sounds innocent. Its latent pitfalls surface when we disassemble it: What constitutes an area, and what is the concept behind the scholarly activity called the study of one or more area(s), hence 'area studies'? In terms of a conventional understanding of area studies, we can follow Birgit Schäbler's handy definition. She describes the concept of area studies as

> scholarly research on a world region/world civilization, i.e. on a territory that is defined both geographically and epistemically. Another generally accepted definition of what constitutes area studies is that researchers learn the languages of their respective world region, have spent longer periods of field work there, and have thoroughly reflected upon the local history, different local viewpoints, material and interpretations according to their disciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches in order to understand non-European societies, cultures/civilizations, literatures and histories from within the region. (Schäbler 12)

Two terms merit attention here, namely 'world region' and 'non-European.' While area studies mostly take whole regions or even continents into their view (Latin America, Africa, East Asia, Eastern Europe, Middle East, etc.), they simultaneously concentrate on one particular country—Chinese studies, Japanese studies, etc.—or on a sub-region, such as Southeast Asia. What counts as an area is thus not precisely determined. Moreover, the designation of a particular geographic territory as an area is subject to political developments and the world order given at a certain time in history. Consider that before World War II and decolonization, no German scholars, for instance, would have produced research designated as Southeast Asian studies. The colonial powers of the time had allocated their names of choice to the territory of today's Southeast Asia, depending on what area

they controlled (e.g. 'Indochina' for French occupied Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam). Since international power relations and academic demarcations between different area studies are almost inseparably connected to each other, 'Southeast Asian studies' is a comparatively recent label for this field of research. Area studies are, as Schäbler puts it, 'indubitably a child of the Cold War' and have frequently been subjected to the task of getting to know the enemy (15).[3] Ruth Benedict's wartime study of Japan, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, is an illustrative case in point for the way in which anthropological works influenced the understanding in the US of a 'foreign' culture. Timothy Mitchell goes even further in creating a direct link between Cold War area studies and the knowledge production project of social sciences. "The genealogy of area studies must be understood in relation to the wider structure of academic knowledge and the struggles not of the Cold War but of science—and social science in particular—as a twentieth-century political product" (Mitchell 2). However, area studies should not be understood as mere delivery service institutions for political decision-makers. Rather than notoriously complying with official politics, we find area studies representatives to be critical observers who articulate well-grounded arguments against the dynamics that are at work in *Realpolitik*.[4]

The second term that merits attention in Schäbler's definition is 'non-European.' Indeed it is a rather strange phenomenon that, at least in Europe, the concept of area studies is usually applied to regions outside (Western) Europe. It is only recently that comparative area studies scholars articulate the need to include Europe—or 'the West' as another fuzzy but tenaciously utilized denominator—into the concept of area studies. It is obvious that the longstanding perception of area studies as non-European studies has shaped the status of areas studies vis-à-vis the so-called systematic disciplines. Results arrived at during fieldwork *outside* Europe were recognized if they matched the theoretical assumption developed *in* Europe (in the 'global North,' as one would probably say today). Mitchell succinctly points this out by stating that area studies contributed to the Western social sciences in two ways: on the one hand, 'area studies would cleanse social theory of its provincialism' and on the other hand, '[a]rea studies would serve as a testing ground for the universalization of the social sciences,' (8). The latter 'function' of area studies in particular has informed social science research for a long time. Spin-offs of the classical modernization theory based on empirical reality in the West (including theories on the role of the middle class for political transition and democratization—as problematized in META 02-2014) are but one example for the testing of their universal validity in other parts of the world. The missing compatibility of such theoretical assumptions with the empirical reality at hand also led to a self-critical questioning if the 'travel of concepts' across the globe could be conducted so easily (if at all). Yet it deserves mentioning that one subfield in the discipline of political science, namely international relations (IR), has immersed itself in a thorough search for 'non-Western theories' of IR (Tickner and Wæver) and found them to be remarkably similar to Western IR theories. The results of the research done thus far are highly revealing and underscore what Pinar Bilgin has succinctly pointed out in her reflections on why IR offers "so little about the 'non-West'" (10). Her analysis illustrates that shifting the view to the non-West in international relations will not unearth much difference. Rather than finding discrete theoretical approaches, 'non-West[ern]' "ways of thinking about and doing world politics […] renders problematic the ex-

pectations of finding 'difference' in the 'non-West" (Bilgin 10). The shift of perspective and the critical stance towards the 'travel of concepts' thus suggests we not fall victim to a hastily anticipated 'difference' between X, Y, and Z, but to accept their relational entanglement. The critical stance Bilgin takes towards area studies, however, reflects the perception of their uneasy relationship with the disciplines. In her view, area studies "failed to work with the disciplines to allow for cross-fertilization" (10).

Scrutinizing the application of Western theories and methods to non-Western contexts brought about novel and well-known approaches such as Shmuel N. Eisenstadt's *Multiple Modernities*. While these had a clearly refining effect on social science thinking, the fact remained that the reasoning behind such approaches was still embedded in Western epistemic logics and semantic contexts. Not surprisingly, this prompted an ideological departure from 'theory production in the West and theory application in the rest' of the world. A paradigmatic work in this regard was Jean and John Comaroff's *Theory from the South*. The book invites the reader to reimagine the theories explaining how the world functions, i.e. to regard the production of universal knowledge as originating from the African continent (instead of Europe/the West/the global North). The logic of Comaroff and Comaroff differs from that of an older study with a similar title—*Southern Theory* by Raewyn Connell—which denounces the formula of 'data gathering and application in the colony' and 'theorizing in the metropole,' (Connell ix). What this strand of thinkers has in common, though, is an appreciative stance towards viewing the production of knowledge from regions that have hitherto hardly been recognized as originators of (universal) theories and methods. Whether they would count as representatives of post-colonial approaches or not is of minor importance here. The merit of their approach lies in the constant reminder they put up against conventional forms of conducting social science research as well as area studies research—the awareness of one's positionality as a researcher—for area studies scholars not only but particularly *in* the field. The underlying gist of this concern is obvious, as Farhana Sultana points out:

> Conducting international fieldwork involves being attentive to histories of colonialism, development, globalization and local realities, to avoid exploitative research or perpetuation of relations of domination and control. It is thus imperative that ethical concerns should permeate the entire process of the research, from conceptualization to dissemination, and that researchers are especially mindful of negotiated ethics in the field. (Sultana 375)

The issue of positionality and reflexivity (as a consequence thereof) in area studies ultimately tackles the question of 'universal knowledge.' In principle, giving due consideration to positionality means admitting that the generation of 'universal knowledge' is factually impossible, and rebukes the claim of having done so. The 'parochialism of universalism' (Bilgin 7) is certainly worth being reflected at all stages of scholarly endeavors. This insight does not go along easily with the belief in universal theories and in methods that can be applied anywhere on the globe in order to gather data.

Scaling the Global Knowledge Terrain

The push for rethinking not only the relationship between area studies and disciplines, but also the approaches used in area studies themselves has become stronger during recent years. Demands for a 'decentering and diversifying' of area studies, as Goh Beng-Lan articulates in the context of Southeast Asian studies, point to the ever increasing importance of a sol-

id reflection on the situational nature of research, and on researchers' own positionality. South–South relations, for example, serve to shift the perspective and de-center 'the West from historical and political narratives' (Freitag 2). De-centering also trains scholars to depart from container categories and territorialized units, so as to more aptly map the field of inquiry. The approach is conscious of the fact that 'historians produce geographies and not vice versa,' as Arjun Appadurai (66) rightly recalls. It also takes into account the significance of shifting the view from the centers to the peripheries of knowledge production, and from conventionally demarcated regions to non-demarcated regions. The latter notion of what maybe called non-demarcated regions was introduced by Willem van Schendel, who writes about a 'region' which he calls *Zomia* and which is not characterized by officially established borders, but by minority groups who have for centuries enjoyed their cultural and territorial affinities and have been able not only to preserve their local culture, but also to escape control and pressure from the respective states they are formally assigned to. The territory is comprised of the huge highlands and lowlands on mainland Southeast Asia. For van Schendel, the conventional area lineages that inform today's area studies are merely 'imagined' ones. The author's work has had strong repercussions for the framing and the concept of area studies in the 2000s.

For the purpose of roughly structuring the current debate *within* the field of contemporary area studies, which addresses the themes mentioned above, I have elsewhere identified three major discursive schools or currents which can be seen as promoting a specific understanding of area studies (Derichs). Without claiming any legitimacy of the chosen categorization, I have structured the area studies landscape into a *conciliatory* current (composed of scholars who emphasize the mutual benefits of combining area studies with disciplinary approaches [theories, methods, and so forth]); a *new areas studies* current; and a *rethinking* current. Proponents of the first current would, for instance, value the research on party systems in different parts of world with analytical concepts and tools rooted in Western political science and comparative politics. The second current would acknowledge the contribution of the social sciences to the deepening of knowledge, but perceive area studies and the disciplines as each taking 'different points of departure'—that is 'a certain space' in respect to the former and 'a particular thematic field of study' in respect to the latter (Houben 3). Applied to the example of party systems, political scientists would take the very notion of 'party systems' as a point of departure, whereas areanists would start out studying politics in a particular area and maybe arrive—or not—at the finding that there exists something like a party system which is worth being compared to others. Supporters of the third current reason that a concentration on sociospatial relations and 'specific spaces constituted by human experience, imagination, and actions in contexts which are thematically defined in each case' (Crossroads Asia) is of increasing importance. South Asia, as a case in point, may sometimes be more visible in the United Kingdom than in India or Pakistan. Area studies focusing merely on the very *area* as a geographically defined entity have in this regard become somewhat mismatched to the empirical reality at hand. Space is important yet not informed predominantly by geographical parameters.

Referring to this finding, Katja Mielke and Anna-Katharina Hornidge have recently introduced an innovative understanding of area studies, which also takes the relationship between area studies and disciplines into account. The principle is to '[n]ot abandon, but modernize and revital-

ize' (Mielke and Hornidge 16). The agenda for the competence network *Crossroads Asia*, of which both authors are members, commits itself to 'Post-Area-Studies' in the sense of rethinking area studies. It seeks to:

> Move human action and interaction and its role in communicatively constructing space into the center of attention. After two and a half years of research, the original focus on different forms of mobility and networks as studied spatial dimensions suggests to additionally include positionality (socio-spatial; us/them) and borders/boundaries/frontiers, assessed through the lens of human communication taking place in interactions, into the core of analysis. (18)

Prior to formulating this rationale, the shortcomings of area studies and disciplines as they have developed over time were identified by various actors, including the German *Wissenschaftsrat* (Science Council) as an institution of high reputation and with agenda-setting authority. Mielke and Hornidge condense the gist of this procedure to three tasks which require closer attention. They point out the need for revitalization in physical space, symbolic space, and institutional space. 'Physical space (scalar fix)', is certainly not adequate anymore 'in times of globalization.' Altering the symbolic space, 'given the deconstruction of culture (cultural turn) and a subsequent reformation of disciplines and research agendas,' would be a measure not only to overcome the anachronism of 'scalar fix,' but also to reform the institutional space, 'which is dominated by scholarly lineages that limit its knowledge generation as a result of organization in self-referential epistemic communities and adherence to disciplinary subordination.' At least in Germany, area studies scholars have become motivated to rethink their paradigms, approaches, methods and position in and outside the field.

Conceptual Outlook

How can the sociospatial dimension in area studies be conceptualized so as to make geographic, territorial, and administrative borders and frontiers less prominent as a frame of reference—and consequently less binding for the analysis of area-related phenomena?[5] An attempt in this direction almost necessarily skips the idea that such a conceptualization should derive first and foremost from the social sciences. It rather crosses the disciplinary borders and seeks approaches which might have gone through an exercise of throwing 'path-dependent' concepts overboard. An endeavor that is rooted in the mission of grasping the empirical reality and binding it back to a conceptual framework has been introduced by ethnologists James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta. Their approach of 'spatializing states' brings us back to the sometimes exaggerated attention given to the national borders of states when doing area studies. Ferguson and Gupta's argument that 'an increasingly transnational political economy today poses new challenges to familiar forms of state spatialization' is not a new one to scholars of Kurdish or Palestinian affairs (982). But rather than pointing at the fact of nations without states (such as Kurds and, at least to a certain extent, Palestinians), the innovative perspective of the authors lies in hinting at the 'verticality' of states, meaning 'the central and pervasive idea of the state as an institution somehow "above" civil society, community, and family' (982). This idea, the authors claim, serves as 'a profoundly consequential understanding of scale,' that is:

> One in which the locality is encompassed by the region, the region by the nation-state, and the nation-state by the international community. These two metaphors (verticality and encompassment; C.D.) work together to produce a taken-for-granted spatial and scalar image of a state that both sits

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> above and contains its localities, regions, and communities. (982)

We can transfer this scheme to the understanding of area knowledge and the very production of knowledge about areas. Let us take the example of Spanish speaking communities. While Spanish is regarded a minority language in the United States of America and English codified as the national language, a few meters off the United States' territorial borders, Spanish is the language of the majority. Studying Spanish communities in these areas as 'minorities' is thus a mere matter of perspective, for if we expand the scale and ignore the states' spatial presence, it does not make sense any more to speak of Spanish as a minority language. What has happened is that the state has turned a horizontal linguistic landscape into a vertical one—making a language a national language here and a minority language there. This is the effect Ferguson and Gupta also describe by verticality and encompassment. The reciprocal relationship between space (area) and regimes that 'scale' particular elements of empirical reality, as well as between macro-conditions and micro-processes, is obvious. The epistemic challenge thus lies in diversifying 'area knowledge' and decentering the perspective on the phenomenon that is chosen for analysis. The value-added aspect of area studies understood this way, we might reason, lies in respecting the dynamics of scales. The scale rather than the space becomes a key analytical tool.

Notes

[1] Classic works on areas studies which also tackle the relationship with disciplines include Bates; Graham; Jackson; Mirsepassi, Basu and Weaver; Szanton.

[2] Most tellingly summarized by T. Mitchell (66): "Area studies scholars were told that their problems would be solved by getting back together with their disciplinary partners and accepting their authority. […] Yet it is in fact this claim to represent the universal that is in question in the authority of the disciplines. The future of area studies lies in their ability to disturb the disciplinary claim to universality and the particular place this assigns to areas."

[3] Needless to mention that the connection between Cold War politics and area studies has also shaped the curricular set-up of area studies, with language, for instance, being a very important element in Middle East or Latin American studies. Critical questions such as those raised by post-colonial studies have also been considerably neglected until they generally gained more currency after the Cold War.

[4] Schäbler mentions the Vietnam War, the Cuba crisis of 1962 and the Post-9/11 politics as particular cases in point (15).

[5] Less prominent and less important is by no means intended to suggest a discarding of geographic or territorial dimensions.

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FOCUS

Comparing What to What? Intersecting Methodological Issues in Comparative Area Studies and Transitional Justice Research

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The paper discusses how current methodological debates on the potentials of Comparative Area Studies intersect with current trends in transitional justice research. As the field of transitional justice studies is approximating a status of maturation, academic enterprises tend to focus on empirical as well as theoretical generalization. The challenge of comparative transitional justice research consists less in weighing national impacts of policies than in taking into account a more historicized conception of causality, inclined to complex long-term processes as well as global interdependencies. From the perspective of Comparative Area Studies, the case of transitional justice studies testifies to the need of combing local, national, transnational, trans-local as well as global foci of analysis.

Keywords: Area Studies; Comparative Area Studies; Transitional Justice; Comparison; History of Science

Introduction

Discerning trends in academic fields is a difficult undertaking, as some paradigms come into fashion and disappear quickly, while others last. One such trend is the field of Transitional Justice Studies that emerged in the late twentieth century. The invented term (or signifier) "Transitional Justice" refers to a set of judicial and non-judicial instruments of dealing with past human rights violations and acts of mass violence. The concept of Transitional Justice is deeply associated with the political changes of the 1980s and 1990s when the demand for both punishment and truth led to the implementation of truth commissions and other mechanisms of restorative justice. Since then, the rapid proliferation of transitional justice mechanisms with ever-increasing degrees of professionalism provided the nurturing environment for an academic enterprise that required expertise from diverse disciplines. The flourishing field of Transitional Justice Studies now attracts scholars from diverse countries and influences public debates all over the world. Competitive dynamics in transitional justice research, as described below, lead to an accelerated search for unsolved puzzles, new cases, and innovative theories. Current synthesizing efforts are often (not always) connected to quantitative approaches that aim at

measuring the impact and/or effectiveness of transitional justice. In general, macro perspectives on transitional justice processes are closely related to comparative approaches.

It is precisely at this moment in history that the field of Transitional Justice Research intersects with the methodological vogue of Comparative Area Studies. In recent years, the "classical" controversy between Area Studies and disciplinary social science (Pye) lost momentum as many researchers became aware of the global interconnectedness of social phenomena. It seems appropriate to presume, though, that real-world changes as well as certain discursive attitudes have led to a growing methodological concern related to the analysis of complex causal interactions both within and across cases. Accordingly, there has been renewed debate on case selection techniques (Seawright and Gerring; Liebermann; Mahoney) and small-N comparative research designs based on (or even transcending) most similar /most different systems (Przeworski and Teune; Berg-Schlosser and De Meur; Sartori). Within methodological debates, the idea of fuzzy set/ Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) has attracted considerable interest (Ragin, *Fuzyy-Set*). Seen from the angle of area studies, however, the debate on Comparative Area Studies (Basedau and Köllner "Oil") seems to be most promising, as it comprises intra-regional comparisons, inter-regional comparisons, cross-regional comparisons as well as thick case studies.

This paper deals with the evolution of two interdisciplinary academic fields that share a growing concern about the potentials and pitfalls of comparative methods. These fields differ in many respects. While the term "Area Studies" is closely associated with institutional contexts and the geography of science, Transitional Justice Research is held together by a common topic. Although current methodological debates on comparative approaches in both fields hinge on somewhat different questions, they reveal much about the opportunities and boundaries of comparative research. How to avoid oversimplification when comparing cases? Or, seen from a different angle, how to produce a case study that is both thick and comparable? How to select cases for comparative analysis? How to navigate between Scylla and Charybdis—that is, between the logic of simplifying probabilistic analysis and the logic of historiographic particularity, uniqueness, and singularity? By comparing key methodological concerns visible in both fields, the paper shows what Transitional Justice Studies can learn from Comparative Area Studies and vice versa.

From Area Studies to Comparative Area Studies

Certainly since the institutionalization of post-WWII Area Studies in the United States, academia has been divided over the meaning and significance of Area Studies and its more recent transformations (Szanton). The term Area Studies entered the vocabulary to describe multidisciplinary research programs whose essential task is to produce systematic knowledge about "other" regions of the world. This knowledge refers to a wide range of subject matters, including language, culture, religion, political systems, geology, history, taxation, media landscapes, gender relations, and so on. The understanding of social, political, and historical contexts requires both language skills and significant real-life experience in the regions at stake. However, area experts usually know cultural contexts of a handful of countries, with their expertise heavily relying on their disciplinary training (humanities, linguistics, social sciences).

Yet what exactly does region (or area) mean? As many critics have pointed out, the demarcation of specific areas (e.g. Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, East

Asia, Europe, Russia) is always linked to ideological conceptions of the world. Wallerstein et al. (94) turned their attention to the evolution of the scientific field that was "divided into a specific set of relatively standard disciplines in a process that went on between the late eighteenth century and 1945". Within this disciplinary division of labour, anthropology was established to deal with "the savage other", while development economics, sociology of development, comparative politics, and area studies were thought to deal with modernization and the "take-off into self-sustained growth" (Rostow) in a postcolonial world. The areas of cold-war Area Studies were arbitrary constructs, emanating from the epistemological history of colonization and imperialism. As Appadurai has noted:

> "These apparent stabilities are themselves largely artefacts of the specific trait-based idea of 'culture' areas, a recent Western cartography of large civilizational landmasses associated with different relationships to 'Europe' (itself a complex historical and cultural emergent); and a Cold War-based geography of fear and competition in which the study of world languages and regions in the United States was legislatively configured for security purposes in a reified map of geographical regions" (Appadurai 7).

Currently, however, there is a trend to move beyond traditional Cold-War area studies by questioning the spatial boundaries associated with world regions, and by introducing innovative methods. The focus on both profound knowledge of local contexts and systematic analysis of global issues, usually based on comparative approaches, continues to be the essence of what distinguishes area studies from disciplinary science.

Comparison is at the heart of social research and means that researchers essentially search for similarities/differences when contrasting patterns of social life within or across cases, within space and across time. Ever since the pioneers of social research started thinking about essential elements and techniques of social science (observation, experimentation, classification, explanation/generalization), there has been a vivid debate on comparative methods, particularly on the units, extent, and scale of comparative analysis. While the macro comparisons and conceptual contributions of Marx, Weber, and Parsons have been a matter of some theoretical debate (Vallier), other authors have been engaged in discussions about small N/large N paradigms and the problem of adequately detecting causal inference. More recently, various attempts have been made to overcome the micro/macro and quantitative/qualitative divide. Ragin and Rubinson have noted:

> "Comparative research can bridge the divide between qualitative, case-oriented research and quantitative, variable-oriented research. Like case-oriented methods, comparative methods maintain the integrity of cases; like variable-oriented methods, comparative methods examine patterns of relationships among variables. Comparative methods, then, may be used for both theory development and hypothesis testing". (15)

It is crucial to note that Ragin and Rubinson have one particular comparative method in mind; Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), based on Boolean algebra and so-called truth tables.[1] QCA, however, is just one method of doing comparative research. There are many other comparative research strategies, mostly linked to "academic tribes" (Becher and Trowler) and their respective languages and cultures of inquiry. After decades of nearly fruitless methodological struggle, more recent debates tend to overcome some of the deepest divisions within social sciences – between inductivism and deductivism,

and between thick description and correlational analysis.

The current move to mixed-method designs coincides with the rising popularity of Comparative Area Studies. Both trends overlap in their approaches to social reality whose sheer complexity demands a multifaceted analytical approach. It is crucial to note that "Area Studies and Comparative Area Studies do not constitute ends in themselves. They must serve a purpose" (Basedau and Köllner, "Oil" 112). As Basedau and Köllner describe, Area Studies and Comparative Area Studies serve an important function by providing data and descriptions (based on in-depth knowledge of local realities) as well as context-sensitive explanations and social theories. As such, they have come to the forefront of innovative social research. Comparative Area Studies can avoid oversimplifying causal chains and ignoring both history and context. As Ahram (84) stated, the emphasis on induction "maintains the integrity of region-specific knowledge about the multiple layers and multiple iterations of impacts that generate the concrete forms of social changes observed in the world today" (ibid.).

The innovative character of Comparative Area Studies may depend on whether they compare social phenomena within, between, or across areas (Basedau and Köllner, "Oil"; Mehler and Hoffmann). While some research designs may still be closely linked to traditional area studies, others contribute to a research agenda that proposes an alternative to Eurocentric and Americanized social science. Comparative studies across regions (including those of the north) are best suited to deal with phenomena perceived as global concerns. Moreover, cross-regional studies strengthen the dialogical benefits of bringing "southern" theory into northern academic worlds (Connell; Comaroff and Comaroff).

Transitional Justice Research and the Search for Scientific Innovations

Following the historical stages of international practice (Teitel, "Justice Genealogy"), the scholarship examining the moral foundations, institutional settings, and political impacts of transitional justice evolved through successive stages. The evolution of the burgeoning field of Transitional Justice Studies resembles a classical product life cycle curve that is divided into four stages. According to the product life cycle model, presented originally by Raymond Vernon, competitive pressures are low during the formative stage. From the late 1940s until the mid-1990s, the body of both empirical studies and normative contributions was growing slowly but continuously. That was the time when the term "transitional justice" was not even in use[2], and debates mainly gravitated around psychological needs and normative claims (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich; Arendt, *Eichmann*; Adorno, *Interventions*, *Critical Models*; Améry; Levy). During the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington), the question of how to deal with past atrocities was treated as a key problem of political transition. While human rights movements fought for both the revelation of truth and judicial prosecutions of those responsible for the crimes, transitional elites (whether involved in the crimes of the former regime or not) were mostly afraid of a return to dictatorship or internal war. In their view, the main task was "settling a past account without upsetting a present transition" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 28). Among the recommendations made by Huntington in his "guidelines for democratizers" was one to deal with the "torturer problem": "the least unsatisfactory course may well be: do not prosecute, do not punish, do not forgive, and, above all, do not forget" (Huntington 231). Many transitional elites, though, resorted to a pragmatic truth-but-no-trials-policy. The invention and rapid proliferation of truth commissions (Hayner) attracted growing scholarly interest in different parts of the world. In the mid-1990s, the ambitious

project of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as well as ongoing debates on accountability and historical clarification in Latin America made "transitional justice" a topic of major interest for social scientists, lawyers and psychologists. These debates set the scene for the subsequent stage of growth, particularly with the publication of diverse now classical contributions to the idea of transitional justice. The years around the turn of the millennium witnessed a significant growth in contributions to normative issues (e.g. Crocke; Elste; Minow; Nino; Weschler). In another vein, fundamental questions about variation in time and across space framed early comparative debates (e.g. Hayner; Kritz; Barahona de Brito, González Enríquez and Aguilar).

International media coverage, public debates within political spheres, as well as a growing number of cultural representations of mass violence created a nurturing environment for academic research. In the growth stage of Transitional Justice Research, the academic output began to grow exponentially, more and more scholars entered the academic market, and powerful nodes within global expert networks emerged. Although major conceptual issues remained unresolved and open to continued debate, there were diverse efforts for getting a process of canonization underway. Since the late 1990s, an ever-increasing number of conferences and edited volumes produced a vast body of arguments that each member of the "TJ community" should know. In collecting, composing, and editing publications, it was paradoxically the members of that same "TJ community" who decided who was to be included in the canon of Transitional Justice Research and who was not. In another vein, perhaps the most important contribution to the field has been in the form of a myriad of case studies, covering well-known cases such as South Africa, Chile, and Argentina, as well as a large number of less-known, deviant, or even neglected cases. With the veritable explosion of publications on Transitional Justice, two general trends have been accelerated. First, the trend towards concentration has further fostered powerful nodes within the global expert network (such as the International Center for Transitional Justice, and the International Journal of Transitional Justice, see Arthur; Subotić). At the same time, more and more academic centers and networks have entered the competition for international visibility. Key institutions include the Transitional Justice Institute (University of Ulster), the African Transitional Justice Network, Oxford Transitional Justice Research, and the Essex Transitional Justice Network. This refers to the second general trend that is the trend towards hierarchized (Anglo-American) internationalization.

Currently, the field is entering a stage of maturity, with the academic market presumably approaching saturation. The overwhelming number of publications has made it extremely difficult to oversee potentially relevant findings. The Transitional Justice Bibliography, provided by Andrew G. Reiter and his Transitional Justice Data Base Project, contains 2,497 entries which represent a selection of relevant literature. As the academic market is booming, there is increasing "brand" competition, and marginal competitors face serious obstacles in getting their voice heard at national as well as international levels.

This situation requires research strategies whose key components are empirical generalization, theoretical refinement, or the discovery of new domains. The latter usually involves either comprehensive case studies or comparisons between two or more cases, undertaken with the aim of providing new insights into the social dynamics of dealing with the past. These case-oriented strategies represent holistic approaches to complex realities, and tend to shed light on historical particularities. In using qualitative methods of social research (whether explorative or not), they contribute to a multifaceted un-

derstanding of transitional justice processes.[3] The strategy of theoretical refinement (that often emanates from empirical research) focuses on providing new conceptual insights into the dilemmas as well as dynamics of transitional justice. More recent contributions to this line of inquiry underline that "the field remains tremendously undertheorized" (de Greiff 32). Whether there is a lack of theory or not remains open to debate, but it should be noted that "approaches to conceptualise the phenomenon can be manifold and highly diverse, and can at times be in tension with each other" (Buckley-Zistel et al. 4). The main problem, though, might rather consist of a "thin consensus" (see de Greiff 32) on the characteristic features of transitional justice. The third strategy, empirical generalization, is generally associated with research methods in Comparative Politics (Backer; Kim and Sikkink). This body of research is based on variables rather than cases, and deals with the extent to which independent variables influence the dependent variable. In contrast to qualitative case studies, this approach promotes a broader understanding of transitional justice processes that transcends the boundaries of time and space. This vein of inquiry, however, leads to new (and even dissonant) answers to a basic question: what is the value of comparison?

How to Select Cases for Comparative Transitional Justice Studies?

David Backer has promoted the utility of cross-national comparative analysis, combining longitudinal large-N studies with qualitative small-N studies. A preferable research strategy, according to Backer, "is a panel survey that captures relevant information on the same set of respondents at multiple points in time (55). For higher levels of aggregation, the requisite source is time-series data on various indicators of interest, capturing snapshots both before and after the implementation of relevant transitional justice measures". It is important to note that the ultimate goal of the research strategy proposed by Backer is to identify the factors which affect the selection of transitional justice mechanisms and to detect their "macrolevel outcomes" (Backer 51) as well as "microlevel effects" (ibid.). On the other hand, Backer refers to a set of "hurdles" (24) in undertaking comparative research. First, cases tend to be too different to establish common variable-based categories. Second, the "information asymmetry" (Backer 58) with regard to well-known and less documented cases contributes to the reproduction of distorted global memories of transitional justice processes. Third, the real impact of transitional justice processes "can be difficult to ascertain or quantify, because it may be highly collinear with other factors, contingent on precise constellations of circumstances, modified by numerous intervening variables, and subject to complex interaction effects" (Backer 59). There is, of course, more than one way out of this dilemma. The way proposed by Backer consists in devoting particular effort "to establishing clear causal links among variables that are amenable to analysis" (Backer 60). In general, Backer opts for applying quantitative methods "to more accurately assess differences across countries in outcomes such as patterns of governance and the evolution of attitudes" (Backer 63). Another solution to this methodological dilemma would be to abandon the search for an authoritative global assessment of past and recent impacts of transitional justice mechanisms. Instead, theory building based on comparative analysis should move back from the top of the pyramid to its bottom, and reconsider the basic question "what is a case of transitional justice?" There is a main challenge of case selection in comparative transitional justice research. Consider, first, that many comparative research projects remain connected to the scholarly tradition of what Beck and Sznaider have named "methodological

nationalism". Apparently, the larger N gets, the lower is the probability of not using national societies or national states as the unit of comparative analysis. Some of the most thorough comparative studies on transitional justice (Backer; Olsen, Payne and Reiter, *Comparing Process*; *Justice Balance*; Kim and Sikkink; Payne and Sikkink) testify to this trend. Although these authors are highly aware of both de-territorialized social processes and transnational political spaces (Keck and Sikkink), their comparative work is often inclined to national units of research. The glocalized character of world affairs, however, would require a multiperspectival lens through which to view entangled processes of coming to terms with mass violence. As Beck and Sznaider (398) noted, a "single phenomenon […] can, perhaps even must, be analysed both locally and nationally and transnationally and trans-locally and globally". To mention but one of many examples, current politics of memory in Spain are so intrinsically linked to transnational political spaces that the most important unit of analysis should transcend national borders (Capdepón; Elsemann; Golob). At the other end of the spectrum, there are many cases where local forces are isolated from (or even diametrically opposed to) national politics.[4]

In general, transitional justice research is concerned with the development of "interactional fields" (Abott 124) that are embedded in and constituted through time and space. These interactional fields can vary greatly in space, shape, and inner structure. Social practices of dealing with the past have contributed to the widening of social places in the shrinking world of global interdependencies. Social exchange and interaction implies changing spatial relationships between interactional fields, thus creating an ever-shifting mélange of overlapping norms and practices. Research practices adapted to this multifaceted scenario would apply case selection strategies open to local, national, transnational, trans-local as well as global cases.

To complicate things even further, cases do not only transcend national boundaries, but also constitute "fuzzy realities with autonomously defined complex properties" (Abott 144) that constantly interact with their environment. This complex understanding has two major implications for comparative research. First, it should be underlined that a "given event has many immediate antecedents, each of which has many immediate antecedents, and conversely a given event has many consequents, each of which has many consequents" (ibid.). This "too-many-variables" problem, in turn, leads to a cross-cultural global historiographic approach focusing on the "network character of historical causality" (ibid.). The second implication of understanding cases as fuzzy realities is to alternatively set the limits of cases. Instead of equating cases with countries, comparative transitional justice research could focus on social groups (e.g. perpetrators, victims, judges), events (e.g. ceremonial events such as the release of truth reports or public sentences), institutions (e.g. International Criminal Court, truth commissions), or networks (transnational advocacy networks, intergovernmental networks).

Conclusion

This article has presented two intersecting lines of argument, dealing with the evolution of scholarly debates over time. The first line of argument claims that Comparative Area Studies are best suited for providing thick descriptions as well as context-sensitive explanations of complex social phenomena in the world today. The second line of argument refers to shifting and interdependent centers of gravity of transitional justice research. As described above, these lines have met at the beginning of the twenty-first century when transitional justice research entered a stage of maturity and social research, in general,

became more aware of global interdependencies. We may draw two lessons from this twofold description of scholarly debates. (1) From the perspective of transitional justice research, the debate on Comparative Area Studies reminds us of the challenge of combining profound area knowledge with progress in generic knowledge on macro-level patterns of social organization. The context-sensitivity of Area Studies implies a thorough understanding of local languages, histories, cultural representations, and symbolic worlds. This is especially important because transitional justice constitutes a collective response to mass violence and its devastating effects. In a broader sense, transitional justice refers to the obstacles of mourning in complex and often violent post-conflict situations. As such, transitional justice studies require both close observation and hermeneutic approaches to understand the meanings related to specific constellations of religious, political, cultural, economic, and gendered power. This leads to another aspect of comparison, which is the geography of transitional justice. Further attention needs to be paid to reconsidering the spatial registers traditionally associated with comparative social research. There have been various attempts at questioning the national focus of research (Hinton; Sriram and Ross), and a myriad of case studies has been published since the mid-1990s. However, comparative efforts often remain unsystematic and embryonic, even if they aim at generating generic theories. One of the main challenges of Comparative Area Studies (and this also applies to transitional justice research) is to generate "the kind of middle-range theory that is context-sensitive but yet manages to capture important causal effects" (Basedau and Köllner, "Oil" 14). (2) From the perspective of Comparative Area Studies, the field of transitional justice serves as a paradigmatic example of the limitations of comparative research. The idea and methodological principles of CAS are best suited for analyzing social phenomena with clear lines of demarcation. A recent article on presidential strategies in building legislative coalitions (Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power) is but one of many examples of fruitful cross-regional research. There are other examples of rigorous research designs, based on the rationale of hypothesis testing, that aim at providing explanations of causal relations by putting even less clearly demarcated subjects into a wider historical context. Consider, for example, the QCA study presented by Basedau and Richter ("Oil") that seeks to clarify the nexus between specific conditions of oil production and the outburst of civil war. The case of transitional justice research, however, is somewhat different from these research questions. Because transitional justice is such a diverse phenomenon, the possible effects and consequents are virtually endless. As mentioned above, transitional justice practices respond to the experience of trauma and collective suffering, and therefore address unconscious articulations. As such, they are deeply associated with trans-generational social processes linked to cultural trauma and collective memory. In general, there is a lack of scholarly consensus on the scope and structure of transitional justice policies, and even greater uncertainties arise from the lack of consensus on components of causal factors as well as outcomes. Because the elements and effects of transitional justice are not easy to operationalize, researchers face overwhelming obstacles in generating generic concepts and theories.

To sum up, the challenge of comparative transitional justice research consists less in measuring the national impacts of more than 800 transitional justice mechanisms implemented in more than 150 countries (Olsen, Payne and Reiter, *Justice in Balance*) than in accepting a more historicized conception of causality, inclined to complex long-term processes as well as global interdependencies. As Barahona

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de Brito, González-Enríquez, and Aguilar ("Introduction" 17) underlined: "transitional accountability policies are not born in a vacuum. They are historically grounded and thus peculiar to each country". Many authors have in fact demonstrated that "national context" is an important variable in transitional justice processes. Nonetheless, transitional justice practices unfold gradually in a series of local, national, and global events, with each variation flowing from one area to the other. Comparative transitional justice research should, therefore, insert the close observation of local histories into both, large-N analysis and the analysis of the evolution of global interactional fields.

Notes

[1] This method, typically applied to a moderate number of cases, creates a bridge between classical small-N comparisons (focusing on complex patterns of causation) and large-N comparisons (based on abstract multiple regression analysis). This method has been widely perceived within the subfield of Comparative Politics, for instance, De Meur and Berg-Schlosser developed and applied a QCA method to analyse similarities and dissimilarities of political systems.

[2] Ruti Teitel claims to have coined the term in her 1991 application to the United States Institute of Peace ("Working Paper", supranote 1)

[3] The list of relevant works is extensive. I have attempted to avoid canonization and its exclusionary effects wherever possible.

[4] Examples are Peru (Burt; Theidon), Guatemala (Oettler), and Mexico. Sylvia Karl has recently finished her PhD thesis on the Mexican dirty war and the social movement of relatives of the disappeared in Guerrero, where Lucio Cabañas led a small guerilla movement in the 1970s.

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Competing Visions of Area Studies in the Interwar Period: The School of Oriental Languages in Berlin

Larissa Schmid

Focusing on the Seminar for Oriental Languages in Berlin, the article explores competing visions on the role of area studies between two prominent Orientalists in the interwar period. It shows that tensions between blue-sky research, applied research and the provision of educational services were at the centre of this argument. In sketching the development of the academic community of Orientalists since Germany's imperial period, it will be argued that concepts of area studies continued to be linked to visions of nationalist and expansionist foreign policies, even after 1918.

Keywords: Area Studies; Oriental Studies; Islamic Studies; Interwar Period

Competing Visions of Area Studies in the Interwar Period: The School of Oriental Languages in Berlin

Introduction

This article addresses the controversial development of the School for Oriental Languages (SOL) in Berlin between its founding in 1887 and the end of the Weimar Republic. The school was founded in order to provide training in "Oriental languages" for diplomats in the imperial service. Although the institution was funded by the Foreign Office and the Prussian Ministry of Culture, it had initially not been founded for the education of colonial officers. But once it began operating, the Imperial Colonial Office turned it into a training school for colonial personnel. Providing vocational training in languages and "colonial Realien," the SOL attracted scholars who called for a reorientation in Orientalist scholarship, aiming to study the contemporary Middle East instead of adhering to philological methods. Those Orientalists interested in the "contemporary Middle East" and in the "study of Islam" profited from a close cooperation with the imperial government. The extensive use of SOL graduates for intelligence and military service during WWI highlights the close connections of German area studies with imperial interests. With the

end of the German Empire, a public debate on the future of the SOL emerged that critically addressed the institution's self-conception.

In focusing on two leading protagonists in this context, the Orientalists Georg Kampffmeyer[1] and Carl Heinrich Becker,[2] the paper picks up on a debate around the question of how closely area studies should be related to political, military and economic interests after the First World War.[3] Although the debate between the two scholars entailed a strong local and personal dimension, its arguments were exemplary for a larger debate on the role of area studies in consequence of Germany's defeat in the First World War. By illustrating those arguments, the article contributes to the under researched history of German area studies before 1933 (Brahm and Meissner 263). It shows how political affiliations and personal convictions influenced Becker's and Kampffmeyer's conceptions of area studies. It will be argued that both concepts were intertwined with visions of nationalist and expansionist foreign policies, representing intellectual currents popular in the interwar period.

Oriental Studies during Germany's Imperial Period

Members of the academic community of Orientalists were actively involved in shaping the landscape of Oriental studies during Germany's imperial period. Developed out of a subsidiary discipline of theology into a linguistic science by the early 19th century, Orientalist scholarship had for over a century—in accordance with the Humboldtian ideal—produced Orientalists who were working on "ancient and long dead cultures" (Marchand 350). Those scholars at German universities studied languages of ancient civilization through the analysis of classical texts. Hardly any of them had travelled to the respective region in order to study contemporary developments or to collect material. Until the end of the 19th century material sources collected by missionaries and travellers remained the only available material for extensive studies in the field (Habermas 136).

Towards the end of the 19th century some scholars started to discard this intellectual tradition and began studying contemporary developments in the Middle East. Among them was Martin Hartmann[4] who had studied Semitic studies at the University of Leipzig with Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, a scholar famous for his Arabic philological training. Hartmann travelled to the Ottoman Empire in 1874 after finishing his doctorate and took up a career as a professional translator (dragoman)[5] in Constantinople. Two years later he took up a post at the German embassy in Beirut where he spent another eleven years. During this time, Hartmann studied colloquial Arabic and travelled extensively in the region. His outstanding command of Arabic brought him back to Berlin in 1887 where he took up the position as lecturer for Arabic at the newly founded SOL (Kramer 284).

After Germany's entry into the era of "Weltpolitik," there was a growing demand for people who were able to negotiate or translate in business negotiations and political affairs. Reportedly, this need for experts had been brought forward most prominently in 1883 by Chancellor Bismarck who had noticed the lack of an adequate Chinese translator in official business negotiations and had subsequently suggested educating officials in the Foreign Service in Asiatic languages and cultures (Marchand 350; Burchardt 64; Morgenroth 7).

Funded by the Foreign Office and the Prussian Ministry of Culture, the SOL became the leading institution in the training of colonial personnel.

> The aim of instruction was not wide-ranging *Bildung*, but unabashedly practical training; it cultivated students who aimed chiefly at business careers, careers as colonial officers, postal workers, and overseas military per-

> sonnel, not at all the same sorts who frequented the philosophical faculty. (Marchand 351)

The curriculum was initially limited to Asiatic languages (Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Swahili), but was gradually extended to include African languages of the German colonies. In addition to language courses, the SOL offered courses in "colonial Realien," which included courses on tropical medicine, customs, law, and the geography of German colonies. According to Burchardt, the SOL

> was not created in response to the needs of colonial policy. Once it was there, however, it was used by the relevant departments in the training of young officials and officers in the colonies. (Burchardt 103)[6]

In 1908 the SOL lost its status as the only institution providing training for colonial personnel, because the Secretary for Colonial Affairs and head of the Imperial Colonial Office Bernhard Dernburg founded the Colonial Institute in Hamburg (HCI) together with local merchants. Administered by the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin, the merchants of Hamburg asserted their influence through a businessmen's advisory board (Marchand 353). In terms of structure and organisation, the HCI was similar to the SOL (Ruppenthal, *Kolonialismus* 173), although the curricula focused more strongly on research and did not stick to teaching languages and "colonial Realien" only.

The Emergence of Islamic Studies in Berlin and Hamburg

Both institutions, the SOL and the HCI, were until 1918 the leading institutions for the training of colonial personnel and key institutions for promoting the study of the contemporary Middle East and Islam. At the SOL, Martin Hartmann taught the first course of Islamic studies beginning in 1910 and in Hamburg, Carl Heinrich Becker promoted the study of Islam.[7] Both were "proponents of a new kind of cultural history, one that played down philology in favour of history, sociology and political ideas" (Marchand 353; Mangold 256-73). Becker was appointed as the first director of the Colonial Institute and held the chair of "History and Culture of the Orient" until 1913.

> The ideal, and only candidate, for its position in Islamic History and Civilization was Carl Heinrich Becker, assistant professor at the University of Heidelberg, who had taught Germany's first lecture course on modern Islam in 1906-1907. In negotiations over the position, Becker insisted that his purview be the cultural, not the linguistic, world of Islam and that languages at the HKI would be taught without the technical apparatus demanded in comparative Semitic studies. This time saved could be spent on *Realien*: institutions, customs, art, and geography. (Marchand 353)

Scholars like Becker and Hartmann offered their expertise readily for imperial research projects. Both participated (Becker in 1908, Hartmann in 1911) in a research project by the imperial government, which undertook a survey on the spread of Islam in German colonies in Africa. Both studies were never published, but reflected a shift in methodology of Oriental studies, which based analysis on empirical material collected by scholars themselves (Habermas 137). The cooperation between scholars and the imperial government on the one hand provided researchers with empirical sources, and on the other hand brought recognition for the relevance of "studying Islam." Scholars who turned to the study of Islam were outsiders in the field of Oriental studies, but they realized early enough that "Islam was marketable during the colonial era" (Wokoeck 181).

Kampffmeyer, a student and colleague of Hartmann at the SOL, was another major figure in pushing the study of Islam and contemporary Middle Eastern studies. His role in the establishment of Moroccan studies at the SOL is a perfect example of

how scholarship and political ambitions went hand in hand. It shows that German Orientalist scholarship was as much attracted to political power as French or British Orientalist scholarship, as stressed by Edward Said (19). However, German Orientalism and its hegemonic sites need to be investigated in a national and imperial framework rather than in a colonial one (Jenkins, "German Orientalism" 99). Following a political agenda known as "pénétration pacifique," Germany strove to gain political influence in the Middle East by using cultural institutions as a forerunner for establishing economic and political ties in the region.

In the wake of the first Morocco Crisis (1905/1906), in which the German Empire aimed at gaining influence in Morocco, Kampffmeyer received funding from the Prussian government for research on Moroccan culture and language. This eventually resulted in the establishment of Moroccan studies at the SOL and the foundation of the German-Morocco Library (Haarmann 63). Kampffmeyer turned himself into an expert on Moroccan affairs acting as consultant for the Foreign Office (Pritsch 5).

Although Islamic studies as a new discipline was institutionalized only after the First World War, already before and during the First World War the study of Islam and the contemporary Middle East gained new ground. The launch of new academic journals and the founding of new professional associations in Hamburg and Berlin mirrored this development. In 1910 Becker founded the journal *Der Islam*, which published on philological as well as sociological or cultural topics (Rohde 128, Marchand 362). It represented a shift away from a longstanding Orientalist institution, the "German Oriental Society" (*Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*). In 1912, Hartmann founded the association "German Association for Islamic Studies" (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde*) in Berlin, which edited the journal *Die Welt des Islams* (WI) with a focus on contemporary issues. The political agenda of the association was programmatically expressed by Hartmann's colleague Kampffmeyer in the first edition of WI in 1913:

> If I am not mistaken, we in Germany are faced with a partial transformation of our oriental scholarship. No longer do we sit by lonely little lamps, so far away from the real world in our little libraries; we too have stepped outside and feel the life pulsing through our people as a whole. […] We want the doing of useful things no longer to be an embarrassment. In their pursuit, we can also demonstrate thoroughness (Marchand 333).

The material presented here shows that the emergence of Islamic studies as a new field within Oriental studies was closely tied to imperial ambitions of the German Empire. Scholars like Hartmann and Kampffmeyer at the SOL and Becker at the HCI profited from a close cooperation with governmental institutions. They readily provided expertise which in return gained them recognition and funding for the study of the contemporary Orient and Islam. Thus, the First World War caused a fragmentation of the academic community of Orientalists in Germany along competing views concerning the profile of the disciplinary field.

First World War: Conflicting Views in the Academic Community

During the First World War the alliance between Germany and the Ottoman Empire gave the field of Oriental studies some unprecedented public attention. Expertise on the Middle East was in high demand and war requirements completely changed the work of scholars at the SOL, but also at other universities.[8]

For instance, lecturers at the SOL were responsible for censoring letters written in non-European languages by prisoners of war (POWs). Among them was Kampffmeyer, who was responsible for censoring letters of Morrocan POWs and served as

an advisor and translator in the so-called "Halfmoon Camp," which was located close to Berlin and held most of the North African prisoners of war (Höpp 58-59). Those activities were coordinated by the newly founded Intelligence Bureau for the East in Berlin, which managed the propaganda efforts in and outside Germany with the help of Orientalists like Kampffmeyer, Eugen Mittwoch and many others.[9] It was responsible for the propaganda towards the so-called "Orient" as part of a wider "revolution programme" which aimed at stirring up insurrections in territories of the Entente powers (Jenkins, "Fritz Fischer's 'Programme for Revolution'" 398). Part of this programme run by the Foreign Office and the Political Section of the Reserve Command Staff was the so-called "Jihad campaign," which aimed at stirring an insurrection of Muslim peoples in territories controlled by the wartime enemies through a call to "Jihad" made by the Ottoman Sultan in November 1914. Orientalists were active in secret missions abroad, wrote enthusiastic propaganda brochures for the Intelligence Bureau for the East or even publicly promoted the German-Ottoman alliance:

> By engaging in intelligence-gathering activities, scholars tried to prove their utility for the national cause, but in general Orientalists were of much less importance than any German or Turkish diplomat, military officer or political leader in the political campaign towards the "Orient." (Marchand 448)

Becker gave numerous lectures on Islam during the war and portrayed the long-standing relationship between Germany and the Ottoman Empire in publications like *Deutschland und der Islam* in 1915 (Marchand 449). In his controversy with the Dutch Orientalist Snouck Hurgronje, Becker positioned himself as an intellectual promoter of German interests in the Middle East, calling for a foreign cultural policy based on cultural cooperation (Van Ess 31). Reflecting his rising influence, in 1916 Becker was appointed as an advisor to the Prussian Cultural Ministry for the reform of area studies (Müller 166).

With Becker's new position in politics, conflicts in the academic community of Orientalists intensified. While Orientalists based at the SOL like Hartmann, Kampffmeyer, and Mittwoch worked intensively "on the ground" (i.e. with local propagandists at the Intelligence Bureau for the East), Becker became a promoter of "Islamkunde" on an intellectual and political level. In this period Becker and Kampffmeyer articulated differing opinions concerning the future development of the disciplinary field. After the First World War they became opponents in a debate on area studies. The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde* (DGI), which initially encompassed all German-speaking Orientalists working on contemporary Islam, was the stage for this controversy. The association focussed on activities like setting up a library and organizing lectures in Berlin, which aimed at providing expertise (economic, political affairs) for politicians engaged in the region. Funded by the Imperial Colonial Office, the DGI developed from an academic association into a platform providing foreign expertise for economic and political purposes only (Mangold 279).

After the death of Hartmann in 1918, Becker became the head of the DGI. When Kampffmeyer took over in 1920, their rivalling positions took shape. Becker aimed at fusing the DGI with the Berlin section of the German Oriental Society in order to strengthen the scientific character of the association. This move reflected his wider ambitions of reforming Oriental studies, as it had existed during the war, into a methodologically sound academic discipline and not merely a provider of policy expertise. Kampffmeyer opposed those plans wherever possible and argued that Oriental studies could only profit from contact with the "living Orientals," and that scholars needed to provide expertise in the region without any restrictions. In the

interwar period, which will be the focus of the following section, those opposing views on the role of area studies were carved out in the debate over the reform of the SOL.

Reforming Area Studies in the Interwar Period

During the interwar years the social and political climate in Germany was marked by economic crisis. This was in part an effect of the Versailles Treaty, in which Germany was held responsible for the outbreak of the First World War and was obligated to pay financial reparations. For the SOL the loss of German colonies in the wake of the war had a far-reaching effect, as its main purpose, i.e. the education of colonial staff, became obsolete. The subject "colonial Realien" was no longer taught at the SOL and the demand for African languages was in decline, too. Instead, the SOL during the interwar period turned to teaching mainly European languages and was discredited by some critics as a publicly financed language school.[10]

At the same time, the Foreign Office (FO) became a federal body and was restructured internally. The Ministry altered the formation of its dragomans and ended its institutional cooperation with the SOL. It created a separate cultural department and changed its cultural policy as well as its instruments. Due to the defeat in WWI, German cultural policy was no longer seen merely as a forerunner for economic and political relations, but as a distinct political field of agitation. It aimed at maintaining cultural ties (art, music) with foreign cultural institutions and at supporting German citizens or schools abroad (Düwell 48; Ruppenthal, "Kolonialabteilung"). At the same time, the FO pursued a revisionist colonial policy in international relations backed by a lobby of revisionist colonialist circles, which aimed at keeping alive a "colonial spirit" in society (Pogge von Strandmann 286). Those circles aimed at once again turning the SOL into an institute for colonial studies.

The reform of the SOL became the focus of public attention. The debate centered on the question of how closely area studies should be related to political, military and economic interests. In his position as personal consultant for university affairs in the Prussian Ministry for Culture (1916-1921), as State-Secretary in the Prussian Ministry for Culture (1921), and as Prussian Minister of Culture (1925-1930), Becker fought for a large-scale educational and university reform. He aimed at closing down philologically oriented Sanskrit chairs and at integrating culturally oriented "area studies" at universities (Müller 353). Initially formulated in 1917, Becker's conception of area studies was broad in its outlook and meant to educate every citizen in foreign affairs ("Denkschrift"). Conceptualized as a newly established discipline for regular students and citizens, he suggested separating area studies from the practical training of civil servants. He thus aimed at increasing the university's independence from governmental affairs (514-16). Becker suggested decentralizing the provision of foreign expertise by turning specific university chairs into specialized institutions spread all over the country, for instance, a center for Latin American studies in Cologne (Brahm and Meissner 264).

His ambitions to reform the SOL were rooted in his conviction that area studies should be centered in the university. Contemporary affairs—be it with regard to Oriental studies or to German society—were his central concern. While Becker was successful in the establishment of the first chairs of sociology and the foundation of the *German Academy for Politics* in Berlin in 1920, his reform plans for the SOL failed. His plan was to integrate parts of the seminar into the university. The idea was initially backed by the Foreign Office and by colleagues at the SOL, but was dismissed in autumn 1923 for financial reasons. Kampffmeyer and Palme opened the con-

troversy over the future of the SOL in a series of publications, which often entailed personal assaults on university professors in general. Becker did not answer those assaults in public, but personal papers and letters show how offended Becker felt by Kampffmeyer's articulations (Müller 364), which will be elaborated on in the following section.

Competing Visions of Area Studies

The two rival concepts of area studies were brought forward in the form of newspaper articles and in small publications. Becker's position was backed in a publication by Otto Franke, a former colleague of Becker in Hamburg and leading professor for Sinology in Berlin.[11] Franke's conception of area studies supported Becker's plans to install the subject at the university. Supporters of this view—mostly established professors—aimed at expanding on the historical-philological method to include contemporary issues in teaching and research at universities (Franke, *Das Seminar* 5-24).

Kampffmeyer together with his colleague Anton Palme, both still based at the SOL, opposed Becker's plans. Both came up with the concept of "studying nations" (*Nationenwissenschaft*), which was to be taught at a future "Academy for Foreign Affairs" (*Auslandshochschule*), envisaged as an extension of the SOL. They argued that the study of foreign languages was crucial for making contemporary developments in politics, economics and societies abroad accessible for experts. In those conceptions a close cooperation with native speaking colleagues at the SOL or with Arab students in Berlin was deemed essential for gaining knowledge on non-European societies. Kampffmeyer's well-known personal engagement with the Muslim community in Berlin therefore served a specific purpose, and it went far beyond professional conventions in the field (Höpp, *Orientalist* 46). For instance, in 1926 Kampffmeyer founded an association (*Hilfsbund für arabische Studierende*), which supported Arab students in Berlin financially and politically (46-47). An institutional expansion of the SOL would not only have secured Kampffmeyer's and Palme's positions, but even might have turned their status of lecturers into professors, which was another demand disguised behind a conceptual debate.

In his publications Kampffmeyer created a distorted binary opposition between the universities allegedly sticking exclusively to the historical-philological method and the SOL which he presented as the only institution able to provide expertise on the contemporary MENA region (Kampffmeyer, "Die Reform").

A comparison of the competing visions for area studies promoted by Becker and Kampffmeyer as reflected in the debate on the reform of the SOL shows that these differences of opinion went beyond personal rivalries. They represented competing strategies for the future development of the disciplinary field and also implied political differences.

Becker's intention to strengthen the university and to turn area studies into a field rooted in the university was based on his democratic convictions, which envisioned area studies to offer knowledge without any claims of utility. Becker did not deny that experts should offer expertise for a national cause, but generally speaking, he did not envision area studies as a field of applied knowledge mainly serving political ends. Embedded in his larger educational reform plans, Becker was convinced that raising levels of knowledge on foreign countries in German society was a national goal in and of itself, which would eventually help to prevent another catastrophe as the First World War.

In contrast, Kampffmeyer and Palme unabashedly argued that expert knowledge on foreign countries should serve political and economic ends, thus distancing themselves from academic knowledge production at universities. Kampffmeyer's agitations against Becker had a strong

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anti-intellectual tone. His conception of *Nationenwissenschaften* was rooted in a conservative political agenda and centered on the category of "race" (*Volk*). Kampffmeyer thus represents an intellectual strand which gained more and more importance in the interwar period. His engagement on behalf of Arab students in Berlin apparently was apparently motivated by nationalist considerations, rather than constituting only an act of solidarity. Supporting Arab claims for national self-determination equally followed a German nationalist agenda designed to weaken the influence of France and Britain in the MENA region and to showcase Germany's ostensibly benevolent engagement with the Muslim world.

Kampffmeyer's and Palme's plans for turning the SOL into a distinct institution eventually came close to being realized in 1924, when the Prussian Landtag voted in favor of transforming the SOL into a so-called *Auslandshochschule*. But the plan was put on hold for political reasons and only realized in 1935 under the Nazi regime as part of its efforts to incorporate area studies into its power structures. Becker did not witness this transformation, as he died in 1933. However, the correspondence between Mittwoch and the Prussian Ministry indicates that behind the scenes, Becker was nevertheless pulling strings in order to promote a more scientifically based curriculum at the SOL. His powerful position in the Ministry allowed him to install Franz Babinger as a lecturer for contemporary Islamic studies at the SOL (1921-1924) and later as a professor at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin (1924-1934). Although Becker failed to reform the SOL in the interwar period, he succeeded in establishing a chair for Islamic studies in 1929 for Babinger in Berlin, making him one of the "founding fathers" of Islamic studies in Germany (Wokoeck 165-66).

Conclusion

This article illustrated how closely the emergence of the field of Islamic studies during the first decades of the 20th century was entangled with the German imperial project. As an academic community of Orientalists working on the contemporary Middle East coalesced in Germany during this period, competing positions regarding the profile of area studies evolved. Conflicts between Becker and Kampffmeyer emerged already during the First World War, when Becker's promotion into the Prussian Ministry of Culture turned him into an influential figure regarding the reform of area studies. Besides holding this position, his ambitions to provide expertise on Islam in liberal, academic circles contrasted with Kampffmeyer's engagement "on the ground" working in the service-oriented field as translator. Kampffmeyer's support for Arab students in Berlin in the 1920's was viewed critically by his colleagues, as such an engagement contradicted professional norms of the time and added to an image of Kampffmeyer as a querulous person. His conception of area studies centered on language as the key for understanding non-European cultures. In his anti-intellectual attacks on university professors, represented by Becker, Kampffmeyer moved towards a völkisch-nationalist argumentation, which became more influential at German universities after 1924/25. Kampffmeyer's approach followed a nationalist conception of science as providing academic services for the fatherland.

Although Becker's agenda of reforming Oriental studies as area studies with a sound methodology and clearly defined aims followed a nationalist line of thought as well, in contrast to Kampffmeyer's it was rooted in a democratic belief, according to which educating the masses in foreign affairs would eventually help to prevent a further traumatic experience like the First World War.

Notes

[1] (1864-1936): 1883 study of Philosophy, Theology, Semitic and Roman languages at the universities of Bern, Lausanne, Florence, Berlin; 1892 dissertation in Leipzig with A. Socin; 1900 habilitation in Marburg, 1906 lecturer at SOL for Moroccan, Egyptian dialect.

[2] (1876-1933): 1895 study of Semitic studies in Lausanne, Heidelberg, Berlin; 1900-1902 international travels to the Middle East (Egypt, Syria, Palestine); 1902 habilitation in Heidelberg; 1908-1913 First Director of the Colonial Institute Chair of History and Culture of the Orient; 1913-1916 Professor in Bonn; 1916 -1921 personal consultant for university affairs in the Prussian Ministry for Culture; 1921 State-Secretary in the Prussian Ministry for Culture; 1925-1930 Minister of Culture in Prussia; 1930 Chair for Islamic studies in Berlin.

[3] The disciplinary forerunner of area studies were in Germany the field of "Auslandswissenschaften" and "Auslandskunde" (Brahm and Meissner).

[4] Hartmann, Martin (1851-1918): 1875 dissertation in Leipzig with H. L. Fleischer; 1876-1887 Dragoman in Beirut; 1887 Lecturer at SOL for colloquial Arabic; 1912 Co-founder of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde (DGI).

[5] A dragoman can be understood as a professional translator in the service of the government specialized in Arabic, Turkish and Persian languages.

[6] The seminar contributed to colonial rule in German colonies by providing training for hundreds of colonial officers until 1914. Among its most prominent graduates were the governors of East Africa, Gustav Adolf Graf von Götzen (1901-1906) and Heinrich Schnee (1912-1919), as well as Julius Graf von Zech von Neuhofen who governed the colony of Togo from 1905-1910 (Marchand 351).

[7] During the interwar period the term "gegenwartsbezogene Islamkunde" was used synonymously with "Islamwissenschaft" and sporadically as "Islamistik" (Wokoeck 165).

[8] The curriculum of the SOL was affected by war requirements, too. The teaching of some languages among them Moroccan-Arabic was given up because of little demand or because language instructors had been recruited for military service (Stoecker 44). Instead, war-relevant languages (Russian, Polish, Turkish) for military or medical personnel were offered for free (Sachau III). Especially Turkish classes saw a huge increase in student's enrolment in the winter term 1915/1916, which corresponded with a wider enthusiasm for Turkish studies resulting in the foundation of numerous cultural associations or university chairs for Oriental studies (Marchand 45; Hanisch 58).

[9] The activities of the Intelligence Bureau were concentrated on the production of propagandist material to be distributed at the camps, at the Western front and in the region itself. Leaflets in Arabic were produced to convince French colonial soldiers to cross over to the German side and the journal *al-Jihad* was published in Arabic for Muslim POWs. Initially, the German strategy had envisioned to send Muslim POWs to fight along with Ottoman fellow soldiers at the Mesopotamian front, but this idea was given up in 1916 and propaganda efforts concentrated on publishing activities. The Intelligence Bureau for the East was headed by Eugen Mittwoch until 1918, who became in 1920 the director of the SOL.

[10] Teaching was restricted until 1929 to the subjects technology, missionary work and the study of newspapers. No diploma in African languages was given after 1918 and numbers of students in African languages remained relatively low during the Weimar Republic. Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Turkish were continuously taught, but student numbers never reached the pre-war peak again (Morgenroth 17). European languages (English, Spanish, French, and Russian) were in great demand.

[11] Otto Franke held the first chair for "Sprachen und Geschichten Ostasiens" in 1910 in Hamburg. Trained at SOL in Berlin, Franke had served as the translator for the *Deutsche Kaiserliche Gesandtschaft* in Peking and in consulates in China. See further Franke, *Erinnerungen*.

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Individuals, Institutions and Discourses: Knowledge and Power in Russia's Iranian Studies of the Late Imperial, Soviet and Post-Soviet Periods

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The scholarship on late Imperial Russia's Oriental studies is divided by a disagreement over the applicability of Edward Said's *Orientalism* to the Russian case. Moreover, in a broader sense, since the mid 1990s, Western scholarship has not been unanimous on the applicability of the underlying Foucauldian notions to late Imperial and Soviet Russia. While presenting a systematic study of Soviet and post-Soviet scholarship (mostly unfamiliar to Western readership), this article offers an assessment of the institutional and individual practices adopted within Russia's Oriental studies from the late nineteenth century to the present. The article aims to provide an analysis that goes far beyond the Saidian restrictive East-West dichotomy and his concept of two-vector relations between knowledge and state power. It offers a new reading, based on the deconstruction of the interplay of the manifold multi-vector power/knowledge relations that is clearly identifiable in Russia's long twentieth-century Iranian studies.[1]

Keywords: Power / Knowledge; Iranian Studies; Soviet Oriental Studies; Russo-Iranian Relations

Russia and the Foucauldian

In today's social sciences and humanities, few scholars, if any, would deny that there is a strong correlation between scholarly knowledge and the social context within which this knowledge is produced. However, in Europe, the scholarly contemplation of this topic dates back to the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century—the period of the genesis of various social theories and the beginning of scholarly attempts at conceptualizing the nation-state. Naturally, while these developments shared a number of common features that were the same across all the Western countries in which they occurred, there were also marked differences and characteristics that were specific for each individual country. In this regard, Russia, which had always been distinct from both Europe and Asia, is a case in point (Hirsch 25-30, 44; Gerasimov and Kusber 3-23, 229-72; Vucinich xiv, 5-14, 30-34; Slezkine 388-90; Krementsov 13-16).

The issue of distinctions in possible modes of social development directly influencing all other spheres within different nation states was also considered by Russia's intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. A good illustration of this can be found in the words of Bogdan Kistiakovskii, a renowned social philosopher and legal scholar of Ukranian orgin in late Imperial Russia, who had stated as early as 1909:

> There are no same unified ideas of personal freedom, of legal system,

> of constitutional state, identical for all peoples and times, just as there is no capitalism or any other economic or social order identical for all countries. All legal ideas acquire unique coloration and their own tinge in the consciousness of each separate people. (Author's translation)

However, against the backdrop of various kinds of national specificities, there were common general tendencies and factors, namely at the social, economic and political levels, in all Western societies which were considered by many historians to be major influences on science and scholarly knowledge and their development (Graham 1; Tolz 6; Hirsch 25-30; Beer 3-8; Slezkine 388-90; Krementsov 13-16; Kotkin 14, 21-23). These general tendencies and factors were clearly apparent in Russia throughout her long twentieth century.[2]

Generally, twentieth-century European thought witnessed major international debates on the philosophy and social history of scientific and scholarly knowledge. Since the beginning of the century, humanities scholars studying the history and present of science, and scientists themselves, particularly in those countries which were in the vanguard of the rapid development of science, had been paying further attention to questions such as the social effects of this process on societies, the role that science and scholarly knowledge play for a particular country or a society, and for mankind in general. In the second half of the twentieth century, the issue of the relationship between scientific and scholarly inquiry and their social context and, especially, the role of state power in this relationship became the subject of the scrutiny of social philosophers and historians. They also pondered the question of the place of scientists and scholars in the complex and entangled grid of multi-branch reciprocal influence between individuals and various forms of knowledge, social institutions and state power.[3]

Among them, Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) work is of particular interest. His ideas on power relations within the power/knowledge nexus, the notions of *épistème* and discourse deeply influencing the process of scientific/scholarly knowledge production and perception of various truths by society, the role of intellectuals and the phenomenon of resistance are the most pertinent to the subject of this study.[4] Foucault's work is characterized by a high level of inherent inconsistency and a lack of theoretical totality and cohesion, but especially by its iconoclastic and challenging nature. However, what goes without saying is that

> his influence is clear in a great deal of post-structuralist, post-modernist, feminist, post-Marxist and post-colonial theorizing. The impact of his work has also been felt across a wide range of disciplinary fields, from sociology and anthropology to English studies and history (Mills 1).

Foucault's concepts of power, knowledge and discourse caused heated debates in the 1960s and 1970s and had a considerable impact on the further development of critical thinking at the end of the twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Among Foucault's main concepts, his insistence on the absence of an absolute and pure truth is most noteworthy. Taking an approach to the study of the production of knowledge that he conceives of as archaeology,[5] he argued that the process of striving for ultimate truths through conventional scholarly activities throughout the course of human history had always been subject to the influence of a vast range of factors, which led him to conclude that all truths are conceived or, to be more precise, constructed rather than being absolute and ultimate. Therefore, according to Foucault, there are no objective, constant and independent truths within the system of human knowledge, especially in the human and social sciences.

This inherent feature of human knowledge is reckoned by Foucault as the consequence of the constant interplay of power relations comprising the various components and factors of both those on the highest level of structures organizing human societies (for instance, state power, social and cultural structures, academic and other communities) and those of less complexity (relations between individuals, their personal viewpoints, endeavors, passions). All these shaped or indeed constructed knowledge, which therefore cannot be considered truly impartial, constant and objective (Mills 33-42, 48-52).

Hence, another crucial Foucauldian notion, namely 'governmentality' that deals with "the technologies of domination of others and those of the self" (Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" 19). It demonstrates the tight interconnections and relationships between power exercised towards individuals by institutions or a state and that which is exercised by individuals towards themselves. These processes imply interaction between aspects of politics and human ethics. There are conduct regulation rules and techniques in our society that are designed and applied from the top, but, simultaneously, there are also rules and techniques exercised by individuals in order to control and arrange their own conduct, and they are tightly entangled with each other (Simons 36-41; Mills 42-52; Kotkin 21-23).

Notwithstanding the seeming universality of these theoretical notions, it must be noted that their applicability to the analysis of late Imperial and Soviet Russia has been questioned since Foucault arrived at his conclusions through the study of the late European juridical monarchies and liberal states, a grouping to which Russia arguably did not belong.[6] The very applicability of the Foucauldian to Russia, in general, was questioned by such scholars as Laura Engelstein in the 1990s. Moreover, somewhat overstating the Russian case's "otherness," Engelstein comes to conclusions which might also partially reflect a residual Cold War mentality. She emphasizes that Foucault stresses the underlying difference between the so-called Old Regimes, where the state is the sole source of power, and liberal societies in which power regulates activities, based on scientific/scholarly knowledge, and is realized by means of disciplinary practices permeating society (Engelstein 224). She therefore concludes on the Russian case that

> … [a]lthough Western culture penetrated the empire's official and civic elites, and the model of Western institutions to a large extent shaped the contours of state and social organization, the regime of "power/knowledge" never came into its own in the Russian context (225).

It appears that Engelstein's reasoning takes into consideration only the general organizational modes of modern Western society, as discussed by Foucault, and operates with very narrow definitions of structures when exploring the applicability of the power/knowledge nexus to Russia's late imperial and Soviet societies. Her focus is on the outward appearance and the concrete shape of structures. However, I would argue that what are really at stake here are not structures, but principles. Indeed, although Russia had considerable distinctions from its Western contemporaries in terms of social organization, the principles according to which power relations operated and permeated the whole society were quite similar (Beer 205-09; Kotkin 21-23).

Indeed, more recently scholars have argued convincingly in favor of the Foucauldian approach to the study of Russian history emphasizing the universality of Foucault's thoughts on power relations.[7] Drawing on the insights provided by these scholars, the theoretical framework of this article will be informed by the above-mentioned Foucauldian notions. While surveying the main common features and distinctions of the process of

Orientological knowledge production during the above-mentioned historical periods, I will trace the presence of Foucauldian power relations in the context of Russian society of the time. As a subaltern outcome, certain parallels of the same interplay of power/knowledge relations will be drawn within present-day Russia's Iranology. Thus, I will demonstrate the validity of Foucault's relevant concepts for the student of Russian history.

From Persian Studies to Iranology

The involvement of Russia's Orientologists[8] in the intense manifold interactions between the Russian Empire and Persia during the period from the late nineteenth century to 1917 predominantly took place within the main four professional domains, namely academic scholarship, the military, diplomatic service and the Orthodox Church's missionary activities. Given the nature and the historical developments of this interaction, the extent of the involvement of each domain in question was different, as was their impact on Russo-Persian relations of the period (Vigasin and Khokhlov 7-8). However, there were also well-discernible commonalities in the organizational set-up and practices of these domains as well as in the roles of individuals involved in the activities of these domains, namely academic scholars and practical experts of Persian studies. In addition, despite the great systemic shift, which took place in 1917 and led to sequential significant changes in all spheres of the life of Russian society, there were strong continuities on the structural level of early Soviet Oriental studies and also in discourses, which were widespread among the Orientologists of a new generation.

The issue of the formation of Russia's Oriental studies after 1917 was initially dealt with in the works of Muriel Atkin, Nina Kuznetsova, Wayne S. Vucinich, Semen Agaev and Richard Frye. They all emphasized the mainly new, different from late Imperial, nature of early Soviet Oriental studies, particularly on the institutional level (Atkin; Kuznetsova and Kulagina; Vucinich; Agaev; Frye). For example, Atkin ascribed the establishment of Oriental studies in Central Asia to the Bolshevik regime (229). Later, the scholarship represented by Marshall, Schimmelpenninck, Tolz and Kemper argued in favor of the presence of strong organizational continuities throughout all the Soviet Oriental studies of the 1920s-30s. This has also been supported by the archival documents only recently brought into scholarly circulation (Volkov, "Persian Studies and the Military"). They shed light on the institutional activities of the War Ministry regarding the establishment of Oriental studies on the periphery of the Russian Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. For example, the successful initiative of Staff-Captain Ivan Iagello (1865-1942) aimed at the creation of the courses of Urdu, Arabic and Persian in Turkestan dates back as early as 1897. In 1908, the courses evolved into a full-scale Officers' School of Oriental Languages in Tashkent, where history, geography and Islamic law were also taught (*Oriental Studies and Foreign Policy*).

The publication of the works by Schimmelpenninck, Tolz and Kemper also resurrected the slightly outdated debate on the applicability of Edward Said's Orientalism concept to the Russian case, which had been initiated by Nathaniel Knight, Adeeb Khalid and Maria Todorova at the turn of this century (Knight, "Grigor'ev," "On Russian Orientalism;" Khalid; Todorova; Schimmelpenninck, "The Imperial Roots;" Andreeva; Bartol'd, "Istoria izucheniia Vostoka," "Vostok i russkaia"). Unfortunately, the above-mentioned debate failed to break through the bounds of the Saidian two-vector relations of "the complicity of knowledge with imperial power," whereas the scholarship of Tolz, Schimmelpenninck and Kemper succeeded in qualitatively transforming the debate into a

broader debate on Russian Orientalism, engaging with Foucault's genuine notions of the productive interplay of power/knowledge multi-vector relations between individuals, institutions, state and discourses (Tolz; Schimmelpenninck, *Russian Orientalism*; Kemper; Marshall; Volkov, "Persian Studies and the Military").

The study of the late Imperial period demonstrates that all four domains of Russia's Oriental studies were organisationally developed enough and remarkably self-reliant. At the same time, their organisational activities were deeply interconnected with each other and their institutional practices were much alike. This productive mutual interpenetration at the level of institutions and individuals which was inherent to all four domains is extremely illustrative of the presence of power/knowledge relations (Volkov, "Persian Studies and the Military" 932). Based on the character of Russia's presence in Persia during the late Imperial period, it appears that the above-mentioned state of affairs within the four-domain structure becomes particularly clear when studying the example of Persian studies. In the case of the diplomatic and military domains, this can be supported by the scholarly and professional activities of such individuals as Gamazov, Zinoviev, Minorsky and Tumanskii, Iagello, Smirnov, Snesarev, accordingly. The missionary domain is evidenced by the activities of the Russian Orthodox Orumie Mission and the Russian Orthodox ministers-Orientologists Ilminskii, Mashanov and Ostroumov. The forth (academic) domain of late Imperial Persian studies is represented by the scholars of world fame, such as Zhukovskii, Bartol'd, Zarudnyi and others.[9]

Considering the Soviet Oriental studies of the 1920s-1930s, it is possible to conclude that they kept the overall pre-revolution organizational structure, with the understandable exception of the missionary domain. The demise of this domain was predetermined by the militantly atheistic nature of the Bolshevik ideology and was stipulated by Article 15 of the *Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship*, according to which Soviet Russia repudiated all Russian Church property in Persia in 1921 and pledged not to undertake similar activities henceforward.[10] However, in actual fact, the once powerful presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Persia had ceased to exist by 1918 because of the hostilities in the West and North-West of Persia and the eventual devastation of the Orumie Mission by Turks and Kurds.[11]

Simultaneously, judging by the immensely high activity of the Soviet-Iranian trade relations during the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, the strong emphasis of Soviet foreign policy on the development of economic and trade ties with Iran, and the contribution of Soviet trade representations of the time to the accumulation of Orientological knowledge on Persia, the trade domain could have supplemented the remaining three domains of early Soviet Persian studies.[12] However, given the fact that the personnel of Soviet trade representations, as a rule, consisted mainly of experts, assigned from *Narkomindel*, *Razvedupr* and *INO OGPU*,[13] the trade activities with their organizations, personnel and practices cannot be marked out as an institutionally self-reliant domain of Oriental studies.[14] Therefore, during the early Soviet period, Persian studies, or Iranology, was predominantly represented by the academic, diplomatic and military domains.

Taking into account that "[i]n the early years of its existence, the Soviet regime perceived a need for people with area expertise to work in the government, party, and military in Asian regions of the country and to advance Soviet interests elsewhere in Asia" (Atkin 229), the emphasis of Orientological training radically changed. Stressing the crucial importance of the practical usefulness of Oriental studies to state needs, the Bolsheviks replaced the former emphasis on gathering linguistic, ethnographic and cultural information for

the study of Persia with enhanced political and, particularly, economic components. Though, similarly to the late Imperial period, academic Oriental training was shared by all domains, this time, it was the Military Academy of the Red Army of Workers and Peasants that played the leading role in the Oriental training of practical experts on Persia during the 1920s, contrary to the former leading role of Russia's Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs in this field.[15]

The study of the late imperial period also demonstrates that the eventual production of knowledge within Persian studies greatly benefited from the tight individual and organisational interrelationship between all four domains of Russia's Oriental studies. As is clear from the research, scholarly active diplomats and military officers used their professional postings for obtaining new area-study material and made immensely significant contributions to the activities of various Orientological societies, members of which they were. On the other hand, the main Russian scholars of Persian Studies played the underlying role in the Orientological training of officers and often carried out the narrowly specified assignments of their diplomatic and military colleagues during their scholarly missions to Persia.[16] The same interrelationship was inherited by the Persian studies of the early Soviet period. Konstantin Chaikin[17] taught Persian to Yakov Bliumkin at the Military Academy of the Red Army of Workers and Peasants, founded by the former Tsarist Lieutenant-General Andrey Snesarev.[18] In 1920, although simply for the sake of surviving, the former Tsarist Colonel Ivan Iagello, a specialist in Persian and Urdu and the founder of the Tashkent Officers' School of Oriental Languages, accepted Frunze's invitation to restore and to again take the lead of Oriental studies in Tashkent (Lunin 111-13).

Furthermore, during the 1920s and the early 1930s the scholars of the so-called new "practical" school of Persian studies were enthusiastically involved in both the activities of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and the academic and scholarly activities related to Persian studies. This period in the whole history of Russia's Oriental studies can rightfully be regarded as the most straightforward illustration of the amalgamation of scholarly knowledge and state power, hence, the supreme manifestation of Said's Orientalism.[19] In 1926, during one of the sessions of the Party Central Committee, Georgii Chicherin was accused of losing control over Persian affairs, and that even the general guidelines of the Soviet Eastern policy had been shaped by his employees, namely Pastukhov, Osetrov and Gurko-Kriazhin—the leading *Iranists* of the new generation.[20]

The study of the late Imperial period has also revealed the presence of an underlying discourse throughout all Persian studies. All four domains were rather united in the promotion of *Russkoe delo* ("The Russian Cause"), which also included the notion of the Russian civilizing mission in the Orient. The spirit of patriotism, boiled down to the promotion of imperial Russia's state interests and Russian culture in Persia, was generally inherent to the activities of all domains. Notwithstanding the fact that all this was taking place in the context of the intense rivalry with European powers, the conception of a civilizing mission was solidly based on Russia's sense of superiority towards Asians that was caused by their perceived belonging to the so-called European civilization. However, simultaneously, most late Imperial Russia's Orientologists strongly believed in the greater capability of Russian culture, in contrast to the West, to interact with the Orient because of Russia's geographical and cultural immediate proximity to the latter.[21] As was first emphasized by Knight, such discursive manifestations were particularly widespread within the academic domain of late Imperial Oriental

studies and were passed on to their disciples in diplomatic and military services ("Grigor'ev" 81; Tolz).

Discourses of a similar nature were also inherent to Oriental studies of Soviet Russia. The representatives of the new Orientological school continued to look down on Persia, this time because of the fact that Russia became the first society of the victorious socialist revolution in the whole world. Hence, the civilizing mission was replaced by the proliferation of socialist revolution.[22] The developments of 1919-1920 in Europe and the Orient, including the failed attempt to sovietize Persia, led to the conclusion that Persian and other eastern societies had not sufficiently developed and were not ready for an immediate revolution.[23] So, the above-mentioned discourse transformed into the belief in the necessity of a significantly more protracted process of cultivating Persians for social conversion. Both discourses predetermined that the agents of the Bolshevism Cause with relevant Orientological expertise and, hence, a better understanding of the oppressed Orientals, be trained in required quantities.[24] In addition to the Oriental section of the Military Academy, this goal was also pursued by the foundation of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow, which preferred to accept students from among the most deprived, illiterate Asians, with the aim of nurturing efficient experts and practically useful scholars.[25]

In actual fact, this motion was the industrialized development of what had initially been offered by Vasilii Grigorie'v long before—as early as the mid-nineteenth century (Knight, "Grigor'ev" 95-97)—and transferred to the Bolsheviks through Viktor Rozen's disciples, academicians of Oriental studies Vasilii Bartol'd and Sergei Ol'denburg, deeply involved with the early Soviet nationalities' policy (Tolz 3-4, 7-19).[26] So, the massive engagement of all three Orientological domains with native agents became one of the most characteristic features of the Soviet period that originally derived from late Imperial Russia. In support of further refutation of the universality of Said's Orientalism that was so advocated by Khalid, the above-mentioned interplay of power/knowledge relations proves that the Russian/Soviet case was devoid of any racist component whatsoever. It is also maintained by Vladimir Minorskii's private diaries, dated from the time he was Head of the Russo-Brito-Turko-Persian Quadripartite Commission for the demarcation of Persia's western border in 1913.[27] Furthermore, and most important, the above-depicted interplay supports the presence of one of the fundamental elements of Foucault's power/knowledge relations, namely their 'productivity' (Foucault, "Truth and Power" 113-14, 120; "Prison Talk" 52; Mills 33; Tolz 70; Volkov, "Persian Studies and the Military" 932).

Along with that, after 1917, the new political ideology predetermined the creation of a new discourse, which seriously affected the relationships between main components of the Foucauldian power grid—academic and expert knowledge, state, institutions and individuals. This implied the making of practical use of Oriental studies—the discourse which challenged the very right of physical existence for scholarship that was unable to yield immediate practical returns (Kemper 2-3; Rodionov 47, 51-52). The expert Persian scholarship of Pavlovich, Pastukhov, Osetrov and Gurko-Kriazhin not only crucially affected the activities of early Soviet diplomacy and the military towards Persia but also put aside the still-existing classic scholarship of Persian studies, which had been influencing Russia's foreign policy towards Persia since before 1917, albeit indirectly but rather successfully. However, this state of affairs in Persian studies lasted merely until the mid-1930s, by which time almost all the representatives of the "old school" and of revolutionary expertdom (practical Orientologists of the first wave) had either died from natural causes or

been dismissed from their posts and executed during Stalin's purges. By that time, the academic domain had been staffed with the graduates of newly established institutions and, in general, the interaction between the domains had significantly diminished (Tolz 6).[28]

'Governmentality' and Intellectuals

Given the hampered access to the archival documents of later periods in Russia, which has become even more restricted since 2000, the study of the mature Soviet period has had to confine itself to merely the analysis of published works. Another reason for this is the much deeper professional specialization of practical domains that has not allowed diplomats and military officers to have enough time for scholarly research since the 1930s, and the area-study information professionally produced by them has not been allowed into the academic domain, either. On top of that, the level of their academic Orientological training could not be compared to that of the pre-1917 period, and very few people would come into academia after their retirement from military or diplomatic service. Therefore, the study of the main scholarly works, published only within the academic domain after the 1930s, is quite representative of Soviet and post-Soviet Oriental studies as a whole.

After the understandable slack of 1940s-50s in the activities of Oriental studies, it is possible to discern a period from 1960 to the mid-1980s when Soviet Iranology turned into a monotonous uniform scholarship in full conformity with the Communist Party's ideology. In view of the above and given the self-censorship of that time, inculcated from the top, the works by Ivanov, Kuznetsova, Kulagina and Agaev were overwhelmed with relevant ideological underpinnings and are lacking in analysis (Kuznetsova and Kulagina; Agaev). For example, one of the central figures of the Soviet Iranology of the time, Mikhail Ivanov (1909-1986), focused on the Iranian "anti-feudal" movements of the nineteenth century and the Iranian revolution of 1905-1911, heavily drawing on Vladimir Ulianov-Lenin's writings (M. Ivanov, *Iranskaia revoliutsiia*; "Sozyv pervogo iranskogo;" *Antifeodal'nye*). During the 1950s to 1980s, he also occupied key administrative positions, including Head of the Leningrad Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Head of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations affiliated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the USSR.[29]

In 1970, Nina Kuznetsova and Liudmila Kulagina published a very detailed study *Iz istorii sovetskogo vostokovedeniia* ("Of the History of Soviet Oriental Studies") which, however, almost did not engage with archival materials and was based totally on Soviet secondary sources. Its emphasis on the development of Soviet Oriental studies, and Iranology therein, in strict accordance with the Party resolutions and the government decrees as well as on its "Marxist-Leninist foundations" (35) significantly reduces its historiographical value. However, due to its scrupulous, sometimes mechanical description of the events, this study still remains one of the main references regarding the organisational changes of Soviet Oriental studies. It therefore can be concluded that knowing the social and political conditions of the time in which they were written, the works of this period, nevertheless, are to be studied as scholarly valuable sources of factual historical material. For example, Ivanov's works extensively drew on archival materials, since the author's administrative positions, deeply embedded into Soviet science bureaucracy and party structures, granted him additional unrestricted access to the archives of the Soviet foreign affairs entities, hence securing more operational autonomy for him.

The developments in the political and social life of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s opened more archival documents even for the Soviet researchers with a lesser operational autonomy and allowed for

new approaches in their study (Mamedova, "O nekotorykh" 40-41). For Soviet Iranology, this moment was marked by the publication in 1988 of collected archival materials on the modern history of Iran. The collection, called *Novaia istoriia Irana* ("Modern History of Iran"), was edited by Ninel' Belova and other renowned Soviet *Iranists*. It contained a new portion of previously intact documents which had been spotted in the Soviet archives, including the one of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which became slightly more open during Gorbachev's proclaimed policy of *glasnost*. As if pushing forward the official authorities, the editors remarked that "the collection of documents that would represent the whole period of the modern history of Iran had been published neither in the USSR nor out of its borders. However, the need in this kind of edition [was] immensely great" (3). The edition still bore the imprint of ideological self-censorship, although to a considerably lesser extent compared with previous works.

However, it was the work of Moisei Persits which was truly groundbreaking; this work was based on the declassified archives mainly of the Comintern and saw the publication of two series in the 1990s. The author gave a really symbolic name to his book: *Zastenchivaia interventsiia: O sovetskom vtorzhenii v Iran i Bukharu v 1920-1921 godu* ("The Timid Intervention: The Soviet Invasion of Iran and Bukhara, 1920-1921"). The word *zastenchivaia (*"timid"*)* symbolically bridged the reticent and uncertain nature of the Bolsheviks' attempt to sovietize Persia in 1917-1921 and the state's efforts, aimed at suppressing the matter within Soviet historiography.[30] As the current hampered research into this and other similar issues in Russian archives illustrates, present-day Russia's authorities resumed the Soviet discursive practices of the politics of history in the early 2000s.[31]

In this sense, the works by Vladimir Genis became a logical and timely continuation of Persits' initiative, based on the access to the documents, opened in the 1990s, shedding light on the early Soviet policy towards Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Genis' books, in detail and for the first time in Russian historiography, highlighted such topics as: the role of Bolsheviks in the establishment of the Gilan Socialist Republic and the winding-up of this abortive enterprise; the destiny of the first Soviet plenipotentiary to Persia and Afghanistan, Nikolai Bravin, and the Soviet politics of history around him, still supported by the Russian state establishment; and, finally, the destiny of the Imperial Russian diplomat-Orientologist Pavel Vvedenskii, whose expertise as a scholar was used by the Bolsheviks in a classical discursive mode *à la Foucault* while he was imprisoned. On balance, Genis' scholarship can be distinguished by the scrupulous saturation of previously restricted archival materials and is immensely valuable for researchers in terms of guiding them towards new, unconventional for present-day Russia's historiography, areas of research (Genis, *Krasnaia Persiia*; *Nevernye slugi rezhima*; *Vitse-Konsul Vvedenskii*).[32]

It is also worth noting that the 1990s' relative openness of Russian archives was hardly asked-for by Russia's mainstream historians of Iran, who are mostly based in or around the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies of Russia's Academy of Sciences. They concentrate their scholarship on traditional, mainly Soviet, perceptions of Russian-Iranian relations, while trying to avoid topics leading to the negative interpretation of Russian/Soviet impact on Iran. Their analysis of historical and contemporary developments mainly moves in full conformity with Russia's foreign policy priorities. It could be supported by such works as *Granitsa Rossii s Iranom: Istoriia formirovaniia* ("Russia's Border with Iran: The History of Shaping") by Liudmila Kulagina and

Elena Dunaeva; "Operatsiia 'Sochustvie' i reaktsiia na nee presidenta Ahmadinezhada cherez 70 let" ("Operation 'Sympathy' and the President Ahmadinejad's Reaction towards It after 70 Years") by Vladimir Sazhin; and "Russo-Iranian Political Relations in the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century" by Elena Dunaeva.

The first one became a factual response to the Iranian old public discourse, questioning the legitimacy of the Golestan and Turkmenchay peace treaties, and, on top of that, it appeared at the time when Russia came across serious difficulties during the negotiations with Iran on the delimitation of the Caspian Sea (Dunaeva, "Formirovanie granitsy" 63, 75, 77-88; "Kaspiiskaia diplomatiia Moskvy" 66-77). It is noteworthy that the work begins with a thesis reflecting the widespread discourse within Russian historiography that the territorial gains of Russia in Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia took place as a result of the 'voluntary entry' of those areas to the Russian Empire (Kulagina and Dunaeva 5).

The second one was published shortly after Iran's former President had tried to initiate a discourse on Iran's integral right to claim reparations for the country's occupation by the allied forces during WWII. The author put forward an argument on the legally substantiated legitimacy of the Soviet occupation of Iran, contrary to those of Great Britain and the United States, and also for the profound historical benefits of this action for Iran (Sazhin, "Operatsiia 'Sochuvstvie'" 145-51).

The author then follows with a rather dubious formula holding that the occupation of Iran "secured its sovereignty and independence as well as its decent place in the post-war world" (146).

The third one can be regarded as an archetypal sample of Russia's Foreign Affairs' propaganda on contemporary Russian-Iranian relations, albeit rather sophisticated and enshrined into a scholarly form. Having been written in the context of the recent, most intense stage of the age-old triple interplay (the West-Iran-Russia), the article was targeted at an English-language scholarly readership and championed the thesis of the mostly bilateral productive nature of Russo-Iranian relations during the last dozen years and their future great potential, both of which, I would argue, have simply never existed (Dunaeva, "Russo-Iranian Political Relations" 468-69).[33] It is also noteworthy that the article draws solely on the sources of the state establishment of the two countries and avoids engaging with third-party views. Except for one book and three journalist articles in the very beginning as the proof of "many publications about Russo-Iranian relations in the West," the article does not contain a single reference to independent scholarly or media sources (443, 447-48, 452, 455). Not engaging with independent sources on Russian-Iranian relations at all, and not bothering herself with too many references, in general, the author is content with emphatically referring to her counterparts on the Iranian side—certified "spokesmen" on Russia—Mehdi Sanaie and Jahangir Karami, as well as to the representatives of Russia's mainstream Iranology. All this makes the language of the article declarative and reminiscent of a foreign policy communiqué which can also be explained by relying almost totally on the official documents of Iranian state organizations and, particularly, of Russia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Russia's President Office, the fact catching the eye even without a brief language discourse analysis (444, 447-49, 451-52, 454-57, 459-61, 465-68).

Notwithstanding the fact that some Russian *Iranists* themselves acknowledge that the development of present-day Russia's Iranology has become a hostage of the triangle-shaped relations between the USA, Russia and Iran (Mamedova, "O nekotorykh" 43), such a state of affairs can-

not be regarded as a support to the Saidian rather limited model of two-vector relations between knowledge and state power. By no means I am arguing that the above-mentioned works were merely produced according to a straightforward state order, though for a significant number, that cannot be ruled out, either. Rather, I would maintain that those works became the organic brainchild of that interplay of power/knowledge relations which, in this particular case, is an interaction of institutional and public discourses, knowledge, state power and 'governmentality' (Simons 82; Mills 33, 58; Krementsov 4-5, 29-30). In this sense, Persits, Genis and suchlike scholars,[34] on the contrary, represent the examples of the Foucauldian intellectual, breaking discursive institutional practices and overcoming 'governmentality' (Simons 36-41; Kotkin 21-23).[35]

Another manifestation of this interplay is the close interaction of various branches of Russia's Iranology (the Academy of Sciences, universities, scholarly societies, etc.) with Iran's political state structures. It is common knowledge that Russian scientific and scholarly institutions have been seriously underfunded by the state since the 1990s. As Loren Graham states, "science never proceeds in a political and economic vacuum" (27), and, in the case of Russian Iranology, this vacuum in the Foucauldian power grid has been filled since the second half of the 1990s by the result of a thoughtful approach of the Iranian Embassy in Moscow and its sections in other cities. This is also pointed out in Mamedova's insightful article, in actual fact, unintentionally demonstrating that the Iranian government has virtually taken Russia's Iranology on its payroll ("O nekotorykh" 41-42).

In addition to sponsoring the equipping of the so-called "Iranian closets" in Russian universities and institutes, enabling students and scholars to watch the broadcasting of Iranian official channels, and providing a year abroad for Russian students, as well as sponsoring Russian scholars' trips to Iran, the Iranian Embassy has been actively participating in the scholarly activities of Russian Iranology institutions, including tangible assistance in organizing thematic conferences and publishing special editions on Iran and Iranian studies with the participation of Iranian "authorized" scholars. For instance, the Russian-language works with the titles that speak for themselves, *The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*; *The Islamic Revolution: Past, Present and Future*; *Iranology in Russia and Iranists*; *Iran: Islam and Power* and *The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Islamic Republic of Iran,* have been published only by virtue of Iran's Embassy (42). It is also illustrative that some of the works have been co-edited by the head of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Abuzar Ebrahimi Torkaman (Mamedova and Torkaman; Mamedova, *Dvadtsat' piat' let Islamskoi*; Mamedova and Sanai), and Iran's current Ambassador to Russia, Mehdi Sanaei (an Iranian politician well known in relevant circles, an IRGC veteran of the Iran-Iraq war and a former cultural attaché of Iran's Embassy in Moscow (1999-2003), he was a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee and head of the *IRAS*, the Institute of Iran-Eurasian Studies,the former Iranian Center for Russia, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies).[36] It goes without saying that such a status quo inevitably tells upon the chosen subject area and the content of published articles and books on Iran which, thereafter, results in the acute scarcity of comprehensive scholarly analysis in present-day Russia's Iranology.

Seriously lacking in critical approach, the chapters of these edited collections put forward the overall positivist thesis regarding the events of the modern and contemporary history in both countries and their

interaction. In so doing, some of them implicitly (Fedorova 60-71; Polishuk 118-25; Kulagina and Akhmedov 116-27; Mamedova, "O nekotorykh" 40-41)—others explicitly (Dunaeva, "Iran i Tsentral'naia Aziia" 126-33; "Politicheskoe zaveshanie" 78-81; Kulagina 43-52; Sazhin, "Dialog tsivilizatsii" 62-65)[37]—underpin the idea of inherent historical and present-day unity of the Russia-Iran nexus against the third-party forces in the region and worldwide. The character of the used sources is also noteworthy. Solely drawing on either Iranian or Russian primary and secondary sources, the above-mentioned works completely ignore sources originated in third countries. Even in the most recent edited collection, *Iran: Istoriia i sovremennost'* ("Iran: History and Modernity"), which is immensely interesting in terms of the diversity of topics discussed, the works authored by scholars possessing full command of English in the book section "The Present" do not engage with the relevant literature or primary sources from other countries (Kulagina and Mamedova).

With regard to the Russian case of the long twentieth century, the issue of politicizing historiography is not new. Its resumption during the course of the hectic pursuit of the 'expedient' national identity in the 2000s was studied in detail in Hans Bagger's timely work that, having been published in 2007, in fact predicted the further development of "Putin's humanities," particularly within the walls of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Bagger). Simultaneously, it, certainly should be noted that in any country, Iranian studies as a scholarly domain does not consist only of the experts of Iranian contemporary history and politics. In germano- and russophone countries this domain is much more organizationally united and homogeneous at the institutional level in comparison with their anglophone analogues (Fragner and Matthee). A leading Russian *Iranist*-linguist, Professor Vladimir Ivanov, denotes the domain of Iranian studies in a broad sense as

> a complex of humanities which study the mode of life, history, literature (folklore), material and spiritual culture, music and singing, written artefacts (manuscripts, rock inscriptions), religion and beliefs, socio-political situation, economy and languages of the iranophone peoples (V. Ivanov 35)

and in a narrow sense, as "the study of the above-mentioned disciplines specifically in application to Iran" (35). While the Foucauldian concept of power relations applies to all representatives of the whole domain defined above, the power/knowledge nexus is more straightforward and can potentially be highlighted in more precise colors in the case of those working on the modern and contemporary issues of Iranian politics, economy and culture. This is particularly justified under the current conditions of inaccessibility to archival documents related to contemporary institutional activities. Hence the emphasis of the given study of the post-Soviet Iranology has been on this particular group within the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences as embedded into present-day Russia's power/knowledge nexus with greater intensity.

Conclusion

Thus, when analyzing Russia's Iranian studies scholarship during late Imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet periods, it appears that there has been a common and mainly underlying discourse throughout all three periods. Regardless of whether it was conscious or unconscious, Russian *Iranists* have been seeing their scholarship in a tight concurrence with their own country's interests. The representation of such interests is conventionally usurped by the political institutions of the ruling power—the status quo that eventually results in the in-

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strumental use of knowledge in the interests of current state power, as is also supported by Alexander Morrison (629).

In further rebuttal of Engelstein's thesis, it is also feasible to conclude that "operational autonomy" in its Western form was not that developed in Russia, especially in the Soviet Union since the end of the 1920s, but as such it existed nonetheless with the disciplinary mechanisms of self-control and self-regulation being of a different kind (A. Vucinich, *Empire of Knowledge* 123; Krementsov 31-36; Beer 207; Kotkin 23). Moreover, the power/knowledge nexus, which definitely existed in the Russian case, had its specificities and its unique sophistication within late Imperial Russia's Oriental studies and even during the Soviet period. Soviet scientists and scholars would act not only under the pressure of various discursive and ideological stipulations, imposed by the party and creatively developed by some of their ideologically driven colleagues, but also under the vigilant control of special institutional structures (from the party committees–*partkomy*–in workplaces to the monitoring by political security entities–VCheKa-KGB).[38] However, in spite of all this, scientists and scholars also managed to play their own game.

> While it was considered important to protect oneself as much as possible against ideological attack from philosophers or professional competitors, it was also recognized that party approval did not in fact depend ultimately on ideological factors, but rather on the ability of scientists to play politics… (Fortescue 18)

Notwithstanding the lack of totality and comprehensiveness of the analysis the post-Soviet period in terms of sources and groups studied in this article, it appears that during the period in question, along with the significant diversification of political forces on the scene, the interplay of power/knowledge relations became more entangled and intense.

Irrespective of the issue of the level of "individual operational autonomy," Foucault was particularly interested in power relations and how they influenced the development of knowledge. As it appears, these power relations and their productive impact can be equally found at work in late Imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet societies. The technicalities of the power/knowledge operation, embracing discourses, institutional practices, resistance, and the relationships between state power and the intellectual–all these elements, in other words, the components of the Foucauldian 'power relations grid' (Foucault, "Truth and Power" 113-14; Kotkin 21-23)–can easily be seen in the Russian case. However, what is most surprising in the present-day Russian case is that the Foucauldian methodological approach has not yet been employed or even studied in Russian social sciences and humanities as a theoretical tool. Though the above-mentioned refutes, in its essence, Engelstein's thesis on the non-applicability of the Foucauldian to Russia, it is nevertheless pertinent to quote her in a slightly supplemented form in the end, saying that, for certain, in the field of humanities, "Russia is a society that has yet to generate the luxury of a Michel Foucault to push it to consider the incitements of paradox" ("Combined Underdevelopment" 236).

Notes

[1] This research was supported by BRISMES, BIPS, CEELBAS and BASEES. The earlier version of this paper was presented at the ASMEA Sixth Annual Conference, Washington, DC, 21-23 November 2013.

[2] The author defines Russia's long twentieth century between Nicholas II ascension in 1894 and the annexation of the Crimea in 2014.

[3] In this context, the names of such prominent scholars (who this or that way touched upon these issues) as Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), Louis Althusser (1918-1990), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) are worth mentioning.

[4] See the works by Michel Foucault such as *The Order of Things*; *The Archæology of Knowledge*; "Prison Talk."

[5] In brief, it can be defined as analyzing scientific and scholarly notions and the process of their production in the social context of a particular historical period within a certain society.

[6] For the debates on the feasibility of application of Foucauldian ideas and notions to the Russian case see Beer 3-8, 16-26, 202-08; Kotkin 21-23; Engelstein.

[7] In the first instance, such scholars can be named among them as Nikolai Krementsov, Loren Graham, Alexander Vucinich, Vera Tolz, Michael Kemper, Daniel Beer, Peter Kneen, Nathaniel Knight, Stephen Kotkin, Jeffrey Roberg, Stephen Fortescue, Francine Hirsch, Ilya Gerasimov, Vadim Birstein, Yurii Slezkine and others.

[8] In order to avoid the unnecessary Saidian connotation and to preserve the neutral epistemological denotation of the term, I henceforth am using the noun Orientologist and the adjective Orientological throughout the piece, similarly to Tolz and Schimmelpenninck.

[9] The Archive of Orientologists (IVAN in St. Petersburg) (henceforth AV), f. 134 (Private archive of Minorskii); f. 115 (Private archive of Snesarev); The Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, f. 39 (Private archive of Smirnov); Russia's State Military Historical Archive (henceforth RGVIA), f. 409, op. 1, d. 172812, p/s 148-610 (Service Record of Tumaskii); The Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (henceforth AVPRI), f. *Central Asian Desk*, op. 485, d. 706, l. 1-3 (Argiropulo to Gartvig about Miller, 1902).

[10] The Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship, 1921, Article 15. <http://en.vionto.com/show/me/Russo-Persian+Treaty+of+Friendship+(1921)> (12 Mar. 2013).

[11] AVPRI, f. *Persian Desk* (1915), op. 486, d. 156, l. 7, 9 (Reports from Russian Consulates). Zarkeshev, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia* 68-123.

[12] Russia's State Archive of Socio-Political History (henceforth RGASPI), f. 85 "Secret Persia," d. 63 (Materials on Soviet trade with Persia); f. 532, d. 350, l. 11 (data on economic issues, collected by Trade Representations).

[13] The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs; Military Intelligence; the Foreign Section of the United State Political Directorate (political intelligence).

[14] The Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (henceforth AVPRF), f. 08 "The Secret Archive of NKID. Karakhan," op. 10, papka 33, d. 190, l. 5-6 (Karakhan's correspondence with Davtian).

[15] AV, f. 115, op. 2, d. 63, l. 1 (Snesarev's Report to the Oriental Section of the General Staff, 1923); d. 29, l. 1 (Pavlovich's letter to Snesarev, 1922). The State Archive of the Russian Federation (henceforth GARF), f. P-1335, op. 1, d. 5, l. 88, 90, 93ob., 95ob.; d. 6, l. 119, 142.

[16] AV, f. 17, op. 2, d.50; d. 34; d. 29; f. 17, op. 2, 64; op. 1, d. 168. See also Bartol'd, "Istoriia izucheniia Vostoka" 446; Marshall 24, 164-65, 168; Vigasin 128-29.

[17] Konstantin Ivanovich Chaikin (1889-1938), Zhukovskii's disciple, graduated from the St. Petersburg Faculty of Oriental studies in 1916. In the 1920s-1930s he worked in early Soviet various Orientological institutions as an academic. The then 'spokesmen' of Soviet Iranian studies, Evgeny Bertels (1890-1957), would criticize Chaikin for "being under the influence of Western-European science and for using its methodology." Shortly after, Chaikin was executed as a foreign spy in 1938. GARF, f. 7668, op. 1, d. 2889, l. 2-3ob.

[18] In 1920 Yakov Bliumkin was preparing to become in charge of the Cheka in the would-be Soviet Socialist Republic of Persia. RGASPI, f. 85 "Secret Persia," d. 26, l. 1. See also Simbirtsev 95-96; Marshall 191.

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→ [19] RGASPI, f. 159 "Chicherin. Persia," op. 2, d. 51.

[20] RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 51, l. 180, 182 (Chicherin's notes); f. 85 "Secret Persia," d. 106 (Ten Persian letters of Vardin), l. 8ob., 16ob., 260, 267.

[21] AV, f. 115, op. 1, d. 70 (Snesarev's manuscript Attitudes toward the Asiatic world). See also Tolz 5, 30.

[22] Russia's State Military Archive (henceforth RGVA), f. 157 (Revolutionary Military Council), op. 8, d. 7, l. 11 (Trotskii's cable), 58ob.

[23] Ibid, l. 58 (Investigation material on the catastrophe of the Persian front); AVPRF, f. "Chicherin," op. 18, d. 50638, papka 109 (Kolomiitsev's Reports), l. 3-4.

[24] AVPRF, f. 94 "The Secret Cryptographic Section on Iran," op. 5a, papka 105, d.1, l. 269; f. 04, op. 18, papka 109, d. 50644, l. 3 (Raskol'nikov's report to Chicherin); papka 109, d. 50638, l. 1-5 (Kolomiitsev's letter to Chicherin).

[25] GARF, f. p-1335, op. 1, d. 5, l. 61, 80-81.

[26] On the engagement of the academicians of the "old" Orientological school in the Bolsheviks' state-run projects of nationality policy see also Hirsch; Baziants 50.

[27] AV, f. 134, op. 1, d. 803, l. 1.

[28] Pastukhov, Osetrov, Soltanzadeh, Tardov, Chaikin, Smirnov were executed. Bartol'd, Ol'denburg, Pavlovich, Gurko-Kriazhin, Snesarev, Iagello died (Sorokina and Vasil'kov).

[29] Moscow State University of International Relations, "Rektory" <http://www.mgimo.ru/about/history/rectors/document3578.phtml> (15 Feb. 2015).

[30] AVPRF, f. 94 "The Secret Cryptographic Section on Iran," op. 4, d. 4, papka 2, l. 13, 28, 52.

[31] On the current ambiguous situation in the present-day Russian archives see Volkov, "Fearing the Ghosts of State Officialdom Past?"

[32] On the phenomenon of Soviet *sharashki* that was widely spread in the 1930s and 1940s see Krementsov 3. The word was an informal name for the secret research laboratories which were organised for imprisoned scientists and scholars within the Soviet GULAG concentration camps system.

[33] Additionally, on the character of the Russian-Iranian relations see Volkov, "The Iranian Electric Power Industry" 5. See also "Ahdnameh-i golestan" published on the *BBC Persian Website* in a special collection dedicated to the bicentenary of the Gulistan Treaty.

[34] The group of the scholars-editors of *Bibliograficheskii slovar' vostokovedov: zhertv politicheskogo terrora v sovetskii period, 1917-1991*.

[35] On the role of the intellectual see also Foucault, "Truth and Power" 133.

[36] <http://www.drsanaei.ir> (25 Sept. 2013).

[37] In his profound monograph published in Russian with the help of Nina Mamedova in 2014, a veteran expert on Russia, Iranian diplomat, Mohammad Hasan Mahdian, is sincerely cunning in his assertion that "Iran has never had doubts regarding Russia implementing its obligations for supplying Iranian nuclear power plants with fuel" (154). During the annual meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission on Russian-Iranian economic cooperation, the author of this article was many times approached in private by Iranian officials expressing their profound doubts related to Russia's realization of its obligations regarding the Iranian civilian nuclear energy programme.

[38] GPU NKVD (State Political Directorate affiliated with the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) was organized on 6 February 1922 as a subordinated structure within NKVD and became a successor to VCheKa (1917-1922)—the all-Russia Emergency Commission for Combating Counter-revolution and Sabotage, established on 20 December 1917 and subordinated to the Council of the People's Commissars (SNK). In connection with the formation of the USSR, on 15 November 1923 GPU was re-organized into OGPU (United State Political Directorate), again subordinated directly to SNK. On 10 July 1934 it was merged with NKVD, becoming its Chief-Directorate of State Security. It existed until 3 February 1941 when it was again separated from NKVD and became NKGB (the People's Commissariat of State Security). During the war, it suffered a series of transformations and turned into MGB (the Ministry of State Security) on 20 August 1946. It finally evolved into KGB (the Committee of State Security affiliated with the Council of Ministers) on 13 March 1954, after some reorganizations, mergers and transformations (Korovin).

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AVPRI MID RF (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii): The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire

RGASPI (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii): Russia's State Archive of Socio-Political History

RGVA (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennyi Arkhiv): Russia's State Military Archive

RGVIA (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv): Russia's State Military Historical Archive

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→ AV (Arkhiv Vostokovedov): The Archive of Orientologists of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts

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Economic Research on the Arab World and the Middle East — A Neglected Field of Study in Germany

Steffen Wippel

The article gives an overview of the development of contemporary research on Middle Eastern and North African economies in Germany. It includes the most important institutions and central research topics and approaches, underlining that this field is, in fact, multidisciplinary. The article also points out some of its most salient structural, conceptual, and methodological problems. Referring to research on regionalization processes, the author advocates an open, transregional and transdisciplinary approach closely based on empirical findings.

Keywords: Economic Issues; Middle East Studies; Germany; Evolution; Impediments; Regionalization

Public and academic interest in the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and especially in the Arab world, has always surged in conjunction with dramatic events like wars, assaults, and revolutions, which have been increasingly associated with religious strife and extremism. At the same time, socio-economic causes, needs for economic reforms, economic crises, and, importantly, the security of oil supplies have attracted increased attention. Parallel to that, in 2013, Germany traded goods worth 90 billion euros with MENA countries (including Turkey, Iran, and Israel), including 50 billion with Arab League members; depending on the definitions of regions, exports in particular had approximately doubled to 35 and 62 billion respectively over the previous ten years (calculations based on the Statistisches Bundesamt). The share contributed by these economies in total German exports was 3% and 6%, respectively, and nearly 7% to 13% if we exclude intra-European Union (EU) trade.

However, despite great individual efforts, continuous research that also takes the social complexity of economic life into consideration has developed only moderately in the German academic landscape. Historical and institutional reasons, as well as epistemic and methodological ones, have contributed to this sustained negligence on the part of the disciplines involved, mainly economics, and responsible authorities. To begin with, the following article will explore the long-term development of German academic economic research on the MENA region, and the Arab world in particular, before it turns to major research topics and approaches, as well as to some of the salient structural and conceptual problems.[1] Finally, it expounds the problems of Middle Eastern economics as an area study and provides some guidance for opening up the regional and disciplinary container. This problematic will be substantiated with research on "regionalization", which constitutes a central issue in Middle Eastern economics.

In conjunction with this concern, this paper's title and first paragraph already show that a clear definition is quite difficult and point to the fuzzy use of terms to designate the region on which research is done (see more below). Yet, designations used by most centers and courses of studies refer to "the Middle East" (or sometimes still *Vorderer Orient* in German), while in practice they focus predominantly on (parts of) the Arab world. Corresponding to these varying terms in institutional practice, in the following the terms "Middle Eastern" (including North Africa), "Arab", and (rarely) "Oriental" will mostly be used interchangeably.[2]

A Late Start for Research in Contemporary Middle Eastern Economies

Studies with a focus on language, religion, and literature in the Arab and Muslim world have a longstanding tradition in Germany. In the German Empire, this research was closely linked to then current colonial policy. Institutes for Oriental and Colonial Studies were established to provide national institutions with the necessary information about the geography, economy, and culture of non-European areas (Wissenschaftsrat; Weiss; Rang). Thus, following Wirth, in the early twentieth century, Orientalists already considered it a matter of course to work on contemporary subjects, including issues of economy and social structure, whereas in the emerging disciplines of sociology and national economy only a few researchers contributed to the understanding of Middle Eastern societies.

In the aftermath of World War II, Oriental Studies in Western Germany once again confined itself primarily to historical philological, religious, and literary studies. The little economic research that was done on the region concentrated mostly on *non-Arab* MENA countries (like Turkey and Iran). Only in the late 1960s and early 1970s did major events—such as the Arab-Israeli wars and the oil crisis—trigger increased interest in contemporary regional expertise and research. Notably, a 1972 memorandum from the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* showed Orientalists' readiness to open up their research to the interdisciplinary study of modern Muslim societies (Wirth; Roemer).[3] In addition to Fritz Steppat, Professor for Islamic Studies at *Freie Universität* (FU) Berlin (Scheffler, "Fritz Steppat"), Eugen Wirth, Professor of Geography at the University of Erlangen, also showed a great concern for contemporary social and economic transformations of the Middle East and was a major pioneer of modern Middle Eastern Studies (Bahadir).

Decisive contributions to such a reorientation came in the 1970s from the independent Volkswagen Foundation, which initiated and financed several reports, workshops, and programs on research on the region (Büren; Wirth; Steppat; Rudolph). In particular, it established professorships in Middle Eastern Politics and Economics at two German universities in the early 1980s. The economic professorships at the FU Berlin and at Erlangen were filled by Dieter Weiss in 1980 (see also Büttner and Weiss) and by Şefik Alp Bahadır in 1984, respectively.[4] Both were integrated in favorable interdisciplinary institutional frameworks which, at that time, made both universities comprehensive centers for contemporary Middle Eastern research.

Yet, despite the fact that the Middle East is a considerable trade and investment partner, these two universities remained the only places in Western Germany that had permanently institutionalized professorships for economics with such a regional specialization. In addition, motivated by personal interest, Volker Nienhaus, Professor for Political Economy and from 1985 to 2004 also Director of the interdisciplinary Institute of Development Research and Development Policy at *Ruhr-Universität Bochum*, made important contributions to the study of the economy of the Arab and

Islamic world since the 1980s; and in Trier, El-Shagi El-Shagi, Professor for Economics, sporadically published on Arab countries. In the German Democratic Republic, research on the modern Middle East developed at least one decade earlier than in the West (Hafez; Preißler and Kinitz). In the early 1960s, departments for history, economics, and state and law were launched at the Institute for Oriental Studies at the University of Leipzig. In the course of an academic reorganization in 1968, Leipzig became the only East German university with a profile in comprehensive modern Middle Eastern studies and its Oriental Institute was integrated into the local Section for African and Middle Eastern Studies. In the ensuing decade, the state's interest in expanding trade relations with oil-producing countries in the Middle East led to an explicit research orientation toward economic issues. The main protagonist of this field was Günter Barthel, Professor for the Economy of North African and Middle Eastern Countries from 1975 onwards. In the 1980s, the center of research partly shifted from Leipzig to the Berlin Academy of Sciences, where research on developing countries had been undertaken since the late 1960s and which was much more independent from the requirements of daily politics.

Developments in the University Landscape Since the 1990s

Since the late 1990s there has been a renewed interest in promoting regional studies in Germany (e.g. Wissenschaftsrat).[5] In consequence, a new survey edited by Rudolph recommended a further fostering of social and cultural research on the Muslim world, including regionally oriented work in the "big" disciplines. The interdisciplinary Institute for Oriental Studies at Leipzig University had already been re-established after German unification. After Barthel retired in 1996, Jörg Gertel, a geographer, took over the Professorship for the Economy and the Social Geography of the Arab World in 1999. In contrast, when Weiss' post ended in 2001, the FU Berlin was ready to liquidate his department under the pressure of rigorous savings measures (Büttner and Weiss). That left Bahadır with the only full professorship in Germany devoted exclusively to the economy of Middle Eastern countries. In effect, in 2009 he succeeded in establishing the economy-oriented Center for Iraq Studies at Erlangen University. In 2006, pushed by Nienhaus, its then-President, the University of Marburg launched the interdisciplinary Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) leading to a junior professorship for Economics at the center. From 2009 to 2012, another junior professorship for Political Economy was attached to the Department of Middle Eastern Politics at the FU Berlin. In 2013 and 2014, courses of study with the possibility of a full or partial specialization in Middle Eastern and Arab Economy existed on the bachelor or master levels in Marburg, Erlangen, Tübingen, and Leipzig. However, with the relocation of the specific post to the Institute of Geography in summer 2014, the Oriental Institute in Leipzig is at risk of losing this long-established specialty.[6] In contrast, the post of Bahadır, who retired the same year, has been advertised as open once more.

In addition, a few Universities of Applied Sciences offer business studies with a specialization in the Arab world, such as the *Hochschule Bremen*—represented by Alexander Flores since 1995, with the post being taken over by Juliane Brach later in 2014—and the private *Munich Business School*. At Heilbronn, Elias Jammal, Professor in the Department of International Management, has been working on intercultural communication with a focus on Arab countries since 1998.[7] Ulrich Wurzel is a Professor for International and Development Economics at the University for Technology and Economics in Berlin who also shows a genuine interest in the economic problems of this region.

Occasionally, mainstream economists also dabble in the field of Middle Eastern economics (cf. below). But in the university landscape, it is primarily researchers from other disciplines, in particular in various faculties of Geography and Political Science, who show an explicit interest in economic matters of the Middle East that is often missing among economists. In Political Science, the Department for Middle East and Comparative Politics at Tübingen, chaired in sequence by Peter Pawelka and Oliver Schlumberger, has a renowned specialization in the theory of the rentier state and economy, with disciples now found in a wide range of institutions. In Geography, Eugen Wirth too, inspired a considerable number of scholars to engage in the field of Middle Eastern social and economic research who were later appointed as professors at several German universities. They in turn have encouraged a subsequent generation of geographers to work on the region.[8]

Research Outside Universities

In the academic landscape outside the universities, the large, independent, mostly policy-oriented German institutes for economic research only occasionally study developments in the Middle East and North Africa (Wurzel 4-5).[9] Yet, in the field of development politics, researchers at the German Institute for Development Research in Bonn have regularly published on Middle Eastern-related issues. Again, research on Middle Eastern economies is also done at institutions that do not have a predominant focus on economics, but are mostly oriented toward the non-Western world. This was the case, first, with the German Orient Institute in Hamburg, established in 1960 with support from the business-oriented German Near and Middle East Association. In 2006, it was re-institutionalized as the Institute for Middle Eastern Studies at the German Institute of Global and Area Studies where it cooperates with other regionally specialized departments on several cross-regional axes. However, the institute has a strong focus on politics and to a large extent serves public information. In 1996 the *Zentrum Moderner Orient* in Berlin was established as another institution with a transregional focus on the Middle East, Africa, and large parts of Asia. But with its predominance of historians and anthropologists, only a very few fellows with a pronounced economic background have worked there.

Other institutions that conduct research on developing countries, such as the Center for Development Research in Bonn, and that give policy advice on international politics, such as the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik* in Berlin, also extend their activities to the Middle East, but cover specific economic topics often unsystematically or on an individual basis. German academic institutions abroad, such as the Orient Institute in Beirut, founded in 1961, and German universities in the Middle East that have been established since 2003, too display virtually no specific interest in economic issues in their host region. It is thus very important to point out that economic research on the MENA region in academia consists mostly of non-institutionalized (funded and non-funded) research activities: many researchers are doing continuous work on Middle Eastern *and* economy-related issues only on the basis of their own initiative. Outside academia, a broad political spectrum of German political foundations for example, have published a considerable number of papers on socio-economic issues, often from an applied and engaged research perspective.

Research Topics: Changing Fashions and Continuous Themes

According to Wurzel, who also gives a comprehensive literature survey, research on Middle Eastern economic issues shows changing fashions as well as some recurrent topics.[10] Without being comprehensive, in the 1950s and 1960s, the field was dominated by a universalist moderniza-

tion discourse. In the 1970s, the oil problem for Western economies had become a central question. In the subsequent decade, interest shifted to effects of rents on oil-rich countries and blockages to their internal development. Studies of cultural factors of development were emerging and, among other things, "Islamic economics" started to find considerable interest which was, perhaps, along with rentier theory the most region-specific topic and attracted much interdisciplinary attention. Parallel to that, the need for economic reform and the consequences of current stabilization and adjustment programs became increasingly important. With the demise of the communist command economies, some comparative studies of system transformation also materialized; simultaneously, expectations regarding the beginning of the Middle East peace process became an emerging topic. Disillusion about substantial structural reforms also led to research on the role of political authoritarianism with some newer publications (see for e.g. Roll) paying explicit attention to the crucial and changing roles of political and economic elites. Several recent studies included the economic catalysts of the more recent "revolutions" in the Arab world, as well their potential consequences for future economic policy (e.g. Zorob, "Zusammenbruch").

Beyond these themes triggered by ongoing evolutions and events, other themes have emerged that have ongoing importance such as tourism, labor migration, and water scarcity. Issues such as trade liberalization, innovation strategies, technology transfer, and, finally, the challenges of globalization arrived later. Notably, regional economic cooperation has been a central and constant topic for over three decades. Sector studies, evaluation of cooperation projects, and surveys of developmental prospects, in particular, have often been part of consultancy activities. In the Arab world, research has a clear focus on Egypt, along with Syria and on the region *as a whole*, whereas the Maghreb countries are still of minor concern.[11] With the advancement of the Arab Gulf states, more critical assessments of their success emerged in the 2000s, including of the impacts of the recent economic crises (e.g. Rohde).

Theories and Methodologies: Caught between the Disciplines

A major problem is the relation among researchers working on Middle Eastern economies, conventional economics, and other social science disciplines (Wurzel 20-27; Wippel, "Wirtschaft" 14-17). In contrast to other academic disciplines that deal with social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of human life, mainstream economics is almost completely constrained by neo-classical orthodoxy. Since the late 18th century, economics increasingly separated from geography (Ritter 1-21) and later from sociology; the German tradition of comprehensive *Staatswissenschaften* (political economy including law and administration) had by the mid-twentieth century largely been abandoned (Drechsler).[12] With the pretense of formulating universal laws and a tendency to quantitative modeling under heroic assumptions, social and historical contexts have largely been eliminated from the analysis. Until the recent crises, economics thereby seemed the discipline most reluctant to pick up poststructuralist considerations, to take part in ongoing "cultural turns" (Bachmann-Medick), and to start critical self-reflection about its own epistemological presuppositions.

In contrast, it is noteworthy that those German researchers with an economic background who rather continuously work on Middle Eastern economies often do not adhere to neo-classical mainstream economics, but to other research traditions. As Wurzel explained, they either refer to non-orthodox theoretical strands of economics or to conceptual backgrounds originating in other social sciences or in cultural studies (20-22). Their approaches

are mostly pragmatic, eclectic, and multifaceted and include social and political processes, institutional arrangements, and socio-cultural value systems. With the theory of rents, even a region-specific approach has (re-)emerged, which was then applied to other parts of the world.

Even if they do not on principle exclude the processing of statistical data, these scholars are aware of the limited informational value of statistics, particularly for the countries under scrutiny.[13] There is a preference for qualitative research based on substantial regional knowledge and field research (for the FU, Büttner and Weiss; Trenk and Weiss). But researchers with an economics background still rarely relate to more postmodern theories, question established presentations and categories, or analyze texts and discourses. As already highlighted, due to the very limited openness of economics to regional and transdisciplinarily embedded studies, it is very often—or even mostly—non-economists, notably scholars in political science and geography, but to a certain extent also in anthropology and Islamic studies (e.g. Ebert and Thießen on Islamic finance), more often interested in historical and legal aspects, who work on economic issues in the MENA region and have a wider range of dimensions in view.

Substantial Structural and Practical Problems

This distance from mainstream economics and the interdisciplinary positioning of research on Middle Eastern economics entail a range of institutional and individual problems (for details see, once again, Wurzel). Economics, in particular, but also specifically German social research, still exhibits boundaries less permeable to trans- and post-disciplinary research than do many other disciplines and countries. Among economists in particular, a regional specialization is regularly considered "peripheral" and "exotic". The understanding for extended field research is rarely guaranteed. In general, area studies have for a time been discredited because of problems such as the danger of essentializing and containerizing world regions and the loss of contact with developments in mother disciplines (cf. below).[14] But the integration of new professorships into faculties of Economics hardly seems favorable either, when candidates are expected, first, to be firm in quantitative modeling and orthodox theory.

The closure and estrangement of orthodox economics, however, seems mirrored to a certain extent by the reservations of social and cultural scientists toward obviously "hard" economics and its restricted approach to social phenomena, but also, in a more general manner, toward macro-perspectives and the use of quantitative data. In fact, even open-minded economists have to struggle with at least a *de facto* triple qualification that is economic, regional (and often multilingual), and transdisciplinary. This issue is also reflected in the task descriptions of centers for area studies and in calls for applications for research programs, which rarely explicitly mention economics. Likewise, current graduate schools, such as the prominent Berlin Graduate School for Muslim Cultures and Societies, either include very few economists or do not explicitly mention the economy as a research area,[15] whereas the current economic PhD program at Erlangen concentrates on Iraq alone. Thus, most doctoral students still have to write their dissertations on an individual basis and with a limited choice of potential supervisors.

All this constitutes a considerable handicap for one's academic career, including the quest for discipline-oriented project funding.[16] It hence discourages young scholars from engaging in such a specialization; in general, they have to expect precarious job opportunities in temporary projects—which in fact is very typical of German research careers in general (Kreckel). A few scholars, therefore, now conduct research and teach abroad. As

Wurzel has already, and correctly, stated, this insufficient institutional structure considerably limits the possibilities for consistent and systematic economic research on the MENA region. In fact, as we have seen, the number of researchers in Germany continuously investigating Arab economies is small. Thus, for example, the number of economists who are members of the German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO) in fall 2014 was only 49, a proportion of 3.5%, compared with 21% for political scientists and 6% for geographers (based on Meyer, *Statistics*).

Studies in Regionalization: An Example of an Important Field of Research

Research on economic cooperation in the MENA region is a central field of study and has been undertaken, repeatedly or sporadically, at most of the institutions and by most researchers already mentioned. Essential dimensions are, in particular, the challenges emanating from the Euro-Mediterranean partnership project, which are sometimes contrasted with the rather ineffective process of Arab economic integration (Zorob, "Mittelmeerforschung").[17] At the same time, this field of research reflects the diversity of approaches, conceptual limitations, and opportunities for transdisciplinary understanding. In particular, the study of cross-border regionalization is connected to a set of problems that have to do with regional conceptions in area studies and their tension with economics tending to be a universally oriented, "systematic" discipline (cp. Middell). Criticism of region-based studies is based on a "spatial turn" in social and cultural studies and new insights into the constructedness of space (e.g. van Schendel; Mielke and Hornidge; Glasze et al.). Proponents like Lewis and Wigen criticized rigid mental "meta-geographies" that crucially influence spatial understanding. Among world regions, the "Middle East (and North Africa)"—or the "Arab(-Islamic) world", "Near East", etc., in accordance with varying perspectives, times, and languages—already overlaps with continentally defined regions. The multiplicity of denominations and their vague definitions also contradict the fundamental character often attributed to the region. In particular, behind its "invention", we find Western geopolitical interests in the nineteenth and twentieth century, in addition to the secular "othering" of the Orient in the Western world (e.g. Scheffler, "Fertile Crescent"; Krause). Evolutions, relations, and movements of all kinds tend to be analyzed only within such spatial containers and at best in relation to "the West" or, more recently, the global context. However, this sometimes obscures rather significant socio-economic contexts that exist across established world regions.

In contrast, conventional economic explanations are largely abstracted from space. The "New Economic Geography", which emerged in the 1990s as part of international trade theory, attempts to model abstract economic landscapes, on the one hand, but still neglects real physical and human space (e.g. Martin for a critical position), on the other hand. In other respects, an implicit container model of space still dominates, as most economists uncritically assume given spatial entities for their investigations of regionalism. In contrast, a "New Regionalism Approach" (e.g. Bøås, Marchand, and Shaw; Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal) understands regionalization as a multidimensional process that produces a multiplicity of forms on different scales and leads to fluctuating and overlapping spatial constellations. Such macro- and micro-regionalizations do not necessarily constitute continuous areas but rather they often resemble fluid networks, archipelagos, and translocalities. Regions can then result, for example, from (a) different kinds of institutional settings, beyond the clearly defined steps of ever-deeper integration in conventional economics; (b) multiple forms of socio-economic interaction and material and human flows; and (c) regional self-position-

ing, which is often strategically communicated for economic and political ends (cf. also Wippel, *Wirtschaft*, *Politik*).
Practical solutions to these problems can be found in studying regional links from a more global perspective, including actor and discourse centered approaches. As this requires additional competency from the individual researchers, expert committees recommended more pluri-regional and pluri-disciplinary cooperative research (e.g. Rudolph; Middell). This has already begun at some of the institutions mentioned above, in contrast to other tendencies on the *Länder* level to locally separate institutes specializing in certain world regions. However, the study of economic issues still needs to emerge from its secondary role in these centers.
Consequently, despite lasting calls to unite an Arab "fatherland" and Pan-Arab ideologies, studies of regionalization which constitute an important field in Middle Eastern economics do not have to be confined to intraregional (and mostly formal) processes but can consider alternative spaces, both old and new. In fact, quite a number of German academics have striven to include a broad range of dimensions in their research. The complex regional interrelationships will become clearer when we turn to examples from the long understudied geographical periphery of the Arab world, where the multi-directional processes of regionalization crystallize perhaps most apparently. These empirical cases are based on inter-institutional, international, and interdisciplinary cooperation and illustrate how fruitful it can be to jointly explore the different meanings of regionalization beyond the "meta-geographical trap" (based on Agnew).

Empirical Insights from the Geographical Periphery of the Arab World

Without going into much detail in respect to institutions, Morocco already integrates numerous regional contexts (Wippel, "Marokko"; for different scales, Breuer and Gertel). In addition to the intense integration in the Euro-Mediterranean process from its early beginnings, the Kingdom is a member of the Arab Free Trade Area and the (rather ineffective) Arab Maghreb Union. With other Arab EU partners, it later aligned itself in the Agadir free trade association. Likewise, more recent developments include its membership in the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and attempts to conclude a cooperation agreement with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (Wippel, *Wirtschaft*, *Politik*). Across the Atlantic, too, it has free trade agreements (e.g. with the USA) or has plans for them (e.g. with Canada and Latin America).
Concerning foreign trade, Morocco is heavily dependent on the EU, but is increasingly opening alternative markets. If we consider the relative economic size of trade partners, so-called "trade intensities" reveal a trading area that reaches from Western and Central Africa across the Mediterranean to Southwestern Europe and includes parts of the wider Middle East. In addition, Morocco has demonstrated a strong entrepreneurial engagement south of the Sahara, whereas incoming direct investment originates mainly in Europe and increasingly in Gulf countries.
In the national public debate, many established Moroccan political parties did not discover the "Mediterranean-ness" of their own country until the 1980s. The Maghreb has become conceived mainly as a central part of a comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean area (Wippel, "Tanger"). The current, as well as historical, links with Sub-Saharan Africa now seem to receive more emphasis than Arab orientations. Simultaneously, for a number of years Morocco has underlined its pivotal role as an economic hub between these world regions.
The entire image becomes even more complex if we include prudent attempts at subnational cross-border cooperation, es-

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pecially with Andalusia and the Macaronesian Islands. Also, there are other less visible forms of interrelations which are rather informal and sometimes illegal and which flow across often securitized land and sea borders. This "trans-state regionalization" (Bach) includes petty traders commuting between Moroccan cities and Western Africa (Marfaing); the smuggling of commodities between Morocco and the Spanish enclaves (Berriane and Hopfinger), western Algeria, and the wider Sahara, all linked with wider hinterlands; and the hotly debated, regionally widespread and regularly shifting lanes and networks of migration.

Oman at the other end of the Arab world displays similar multi-regional integration, including a strong belonging to the "intermediate" Indian Ocean area (contributions in Wippel, *Regionalizing Oman*). On the institutional side, whereas Gulf cooperation is the most highly developed, Oman has free trade agreements with the Arab world and the USA (esp. Zorob, "Oman") and is a promoter of Indian Ocean cooperation. With the latter area, it also displays strong links in trade and investment, and here nation branding situates it at the crossroads of several world regions. But what seems to be quite apparent at the periphery of the Arab world is, nonetheless, true for more central parts of the region if we consider, for example, Egypt's different regional orientations between the Arab world, the Euro-Mediterranean area, and Africa (e.g. Afifi). Certainly, this creates numerous contractual incompatibilities which have also been scrupulously investigated (also Zorob, "Intraregional"). But at the same time, it reflects the actual multi-directional, fluctuating, and interpenetrating tendencies of regionalization, which only partially coincide with established meta-regions.

Conclusion

In the process of increasing German interest in contemporary Middle East Studies, economic issues have also attracted a certain interest. But, after a temporary upturn in the 1980s, this research has remained very limited considering the importance and proximity of the region. This is partly related to insufficient institutionalization at universities and research centers but is also an effect of the mutual estrangement between economists and other social and cultural scientists in terms of methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives. In particular, structural reasons and (meta-)theoretical considerations do not leave room for area-related "pure" economics research. While those actually doing research on these topics largely struggle with the necessity of multiple disciplinary competencies and a broad conceptual toolkit, this currently leaves only one full university professorship officially engaged with Middle Eastern economies and has left a lot of other disciplines contributing considerably and fruitfully to this field. Considering the danger that area studies may tend to regard their objects of study as more or less given and closed entities, transregional and transdisciplinary studies, sensitively based on empirical findings and regional knowledge, are currently additional challenges. Yet, the prospects for having more scholars—working from whatever disciplinary background on economic issues of the MENA region—in institutionalized posts in the near future seem rather gloomy. Finally, the relative negligence of Middle Eastern economic issues calls for a broader comparison with research on other fields of interest in the Middle East, as well as with economic research on other world regions,[18] in Germany and other countries and, in particular, in the Middle East itself.[19] As this latter issue goes beyond the scope of this article this desideratum will be left open for further investigation.

Notes

[1] This article owes a great deal to the recent paper by Wurzel as well as earlier intellectual input from Christian Steiner (currently at the University of Innsbruck), Stephan Roll (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin), and Anja Zorob (Ruhr-Universität Bochum). Nonetheless, all responsibility for the content remains exclusively with the author.

[2] Institutions concentrating solely on Turkey, Iran, and Israel are excluded here; but no such academic institution with a strong economic focus exists.

[3] Whether research can and should be undertaken on an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary basis needs separate consideration. It should be noted that in this article these terms are used rather interchangeably.

[4] Direct reference will be limited to full university professors who have shown a sustained interest in a combination of Middle East and economy related issues.

[5] For overviews on the current research landscape, see Rudolph; Wippel, "Wirtschaft"; Centrum für Nah- und Mittelost-Studien; Weiss; Wurzel; Rang. Information on institutions and persons has also been retrieved from institutional as well as drawing on personal websites and the existing knowledge and direct relationships of the author. The survey attempts to be comprehensive, but cannot claim to be complete.

[6] A few graduates from Arabic Studies with a focus on economy and social geography now temporarily integrate the transregional and interdisciplinary Center for Area Studies at Leipzig University, an institution established through the recent initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to promote regional studies.

[7] Currently, this position is also being advertised.

[8] A non-exhaustive list of professors with continuous (non-exclusive) or important temporary interest in the economic, tourism, and social and urban geography of the Middle East, already shows the contrast in numbers: Herbert Popp (Bayreuth), Fred Scholz (FU Berlin), Horst Kopp (Erlangen), and Konrad Schliephake (Würzburg), all recently retired; Günter Meyer (Mainz) and Hans Hopfinger (Eichstätt), with successors imminent; Anton Escher (Mainz), Hans Gebhardt (Heidelberg), Detlef Müller-Mahn (Bonn), Carmella Pfaffenbach (Aachen), Georg Glasze (Erlangen), Andreas Kagermeier (Trier), Nicolai Scherle (Iserlohn), and the late young colleague Heiko Schmid (Jena). For Jörg Gertel (Leipzig), cf. above. For a good overview of geographical research, see Meyer, *Die arabische Welt*.

[9] In 2012, a search for recent publications on their websites resulted in only a few papers or short notes on energy issues and the development of the oil market.

[10] Due to his extensive publication, it is sufficient to summarize Wurzel's detailed and balanced explanations of research topics and approaches in the following. Cf. also Wippel, "Wirtschaft".

[11] Important research has been done mainly in economic geography on Morocco (e.g., Breuer and Gertel). Outside the Arab world, except for Erlangen (e.g. Schuß), economic research on Turkey became rather limited in the aforementioned institutions, contrasting with long-lasting excited debates, e.g. on its EU accession process. Research on the economic development of Iran is presently done at the CNMS. To the author's knowledge, economic research on Israel (such as by Hofmann at FU Berlin) is also very limited.

[12] The department in Erlangen, however, has been initially integrated into such an institute.

[13] This contrasts with sporadic work by mainstream economists who developed rather formalistic models without any deeper knowledge of the region. This type of quantitative modeling was prominently done, for instance, in the 2000s at the Institute for Growth and Economic Cycles, University of Hamburg, under Bernd Lucke, now the leader of the anti-Euro political party AfD, on macroeconomic impacts of trade liberalization and regional integration in the Middle East (for a heated discussion of examples, see also Wurzel 19-20, 25-27).

[14] Against this background, continuous regionally specialized research also seems to be recognized less and less in disciplines like geography. See in contrast Verne and Doevenspeck defending the cause of (re-conceptualized) regional studies.

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→ [15] In contrast, the doctoral program in Contemporary Research on the Middle East that existed from 1990 until 2000 at Erlangen had a strong economics component, and the 1993 to 2004 PhD Program "System Efficiency and Dynamics in Developing Countries" at Bochum included important research on the Middle East. Today there are very few PhD schools that include some Middle East- *and* economy-related research topics, e.g. at the Research Academy Leipzig.

[16] Whereas the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* has a very refined categorization of disciplines (excluding area studies) for its funding programs (<http.//www.dfg.de/dfg_profil/gremien/fachkollegien/faecher>.), e.g., the Danish Council for Independent Research defines five broad cross-disciplinary fields of research (<http.//ufm.dk/en/research-and-innovation/councils-and-commissions/the-danish-council-for-independent-research>. Web 25 Feb. 2015).

[17] For the sake of space, extensive bibliographical referencing will again be avoided. For the country cases, below, insights are drawn largely from the author's own research experience and close cooperation with colleagues at various institutions.

[18] German economic research seems to have been comparatively more intensely focused on Latin America under the "dependency theory" paradigm around the 1970s, and for a long time now on economically emerging Eastern parts of Asia.

[19] Important work, yet overwhelmingly in the frame of the orthodox, predominantly quantitative research paradigm, is done, for example, in the context of the Cairo-based Economic Research Forum and the international Middle East Economic Association.

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Reorientalizing the Middle East: The Power Agenda Setting Post-Arab Uprisings

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Claims to new or critical knowledge can often be non-performative. Building off of this assumption, this paper demonstrates the ways in which the 2010-2011 uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa have been analysed through approaches that claim to be critical and post-Orientalist and yet reproduce problematic assumptions about the region, revealing their connection to a longer genealogy dating back to Orientalism. This serves to sanitize the uprisings by virtue of a neoliberal agenda that reproduces the 'Middle East' straitjacket, in turn creating a typology not too different from realist analysis in the region that (re)posits 'Arab exceptionalism.' Claims to being critical, or making a critical turn, are thus questioned in this paper through an analysis that shows how theory has been in the interest of power through the appropriation of native informants into the academic complex of think-tanks, Western donor institutions, and foreign media.

Taking our cue from Edward Said, we explore how new approaches have presented themselves as critical and have disrobed themselves of their exotic and explicit racist discourse, despite the fact that the same assumptions continue to lurk in the background. Using Sara Ahmed's notion of the non-performativity of claims to being critical, we survey how the Middle East is being reshaped through these 'new' and 'critical' approaches that in essence are apologetic to neoliberalism and liberal governmentality at large. We show how minorities continue to be an intervention mechanism under the so-called 'freedom of belief' agenda, how the 'democracy paradigm' advances electoralism as freedom, and how rights-based approaches with their underlying (neo)liberal assumptions continue to determine gender politics and analysis despite postcolonial interventions.

By presenting a contemporary genealogy of Middle East studies and surveying calls for proposals for journal articles, media publications, Western think-tank reports, donor programs and Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) expansion into the Middle East, this paper argues that this form of surveillance, though masquerading as 'critical,' builds off of neoliberal governmentality. This, in turn, molds a subjectivity that reifies the Middle East as a stagnant entity.

Keywords: Egypt; Arab Spring; Middle East; Orientalism; Neoliberalism; Copts; Women

Introduction

The uprisings that spread across the Middle East and North Africa in 2010 and 2011 quickly gave rise to calls for analysis that could explain the supposedly unexpected events. Four years later, this drive for explanations and theoretical innovations has continued, within the pluralist celebration of 'the more the merrier.' This has not only occurred within academia, but also within policy-making circles.[1] No one has paused to investigate these analyses pedagogically and how they have had an effect on reproducing 'Middle East studies', as well as the term 'the Middle East'. As side debates rage on about interdisciplinarity and reflexivity within area studies, in particular Middle East studies (Wilson 855), the discipline as a whole remains unscathed and continues to be encapsulated in the paradigm of Eurocentrism (Massad 37-38). To add insult to injury, most analysis now heralds itself as 'critical.' This is precisely what this paper aims to probe: Orientalist representations of, that in turn shape, 'the Middle East' as anarchic, radical, misogynist, and on the verge of being a failed state. This representational move can mount a new attack by way of positing itself as critical, and in so doing, hiding its material ramifications as it furthers neoliberal policies.[2]

The performativity of claims to being 'critical' or new are important to assess, particularly in light of the increasing tendency to make such claims as protection against accusations of Eurocentrism. Sara Ahmed has noted that a claim to being critical can be just that: a claim, without substance, and therefore one that does not perform what it says it will. The non-performativity of a concept is important to trace: concepts and theories do not always perform in the ways in which they claim to perform. Claims to 'being critical' should always be probed, as a claim to being critical does not replace the act itself. Using examples from the post-uprisings period, this paper shows how the neoliberal agenda operates through this claim and in effect sanitizes the potential of the uprisings. However—and this is crucial—claims to being critical are non-performative in the sense of failing to perform a critical task; but they remain performative in other ways, notably in the way they reproduce certain assumptions and paradigms (ibid.). This twofold process is what we address in this paper: on the one hand, we aim to demonstrate the non-performativity of claims within Middle East studies to be critical, new, or post-Orientalist; and on the other hand, we show how this non-performativity in terms of being critical still performs other functions that are often hidden, namely the reproduction of the field of Middle East studies along the lines of an Orientalist Eurocentrism. Middle East studies seem to be predicated on the International Relations notion of Hobbesian 'anarchy' that it cannot move past, a point we will touch on later.

This paper thus seeks to probe these processes in order to demonstrate that the so-called 'critical turn' taken by many scholars within Middle East studies in fact relies on similar assumptions as previous work that has been categorized as Eurocentric or Orientalist. The non-performativity of the claim to be critical as well as the performativity of the reproduction of a Eurocentric Middle East will be probed through an analysis that focuses on three key areas of debate within Middle East studies: civil society and the democracy paradigm, gender justice through rights-based approaches, and the 'minority question.' The furthering of neoliberalism through claims to be critical occurs in each of these debates, which in turn continue to reproduce the Middle East in a Eurocentric manner.

Genealogy of the Literature Leading up to 2011

It is commonly assumed that post-positivist literature[3] has shown the weaknesses of positivism and led to the emergence of 'new' approaches that challenge its central

position (Smith, Booth, Zalewski 6). These new approaches are lauded for their critical and reflexive approach to knowledge production (Tickner). Despite this, these approaches continue to be dominated by the world hegemon: the US (Smith). The understanding of these 'new' approaches as critical and reflexive eschews the 'constructivist turn' that has been applied to the Middle East with largely the same apologia to the dominant benevolent hegemon, the US (Banai). Banai, for example, openly advocates, through a purely constructivist lens that problematizes norms, that the US should in fact engage in democracy promotion, but critiques the approach of President George W. Bush and openly commends that of President Obama. Some scholars have even made inroads using a critical security studies approach that utilizes 'speech-act', a similarly post-positivist approach that relies on discourse analysis. This approach serves to 'desecuritize' the Middle East, which by a sleight of hand is marked as inherently unstable, by linking it economically to the dominant and 'stable' democracy of Israel (Christou and Adamides, 2013). This ties back to Smith's claim that IR is produced as apologetic to the hegemon: in this case it is produced in service of the Middle East's policeman: Israel. These brief examples all show essentialized notions that constitute the Middle East as war-torn and damned place while hiding neo-imperial Western intervention. It also furthers a neoliberal agenda and simultaneously adopts a racialized idea of Arabs as being savage, at times implicitly or explicitly calling for them to be tamed. This takes the form of either legal exceptionalism and pausing the Geneva Conventions (conditioning their applicability only to the civilized races); or at other times designating the Middle East as rampant with 'failed states.'[4] Both consequences of this designation and construction of the Middle East means that development requires the civilized West to enter benevolently whilst the neoliberal agenda becomes more hidden. Moreover, it is because of this that Eurocentric notions are reconciled with Islamists in order to further the Eurocentric goals of neoliberalism.

There is no clearer example of neoliberal discourse that seeks to be critical and new than the issue in which both articles were published: *Security Dialogue*'s 2013 special issue titled *The New Middle East*: *A Critical Appraisal*. In this issue, Banai seeks to present a narrative in which rights and freedoms are the focus of the Arab Spring in which he constructs protestors as vying for those rights, as opposed to calling for social justice and protesting against neo-imperialism. This is precisely the general argument of this paper: post-positivist approaches claiming critical knowledge and masquerading as novel in order to hide their neoliberal agenda. This serves to obscure the fact that the Arab uprisings have rejected such economic linkages to capital within the agenda of neoliberalism despite a sanitized version existing in the literature on the Arab Spring. Banai's argument meshes well with that of Christou and Adamides, from the same issue of *Security Dialogue*, as both have a gaping lacuna: they both neglect to mention the occurrence of events that demonstrate the clear opposition towards Israel throughout the Arab Spring. For example, in August 2011 Egyptian protesters nearly stormed Israel's Cairo embassy, climbing and breaching the top floor of the apartment complex housing the embassy to protest the death of Egyptian border guards caused by Israeli border guards pursuing militants near the Rafah border strip. Egypt threatened to withdraw its Ambassador from Tel Aviv and almost did, posting an online statement that it was withdrawing its ambassador, but later withdrawing it in a mysterious manner (Ahramonline). Such omissions of key events can only take place if a democracy lens is superimposed on the analysis that in effect prioritizes individual rights whilst omitting power politics and social justice

as analytical categories that obscure neoliberalism.

Banai performs this pedagogically in the parallel he draws between the Iranian revolution and the Arab Spring. Banai distinguishes the case of Iran in 1979 by saying that its failure was due to "[the] discussion [...] being in terms of anti-imperialism and social justice issues, and not about the future of democracy in Iran" (420). In this case Banai's operational definition of democracy is one that firmly eschews anti-imperialism and the notion of social justice, replicating an almost Cold War-like McCarthyism. After this definition he goes on to lament the Arab Spring activists who *do* further the cause for democracy. This genealogy of democracy is extremely Eurocentric in casting democracy literature as being individualistic, liberal and furthering rights-based approaches whilst ignoring more accepted critiques, such as Dingwerth's, for the need to probe areas where social justice can actually be a defining characteristic of 'democracy' as opposed to procedural definitions of democracy that live off electoralism.

But it would be foolish to think that Banai is alone in his definition, just as it would be foolish to think Banai (420) is critical because he can cite Robert Cox's (129) famous phrase: theory 'is always for someone and for some purpose.' Banai just so happens to elide his theory's purpose and its Eurocentrism by critiquing that of others and calling for reflexivity. Indeed this is a clear instance of the non-performativity of a claim to being critical: while Banai cites Robert Cox's argument about theory and power, and even calls for others to be reflexive, his own analysis clearly reproduces Eurocentrism and thus cannot be seen as critical. Banai's ideas resonate well with US media. See, for example, responses towards 2012 socialist presidential candidate Hamdeen Sabahy from major US media outlets. The New York Times vilified Sabahy, who ended up coming third and missing the run-off elections by less than three percentage points from the second frontrunner Ahmed Shafik, for opposing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan and labeled him as "against the market" (New York Times). *Foreign Policy* similarly lambasted Sabahy with an odd feature piece title: "More Trouble for the IMF in Egypt." It is precisely such depictions that show the prowess of the IMF in Egypt and the 'irrationality' of opposing such an institution that furthers Orientalism–and, importantly, neoliberalism—alongside developmental linear paradigms in order to help the 'Third World.' *Foreign Policy* has recruited native informants to similarly lambast Sabahy decrying his policies as "a far cry from what the country needs" (Dahshan). These Orientalist narratives eschew the larger causality of opposition to Mubarak and Ben Ali's regimes for their neoliberal agendas; as such narratives firmly exclude the Gafsa and Mahala worker revolts in Egypt and Tunisia in 2008 (Hanieh). Indeed the exclusion of worker revolts from much of the post-uprisings analysis clearly reveals the neoliberal underpinnings or these so-called 'critical' approaches.

Another aspect of this discussion is the famed 'moderation thesis' of Islamists (Lynch; Basly) which essentially remains little more than performativity to hide power politics. Interestingly this thesis not only hinges on taming the 'Arab radicals' but similarly on liberal ideas, rights-based approaches and individual freedoms. Rajaa Basly wrote a piece in Carnegie's *Sada Journal* warning that:

> [The] growth of fundamentalist Salafism puts al-Nahda in an awkward position, and may force it to reposition itself after the Salafists have led demonstrations chanting bigoted and anti-Semitic slogans, and attacked liquor stores and unveiled women.

Here there is a clear juxtaposition between Salafis (radical Islamists) and al-Nahda (moderate Islamists). Similarly,

take Middle East Foreign Policy Editor and George Washington Professor Marc Lynch's opinion on the 'polarization' of politics in Tunisia and reference to how al-Nahda were "unsure about how to grapple with the rising Salafi trend." This positing of a spectrum and the performativity of this fear factor automatically preempts any questions and ups the credentials of moderate Islamists. It also takes the Hobbesian idea of anarchy to new heights and attunes it to the Middle East by throwing radical Islamists into the mix, adding a cultural dimension to the IR argument. Such statements carry big omissions of assassinations of the opposition such as the death of Choukri Belaid, which was widely believed to be the work of the ruling party al-Nahda by way of tolerating increasing violence, Belaid's comrade—Abdel Nasser Laouni—accused al-Nahda directly of perpetrating the murder (al-Akhbar). Echoing Lynch some describe such Islamists as a "safety valve for moderate Islam" while simultaneously arguing that "[i]f it wasn't for the Brotherhood, most of the youths of this era would have chosen the path of violence" (Leiken 2007). This article, like most of the literature on the Arab Spring relied on the youth as a malleable category that has the power to shape Islamists and bend them to modernity. Basly's piece ended on a similar note urging Tunisians to "balance modernism and traditionalism." Evoking "traditionalism" in such a blanket way without engaging it furthers anthropocentric colonial notions of essentialized native 'traditions' (Mamdani). Other like-minded think-tankers and native informants argue that this moderation is apparent in that the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is taking "the long view," (Hamid). It is interesting that the racist-realist argument (Hobson),[5] manifested here in terms of the moderation thesis,[6] is made in the *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, the flagship publication of the Council of Foreign Relations think-tank, heir and previous namesake to the *Journal of Race Development*.[7] The genealogy attests to the once racial-turned-Eurocentric argument. The only way such knowledge can retain its 'critical' veneer is because it is placed alongside positivist realist literature that posits the Middle East as a sub-system with its own anarchic system. Here Bahgat Korany's critique of Robert Kaplan is important. It posits that the representation of the Middle East's anarchic relationship is exceptional. This realism has unveiled its racial underpinnings in which the savages are the impending threat and must be balanced against or kept in check. Examples of such racist-realist writing, as Hobson has triangulated with the eighteenth century, insinuate with analysis of the conventional 'security dilemma' and the 'failed state thesis.' The persistence of such analysis is explained by the fact that pedagogically there are few security journals that are not borne out of flagship think-tanks or institutions where funding, and editorial managers, determine loyalty and direction. This problem has been so noticeable that other competitive journals have pointed it out. It is no surprise that these more independent journals are open-access, are not behind a pay wall and do not require membership fees.[8]

Expanding on the analytic qualities of realism and the 'security dilemma,' security in the anarchic world and its analysis becomes key. Egyptian native informant think-tankers write that Egypt's security problem needs to address rights-based agendas whilst simultaneously holding them to a worldwide counter terrorism goal that 'serves US interests.' This reconciliation is achieved by a racial performativity: the Egyptian 'crackdown' is ineffective and needs to be reworked with US assistance and European help, thus assuming that both players are neutral and professional with their own counterterrorism policies (Radwan). The racism is apparent in the assumption that only the White West can master safe, civilized policing tactics. An example of this is the way in

which racism creeps in when advocating the necessary Israeli 'deterrence strikes' against Palestinians, even if civilians. This racial othering happens by openly advocating the killing of civilians in violation of the great Eurocentric mantle: the Geneva Convention. This is something one would think in the twenty-first century would be taken as a fait accompli, but it shows precisely the double Eurocentric/racial bind: the Geneva Convention, a European creation, does not apply outside Europe because previously designated barbarians, Palestinian civilians, are a 'necessary' casualty to 'reel in Hamas' (Herzog). Palestinian civilians are willing to die as human shields, they have no feelings, they want to die, and therefore they deserve to die; the right to life enshrined in the Geneva Convention does not apply to them.

It is clear that in the examples presented above, alternative genealogies that do not stop at the toppling of Arab presidents in 2010-2011 and that include a host of forces that are hostile to the neoliberal agenda are ignored. It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail these arguments, but other avenues of research have highlighted how there exists alternative historicizations of the Arab uprisings that tackle the issue of imperialism (Hanieh) and which problematize the issue of neoliberal policies (Elyachar), austerity and structural readjustment (Alexander and Bassiouny).

Triangulating Neoliberalism

The main thrust of the argument is that neoliberalism is represented as the only logical path to development. When Egyptian actors are seen as unwilling to comply with this, racist and Orientalist depictions are used to explain this supposed insubordination (to global capital). The key link between neoliberalism and 'Islamism' in general is that to move past previous Orientalist representations of 'Islam' as an ideology (Islamism), it must be seen to be market-compatible. This means for Islam to be palatable, and to disrobe itself of its previous depictions, it must be ready to accept austerity policies and be docile to foreign capital. This phenomenon is what Timothy Mitchell (203), playing on Benjamin Barber's concept of "McWorld," calls "McJihad." It is a helpful way of understanding "the political violence the United States, not alone […]has funded and promoted," by way of promoting Islamists. Mitchell argues "it would seem to follow that political Islam plays an unacknowledged role in the making of what we call global capitalism" (ibid.).

The attention that has been paid to Islamist forces post Arab Spring is particularly notable in relation to neoliberalism, where Islamists were collectively promoted as the 'moderates' compared to the 'crazy socialists.' One example is the MB in Egypt pledging to honor Camp David while Hamdeen Sabahy called for its amendment and made his position against it clear. This is similar to Tunisia, where al-Nahda has accepted an IMF loan and begun restructuring its economy along neoliberal parameters. Due to the sanitized narrative of the Arab Spring and its various exclusions, few remember that the MB in Egypt also signed a Stand-By Agreement (SBA) with the IMF under MB president Mohammed Morsi.[9] Islamists in the Arab Spring are heralded as a group that have been oppressed for too long – despite the fact that socialists too have been similarly oppressed–and that have been portrayed as coming back for their glory. Out of this comes the moderation thesis in relation to Islamists, which is little more than a euphemism for neoliberalization. This sleight of hand is performed in two parts: first Islamists in both Egypt and Tunisia sought to play off fears that rising Salafist movements represented a threat to the political order and that socialists were 'against the market,' thus calling for both to be excluded. In this sense, such Islamists stand to actually gain by fanning the flames of extremist Islamism by positioning themselves as 'moderate' relative

to rising Salafists and outlandish socialists. Embracing the notion of 'moderate Islamists' allows Western academics to be presented as critical and post-Orientalist, because they have overcome their othering of Islamism as a whole. This embracing was seen in the West's silence over Egypt's MB violence and extrajudicial usurping of power by a constitutional declaration that declared Morsi immune to judicial review in order to pass an authoritarian constitution, as well as the silence over the violence that followed. This was in addition to the police-sanctioned attacks against a funeral procession outside the Egyptian Coptic cathedral in 2012 that resulted in the police attacking the cathedral itself with teargas. In Tunisia in 2012, this was mirrored with a strike and mass protests following al-Nahda's move to arrest opposition figures. Tunisia differed from Egypt in that a concession was eventually given with a new coalition government.

There is a clear attempt at whitewashing even in how foreign governments chose to intervene in the Arab Spring: through representing bilateral aid as technical, neutral and value-free. That is why there is a Westernized Arab audience that continues to ask why Western aid is not forthcoming, demonstrating that the debate is already set within the parameters of aid being seen as welcome. In a rare show of frank yet outright Orientalism, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina noted on CBS' *Face the Nation* (Hill) that:

What would happen if we cut off the aid is that Western tourism ends in Egypt for the foreseeable future for as far as the eye can see [...]Western investment comes to a standstill. Egypt becomes a beggar client state of the Arab Gulf states. Egypt's future is really damned[...]. We're the strongest nation on earth. Everybody that sides with us tends to do better than people we oppose.

This is a civilizational and Orientalist representation in that the strong US can bend Egypt's arm in order to make it beg, because it is seen as on the point of becoming a failed state. This is similar to Hobson's idea of the Eurocentric nature of the 'failed states' thesis and the paternalistic attitude and form of intervention it invites. It involves a doctor-patient cancer metaphor in which the doctor must first break the patient's body and defense in order to cure him of the 'disease.' It is interesting, but not surprising, to see that liberal Egyptian opposition figures, such as Mohamed El Baradei, through the invitation of Western media, discuss Egypt through these parameters, identifying it as being close to a failed state.[10]

Neoliberalism's *inclusion* of 'political Islam' has been inundated with a logic of accumulation of foreign capital and austerity politics. This representation continues to Orientalize politics in a bid to disfranchise socialists who are—to borrow from the New York Times—"against the market." This post-Orientalist notion continues that performativity; to be post-Orientalist is to perform a novelty that claims a departure from, but performs that very function of, Orientalism.

Civil Society and the Democracy Paradigm: The Case of Democracy Promotion

Democracy and civil society have been recurrent themes in debates on the Arab uprisings. They are conceptualized as being of particular importance to the region's future, and thus in need of being strengthened. However, much of these debates clearly reproduce a Eurocentric and liberal teleology that hide specific assumptions about what democracy and civil society actually are, and that also hide the connection between these assumptions and the furthering of neoliberalization. In spite of the continuing use of Eurocentric understandings of democracy and civil society, there remains the claim of being critical and new. It is thus important to in-

terrogate this, and show that in fact there is continuity and not disjuncture in the ways in which democracy and civil society are imagined.

Despite being one of the buzzwords of our times, 'democracy' is rarely clearly defined by scholars or writers who work on the contemporary Middle East. It seems to be the case that it is presented as though it has no underlying assumptions: a concept that simply makes sense. The aim in this section is to unpack what 'democracy' is and how it is represented in reference to the 2010-2011 uprisings, and in turn what it meant by 'democracy promotion,' an activity directly linked to civil society.[11] Indeed it is clear that the form of democracy that is usually referred to is, first, one among many, and second, the form that is most conducive to neoliberalism by way of electoralism and fascination with representationalism through elected representatives as opposed to a notion of accountability. In other words, what is at stake here is the representation of democracy such that the globalized standard today is revamped. Procedural democracy becomes the top priority, as this fosters continued neoliberalization, and this favouring of procedural democracy occurs at the expense of other conceptualizations of democracy. As argued by Tagma et al., this demonstrates a clear liberal bias: "The understanding of democracy displayed here is clearly at odds with other understandings of democracy—such as radical democracy, which sees politics as consisting of lengthy and open-ended contestations, or social democracy, which is suggestive of social justice, solidarity and egalitarianism" (386). As mentioned in the first section of this paper, the dominant conceptualization of democracy thus ignores neo-imperialism and social justice whilst focusing on electoralism. Moreover, this dominant conceptualization articulates specific conditions as necessary for the 'transition' to democracy, most notably: a free market, a 'strong' civil society, human rights, and a host of individual civic liberties.

In the literature on the Middle East it is assumed that civil society is the 'private sphere' whose function is to exist as a space of freedom that restricts the power of the state, conceptualized as the organs of government. The state in Arab contexts is represented as particularly authoritarian and thus in need of an especially powerful civil society that can restrain it. Altan-Olcay and Icduygu note that civil society organizations are seen as outside of the state, mediating the relationship between citizens and the (authoritarian) state. Thus civil society organizations are seen as organizations that bring about tolerance, peace and civility (159). As NGOs started to proliferate across the Arab world, they began to be conceptualized as a possible counterbalance to authoritarian states. As Islah Jad writes, "The expansion of NGOs is widely viewed as constituting the development of an Arab 'civil society' that can contain the authoritarian state and as a healthy sign of real, 'bottom-up' democracy in the region" (177). Jad also notes, however, that the proliferation of NGOs may also be viewed as a new and growing form of dependency on the West.

Indeed the link between civil society in countries like Egypt and democracy promotion confirms this relationship of dependency. Democracy promotion has become one of the pillars of American foreign policy and democratization has been central to the conditionality imposed on Middle Eastern countries by international actors (Stivachtis 102). As argued by Stivachtis, democracy promotion cannot but place countries on a civilizational hierarchy and create unequal relations within international society (111). Civil society in postcolonial contexts has constituted one of the main mediums through which democracy promotion is spread, which has rendered civil society as one of the most crucial spaces in 'post-revolutionary' Arab countries. Following this, civil society has been posited as essential to democratic transitions and thus any events perceived

as 'attacks' on civil society are seen as negatively affecting the prospects of the Arab uprisings themselves. The centrality of civil society means that the literature on its role in Arab countries is extensive, particularly among think-tanks. Hisham Hellyer, a Brookings fellow who boasts expertise on the region, has written that "civil society is critical to Egypt's transitional process—because it does jobs that no one else has the time or inclination to do. Egypt is a stronger country if civil society is stronger." In a post for USAID, Mahmoud Farouk—Director of Egyptian Center for Public Policy studies—writes: "While Egypt's civil society plays an important role in defending civilian rights and promoting development, civil society organizations frequently find themselves under criticism. Our contributions are belittled. Our work is obstructed. Our motivations are called into question." He suggests that the solution to this is to produce films that explain to Egyptians what civil society is. The Atlantic Council, arguing in a similar vein, has even suggested that Egyptians do not yet understand the role and importance of civil society: "The fact is that civil society as a legitimate (and beneficial) zone of activity separate from the state is not yet a widely accepted concept in Egypt." They go on to call for a fair NGO law that is rational and that allows for freedom of expression. It is difficult to miss the paternalism in many of these articles and statements. Indeed Charles Dunne, Director of the MENA Freedom House project, in a hearing on "The Struggle for Civil Society in Egypt" stated: "My deepest concern here is not for me but for Egyptians themselves. Having served there as a Foreign Service officer for three full years, I came to love the country, and its people. They deserve better. Unfortunately that's not what they're getting." This paternalism, linked to the clear liberal underpinning[12] of such organizations, should be seen as problematic and worrying, rather than as the only solution to the problems in Arab societies. Thus it is clear that while claims to being post-Orientalist are being made, they do not in actual fact perform a critical act and continue to reproduce Western liberal assumptions about what constitutes democracy and how civil society can be used to democratize Arab societies.

Gender Equality through Rights-Based Approaches

Discussions on gender and sexuality have been central in the literature on the 2010-2011 uprisings, as gender continues to be a key indicator of civilizational standards.[13] This is not a new phenomenon, and dates back to the start of the European colonial project. Following this, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa continue to be scrutinized based on how far up the ladder they are with regards to gender equality. Gender equality here is conceptualized according to Rights-Based Approaches (RBAs) that construct women and unorthodox sexual orientation typologies as special groups with specific problems. The solutions proposed to said 'problems' are presented (and in turn represented) as though they are universal and neutral, even though they often reproduce liberal notions of gender equality. This is despite the fact that feminism as a discipline has undergone several 'critical turns,' the most recent of which led to intersectionality.[14] These approaches are represented as being new and thus distinct from previous approaches that were more likely to reproduce Eurocentric assumptions about gender. It is precisely this performativity of being 'new' that is important to probe in order to show how many of the same assumptions underlie these 'new' approaches.[15]

During the 2010-2011 uprisings it became increasingly common to hear statements about women and either their presence or absence within the protests. The main problem with such statements is that they reproduce a classic liberal feminist trope: that of the separation between the public and private spheres alongside secular/re-

ligious binaries. Any transgressions or non-transgressions of this separation thus become important to the analysis, as is clear from articles such as Jessica Winegar's in *American Ethnologist*. In this article she 'contrasts' women's experiences at home with the images of the Egyptian revolution in Tahrir, largely dominated by men, and implicitly laments the fact that although women are major social actors, they were unable to take to the streets and protest, for a variety of reasons. In one scene she explicitly lays out the dichotomy between men protesting and women cooking (while watching the protests on television): "Yet here Mona (her neighbor) and I were, on what was sure to be a defining day in Egypt's nascent revolt, cooking in the kitchen." In another part she speaks of questions she received from friends abroad asking her "where the women are?" and details her discomfort with discussing gender and Arab women with friends back home who may not be as familiar with the contextual specificities and thus may have stereotypical understandings:

> Early on in the uprising, many of us foreign academics and journalists in Cairo started to receive e-mail inquiries from abroad asking us, "Where are the women in the revolution?" We always have to struggle between our suspicion of these kinds of questions, loaded as they are with very particular presumptions about and desires for women in the region, and our own feminist interest in women's activities.

This therefore positions her as critical compared to her friends back home, and as someone who is familiar with the context. Thus we see here the representation of being critical that is, in effect, non-performative. Despite this, her article clearly reproduces a liberal understanding of the clear separation between private and public as a *key element of society*. Thus the point here is not whether this separation exists or not, or whether women protested or not, but rather that the entire argument serves to solidify the view that the public/private sphere is deterministic of social relations and that it prevents women from doing what they really want to do: protest in the streets. In order to do this, she ignores the literature that deals with the role of women workers and Egyptian protest movements (Beinin and Lockman; Beinin; El-Mahdi), as well as the literature that problematizes the over-emphasis of public and private spheres in gender analysis (Okin; Chinkin; Landes; Joseph).

On the other hand, some posited the presence of female protesters as positive because they show that "the Arab world has come around to the Western world's ways of treating women," and contrast the negative situation of women before the uprisings with the empowered positive situation of women during the uprisings, thus positing a progressive linear teleology (Sjoborg and Whooley, forthcoming). The negative situation is often explained through culturalist reasoning. Culturalist representations remain predominant in much analysis on the Arab world in gender. This holds true for think-tank literature as well. For example, in a research paper for Brookings Shadi Hamid writes: "The prevailing culture in the Arab world, for now at least, does not view women the same way that Western cultures do. In other words, getting to gender equality is probably going to take a very long time" (Good).

The indicators often used to 'measure' the status of Arab women usually rely on key liberal feminist assumptions regarding gender equality. Ranging from the status of Arab women's employment[16] to the number of Arab women present in government bodies,[17] these indicators measure women's access to the market and to political power that is limited precisely because of the absence of social justice. The World Bank report on the Arab Spring and women even posits that Arab women

are having a hard time balancing their family life with work, bringing to mind the exact trajectory of Eurocentric feminism that occurred elsewhere. These indicators have become the accepted currency of measuring gender equality, and are made concrete by indexes such as the Global Gender Gap Report. The United Nations Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) also acts as an important determinant of the status of Arab gender relations, despite the fact that it is part of the problematic attempt to universalize a Eurocentric human rights discourse.[18] Importantly, these measurements in effect create civilizational hierarchies that rely on gender.

To conclude, it is notable that despite several critical turns within gender studies the field of gender and the Middle East continues to be represented by liberal assumptions and culturalist analysis. Thus even new work published after the most recent critical turn towards intersectionality in effect reproduces older civilizational narratives of gender. This is clear both in discussions on the presence/absence of women during the uprisings as well as the use of sexual rights to delegitimize causes, thus clearly demonstrating the non-performativity of the critical turn. Alternative approaches that center Marxist or postcolonial understandings of gender are one way out of simplistic reductionism and the representation of civilizational hierarchies based on gender and sexuality. These would instead emphasize materiality, social justice and anti-imperialism as important lived realities for Middle Eastern women, and unpack the ways in which these were part and parcel of the Arab uprisings.

Copts and the 'Minority Question'

The constraining influence of Rights-Based Approaches can also be seen in relation to understanding events including their favorite advocacy target: minorities. It is especially odd—perhaps not so much when the continuity of Orientalist practices of racism and Eurocentrism are revealed—that think-tankers continue to advocate a one-size-fits-all approaches to 'equal citizenship' whilst hiding power dynamics (Malak, forthcoming). This is reflected in the literature that talks about how the 'Arab Spring' provided an opportunity for equality and failed; blaming it on the region's inherent 'democracy deficit' and placing it within a transition to democracy paradigm. This paradigm posits the 'minority problem' in the whole region as a fait accompli: that Arabs just have an issue with those who are not Muslim. This obstacle is not deconstructed, nor is it probed as a colonial artefact. Moreover, even some of those 'minorities' are othered, think-tankers claim, in the sense that their decisions to support Arab rulers are "strange" despite being victims (El-Essawi). By performing this tempocentrism[19] that obscures the colonial legacy and attributes community strength based on size and censuses, this classic RBA, which rests so firmly on individualism, means that in the literature the 'minority problem' persists. It persists under the racist designation of the *sui generis* 'minority problem' with its other namesake of 'sectarianism.'[20] The continuation of Orientalism in the literature is so strong that chauvinistic attitudes towards Copts in Egypt - for example the categorization of a 'wealthy minority' (ibid.), a typical neoliberal problem—is blamed on Egyptian society's inherent sectarianism rather than neoliberalism.[21] Often such Orientalism is reinforced by yielding to Eurocentric foreign entities such as the Catholic Church or the Anglican Church as the 'critical' voices that "predicated extremists [would be] filling vacuums left by the ousting of autocratic regimes" (ibid). This aims to impose European tempo-historicism by transplanting the Church-State clash and separation onto the Arab world as the only remedy. Not only is it blatantly obvious that the Church-State clash is a result of the European Enlightenment, but its remedies are

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taken to be the remedy to Egypt's 'minority problem'. No attempt is made to provincialize Enlightenment ideas and the sick nationalism it produced resulting in the 'minority problem.'

Such representations are different than those that seek to deconstruct the category of minority in which alternative historicizations emerge of how the juridical category of 'minority' was created as legitimating for the mandate system (Mitchell 99). By understanding how this historicization informed the emergence of nation-states in the region, such as in Britain's Unilateral Declaration of Independence of Egypt in 1922 which subjected 'independence' to several conditions, one of which was the 'protection of minorities,' we can begin to formulate alternative categorizations. This is a profound symptom of the region that is riddled with imperial high politics; one need only see how the treaty of Lausanne of 1923 created overnight the category of 'minority' based only on religion as opposed to other markers[22] that continue to be rejected today in Turkey by way of this colonial artefact (Tambar). Indeed even from a disciplinary point of view the literature on Copts continues to enclave itself in a 'ghetto' of its own and is rarely discussed vis-à-vis other conceptualizations, if at most it is with discussions on *other* minorities–this seems to largely be the exception that confirms the rule of the rigidity of the category of 'minority' as a marker of religion (Philipp 1995). The concept, theoretically and disciplinarily, cannot seem to have conversations with other disciplines and theories. This contribution here firmly positions itself within the question of neoliberalism and Orientalism at large in a hope to move past this deadlock. Alternative theorizations may wish to explore the emergence of capitalism with respect to different classes, factions, communal groups and different geographies during colonial Egypt using the approach of Uneven and Combined Development (U&CD) to explain how certain groups accumulated capital which today is policed by a marker of religion.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to make a two-fold argument: to demonstrate that claims to being critical and post-Orientalist within Middle East studies are often non-performative and therefore do not complete the act they claim to undertake; and second, to show that instead, the performativity is one that consolidates the neoliberalization of the region. It should come as no surprise that the Middle East has been and continues to be the product of neoliberalism. In fact the very inception of the geospatial concept was the very product of neoliberal governmentality: a savvy Australian Navy officer by the name of Robert Jackson who was responsible for coordinating trade bottlenecks during World War II fleshed out the term 'the Middle East' and gave it its meaning (Mazower). This is far more elucidating than the widespread conception that it was Alfred Mahan who coined the term, and it should come as no surprise that this was the genealogy presented in the special issue of *Security Dialogue* titled *The new Middle East*: *A Critical Appraisal* as mentioned in the first part of the paper (Christou and Adamides). This genealogy shows the neoliberal governmentality behind the history of the region: it was viewed through the logic of foreign trade with respect to foreign powers.

It is clear that to hide underlying causes of the uprisings, a similar cloak was needed to hide neoliberalism. This involved a rich tapestry of 'Islamic' discourse that embraced neoliberalism head on, accepted the 'failed state' thesis, the white man's burden, and welcomed foreign aid (in fact even asking why it was postponed), all in a new 'critical' fashion that was post-positivist. It also included the continuation of culturalist assumptions in approaches to gender, sexuality, and minorities that underline the civilizational hierarchy dominating Middle East studies even today.

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This was done with Fukuyama's same deterministic attitude but not in an end of history thesis, but in an end of the Orientalism thesis. The ultimate irony, and sad reality, is that Orientalism is alive and well.

Notes

[1] A clear example is a 2012 US Institute of Peace report, that stated the following: In February 2011, a workshop at Stanford University cosponsored [sic] by USIP, George Washington University's Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication, and Stanford's Liberation Technology Program discussed the state of the art in empirical research and theory development relevant to the emerging Arab struggles. The scholars, activists, and representatives from technology companies particularly focused on the new data that might be used to address these urgent theoretical questions. In September 2011, a similar group convened at USIP in Washington, D.C., alongside senior U.S. policy officials to present new research to a public audience and to continue the conversation in a private workshop.

[2] Neil Lazaraus has argued that postcolonial approaches fixate on the representational aspect of Orientalism and fail to grasp the materiality of representational politics. We subscribe to Lazaraus' take and locate Orientalist politics within the representation of an anteriority of the Middle East using a materialist outlook can move past this impasse. We also show how continued Orientalist representations further a neoliberal agenda.

[3] The post-positivist turn denotes a theoretical approach that does not subscribe to objective and neutral formulations of knowledge as reflecting an external reality, but instead one that looks at performativity. Judith Butler captures this point succinctly: "performativity seeks to counter a certain kind of positivism according we which we might begin with already delimitated understandings of what gender, the state, and the economy are." For more see Judith Butler ("Performative Agency" 147).

[4] Hobson has been among the first to say that World politics at the international level have a Eurocentric discourse performed through the concept of the 'failed state' as a civilizational burden similar to the 'white man's burden'. This argument has not been made with respect to the Arab uprisings before.

[5] Hobson's argument that imperial era racism was repackaged into realism, through anarchy, as a feature of the international world provides an accurate genealogy of how this theoretical notion polices non-Eurocentric parts of the world today.

[6] For examples of works that cite the US promotion of 'moderate Islamists' and the failure of the 'moderate thesis' see: Zaheer Kazmi.

[7] For a concise history of the racial underpinnings of political science in general and the development of the Journal of Race Development see Robert Vitalis ("Making Racism Invisible"; "Birth of a Discipline").

[8] See call for papers by the journal titled *Security*. Humanities and Social Science Net Online, 24 Apr. 2014. Web. 1 Sept. 2014. <http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=213237>.

[9] The IMF deal has been frozen after a change of power in Egypt on June 12, 2013 that saw the ouster of Morsi, only a 'staff level agreement' was signed under Morsi in November 2012 with the remainder of the deal to be negotiated and ratified by the incoming parliament resulting in the delay as late as June 2013. For more see: "IMF Reaches Staff-Level Agreement with Egypt on US$ 4.8 Billion Stand-By Agreement." *IMF Press Release* 12/446. International Monetary Fund, 20 Nov. 2012. Web. 3 May 2015.

[10] See CNN correspondent Becky Anderson's interview with Mohamed El Baradei and her Orientalist question if Egypt is a 'failed state'. "El Baradai: Egypt is a 'Failed State.'" Online video clip. *Youtube*. Youtube, 14 Feb. 2013. Web. 3 May 2015.

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[11] The definition of civil society is contentious, despite an apparent agreement in the literature on the Middle East, where it is most often referring to the representation of non-governmental organizations. A more Marxist definition, on the other hand which needless to say is not represented at all, would argue that civil society refers to much more and that it encapsulates almost all non-state institutions and actors including most importantly classes outside the ruling class. For the sake of this argument, however, we assume that civil society represents non-governmental organizations.

[12] Indeed Dunne went on to state: "Egyptian NGOs committed to democracy could play a major role in steering the government to liberal political change, and drawing the attention of the world to its successes and shortcoming. But the government of Egypt has moved swiftly to forestall this possibility."

[13] For more, see: Towns ("Status of Women"; "Civilization").

[14] There is a debate surrounding the question of what exactly intersectionality is: an approach, a framework, a methodology, or a discipline. In this paper we treat it as an approach to gender analysis.

[15] A clear example of this is the ways in which intersectionality, although posited as post-positivist and critical, often reproduces liberal identity politics and thus continues to perpetuate Eurocentrism. For more, see: Carbin, Maria, and Sara Edenheim. "The Intersectional Turn in Feminist Theory: A Dream of a Common Language?" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 20.3 (2013): 233-248. Web. 3 May 2015.

[16] See: World Bank. "Missing Voices: Gender Equality in the Arab World." *Worldbank.org*. World Bank, 14 Mar. 2014. Web 3 May 2015.
See: Ghanem, Hafez. "Inclusive Growth after the Arab Spring." *Brookings.edu*. Brookings, 30 Jan. 2013. Web. 3 May 2015.

[17] See: Mabrouk, Mirette F. "The Precarious Position of Women and Minorities in Arab Spring Countries." *brookings.edu*. Brookings, 1 June 2012. Web. 3 May 2015.

[18] For example, see: "Poll Ranks Egypt Worst Arab State for Women." *Project on Middle East Democracy*. POMED, n.d. Web. 3 May 2015.

[19] The term tempocentrism coined by John Hobson designates the temporalization of politics such that certain periodizations and linearity is favored, making explanations that can arrive to the present neatly. For more see Hobson.

[20] The use of the problematic analytical concept of 'sectarianism' is widespread in the literature. See Tadros.

[21] These attitudes arise out of the uneven and combined development of capitalism in which a rising class is ostracized by way of singling out a particular trait of that class. In this case it is that of a Coptic Christian businessmen-Naguib Sawiris-often the same ostracization can be at play with female businessmen and members of different class factions of the ancien régime. Examples of such attitudes towards other groups of society after intense implementation of neoliberalism include anti-Chinese sentiment in Indonesia after IMF imposed conditions in 1997. For more see Klein (Shock Doctrine).

[22] Kabir Tambar details how the question of the community group of Alevis continues to be sidelined because minority groups as recognized by the treaty of Lausanne are only defined along a religious axis. This shows the precarious nature and limits of the concept of 'minority.' Tambar details how other mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of subjects, in the transition from empire to state better grasp and locate such representations that are outside the nation-state. One can use Tambar's concept of belonging and representation and apply it to Copts in Egypt to better grasp dynamics of topographic inclusion and the representations of 'Coptic communities' as opposed to the continued persistence of the 'Coptic question' vis-à-vis the state. For such nationalist representations that describe an impasse between the state and Copts see Issandr El Amrani ("Coptic Question").

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The Impact of the Arab Spring at an Egyptian University: A Personal Experience

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The Egyptian Revolution on January 25–part of the 2011 Arab Spring–and the consequent June 30, 2013 Revolution have marked important turning points in the history of modern Egypt. The curricula and courses offered by Egyptian universities, as well as their academic activities and employment structure, have been greatly affected by these momentous events. Furthermore, the revolutions have opened a wider territory of freedom and emboldened both staff members and students. This article attempts to answer questions related to the changes that have occurred with regard to the university courses, activities and structures. The article is based on the writer's personal experience as an associate professor in the English Department and in the Faculty of Education at Alexandria University. It is further influenced by the writer's experiences as an elected member of the committee that observed–after twenty years of appointment by the National Security Department–the new elections for deans and heads of departments; the same committee also moderated debates among the candidates for these posts. As a teacher, I started a new course on revolutionary literature–which I personally designed and taught–and another on politics and media in collaboration with a colleague. From 2011 onward, I have linked and adjusted the materials of mandatory courses, "American Studies," "18th Century English Novel" and "Contemporary Novel" to our revolutions and to current events. I constructed holistic courses by using the three domains of learning: the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor. The paper will discuss the way I used Bloom and Krathwohl taxonomies in combination with other methods to cover these domains. This has made the courses more authentic and livelier to the learners, encouraging them, to quote Paulo Freire, "to assume …the role of creative subjects" and creating "a relationship of authentic dialogue" between teacher and students (5). The articles and texts I use, as well as the students' assignments and feedback, will be included in the paper as empirical materials.

Keywords: Higher Education; Egypt; Politics; Arab Spring

"…in every human breast God has implanted a principle, which we call love of freedom; it is impatient of oppression, and pants for deliverance."
Philis Wheatley

The Egyptian Revolution on January 25—part of the 2011 Arab Spring—and the consequent June 30, 2013 Revolution have marked important turning points in the history of modern Egypt. They have directly affected various professions and fields of life, and the Egyptian university is prominently among them. The curricula and courses offered by the Egyptian universities, as well as their academic activities and employment structure, have been greatly shaped by these momentous events, which have since opened a wider territory of freedom and emboldened both staff members and students.

This paper discusses and gives examples of the changes that have occurred at one Egyptian college with regard to its courses, activities and its employment structure. This will be based on the writer's personal experience as an associate professor of English and American literature, a former acting head of the English Department in the Faculty of Education at Alexandria University and as an elected member of the committee that observed—after twenty years of appointment by the National Security Department—the election of deans and heads of departments and that also directed debates among the candidates for these posts. The paper will show how the writer, by making use of Bloom and Krathwohl taxonomies in combination with other methods, constructed holistic courses by using the three domains of learning: the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor. The articles and texts used, as well as the students' assignments and feedback, will be included in the paper as empirical materials. The paper will also give examples of the newly introduced activities on campus which resulted from the freer atmosphere following the January 25 Revolution and pose questions about the future.

Courses Taught and Adapted

Literature is an interdisciplinary field that requires deep reading and extensive knowledge of other fields such as—to name only a few—history, geography, psychology, anthropology and most certainly, politics. It is not fictitious as some people claim, but rather a reflection of life and society at any given period of time. Hence, as a teacher of literature for more than twenty years, I have always been keen on conveying this interdisciplinary and realistic approach to my students as well as relating the foreign literature I teach to the Egyptian and Arab context. Doing so has always made the study and teaching of literature engaging and interesting to both my students and myself as a teacher. But it has also entailed breaking many taboos and bringing them to the forefront. One important example is politics, which was banned from the Egyptian university campus until the outbreak of the January 25 Revolution.

Like many of my colleagues, I have always paid great attention to integrating the principles of civic education into the content and texts that I teach. Having engaged with the writings of great thinkers such as Paulo Freire (1921-1997) and Edward Said (1935-2003) provided me with part of the theoretical framework on which I based my teaching methodology. Hence, I have been careful to choose texts that cover themes which celebrate tolerance, diversity, acceptance of others and observance of human rights in general. Furthermore, I insist on the importance of training the students, especially those who hope to become teachers, in critical thinking. Having Bloom and Krathwohl taxonomies in mind, I have always been keen on raising debatable and controversial issues in my literature courses. This is particularly important for our students because the majority of them come from government schools, which rarely train their pupils in critical

thinking. Many have never before given a presentation. Hence, having debatable issues in class has always proven to be a successful means of engagement. These presentations enable the students to practice their ideas of diversity and tolerance through various important skills like understanding, analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing, which in turn, entails creativity. In this way, classical texts like Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, George Orwell's Animal Farm and many others have been deeply and critically discussed in the classroom with reference to the current political, religious and social Egyptian background.

However, the outbreak of the January 25 Revolution was an outstanding event in the true sense of the word. It was a renaissance, a great awakening that took us by surprise and inspired indescribable feelings in many Egyptians. It was like the Phoenix rising from the ashes of death. Although there are rumors about possible conspiracies involved in the revolution, they do not, by any means, detract from the importance of the event and all the positive, patriotic and proud feelings that it awaked in the hearts of many Egyptians. It was inevitable that it would move us as teachers and students, and it was particularly influential for the courses taught in the second term of the 2010-2011 academic year, which started in March 2011, forty days after the outbreak of the Revolution.

From that term until the present time, I have linked and adjusted the materials of the mandatory courses that I teach to include the two 2011 and 2013 revolutions. Among these courses are "American Studies," "18th Century English Novel," "Contemporary Novel" and "Modern Criticism." I will highlight one example by focusing on the first course, which I taught to second year students during the 2011 and 2013 second terms.

Linking this course to Egypt's contemporary situation was important for many reasons. First, to quote Donaldo Macedo in his introduction to Paulo Friere's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, it helps students to make use of their own lived experiences: "If students are not able to transform their lived experiences into knowledge and to use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing" (19).

Another goal was to foster their sense of belonging to, and pride in, their country and their great Revolution. Furthermore, comparing the contents of the course to the current Egyptian scene, helped to bridge the gap between cultures. Thereby, through analysis, comparison and contrast students could learn that regardless of time and place, and regardless of cultural, social, religious and other differences, human beings share the need for liberty, equality and justice. Consequently, humans are willing to do anything for the sake of attaining these needs—even when a dear price is to be paid. Regarding the concept of knowledge for the sake of understanding and co-existence, I introduced the students to "Preface to Orientalism," an article written by the Arab American thinker, Edward Said, in 2003. The article was published in Egyptian al-Ahram Weekly only a few months before his death. That year marked twenty-five years since the first publication of Said's major work, Orientalism. We discussed the article with a focus on a selection of his most famous quotes such as: "But there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and knowledge that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation". By so doing, I believed that the course would render itself authentic to the learners, and because students were encouraged to play an active role in it, the resulting classes were livelier. Thus, the students, to quote Paulo Freire, would "assume […] the role of cre-

ative subjects" and, "a relationship of authentic dialogue" between teacher and learners was created (5).

The American Studies course is meant to offer the students an overview of American history and literature. Since it is a one term course, it touches upon certain major historical events such as the arrival of the European emigrants, especially the Puritans, the American Revolution, the American Civil War and the American Civil Rights Movement. Alongside these events, students examined texts that reflect these events and certain literary movements. For example, with the arrival of the Puritans they studied information about the settlers life style together with works by key figures of the time such as Ann Bradstreet, Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather. The American Revolution opens the door to the likes of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson as well as the beginning of individualism and other important movements such as transcendentalism. The study of the American Civil War is usually preceded by the examination of slave narratives and is followed by the Harlem Renaissance. Keeping this framework of events in mind, and taking into consideration the three domains or categories of learning: the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor—referred to as KSA (Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude,)—I decided to have the whole course geared towards two major themes. The first theme was liberty and the second was the celebration of the individual, both of which relate to the idea of creativity. The importance of education was also a sub theme throughout the course. I chose texts that would highlight these themes and that would provide the students context for making comparison to the Egyptian Revolution. Thus, students gained the required course knowledge while simultaneously obtaining different intellectual skills that will affect their attitudes as future teachers and as responsible citizens.

In the following section, I will focus on some of the texts that I chose to fulfill the course's objectives as well as the targeted themes. For example, in examining the Puritans, I asked the students to research their history, their persecution in England and the enforced escape and exile of a certain group—first to Holland and then to the New World, America. It is worth noting that students were already familiar with the Puritans through a course on the history and literature of England, which they had studied in their first term. I also asked them to read briefly about the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), a religio-political organization that was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Bannā (1906-1949). This Movement promoted the Quran and hadith as the proper basis for the society. Due to class and course time limitations, we could not delve deeper into the contextual differences between the Puritans and the MB or their ideological variation, historical evolution and political allegiances. The same deep examination and comparison of other American and Egyptian phenomena was almost impossible due to time restraints. However, we briefly referred to the differences between the movements, and we compared and highlighted the points of similarity that instigated certain major events.

For example, concerning the Puritans and the MB, the students could easily see that despite belonging to different religions (the former are Christians, whereas the latter are Muslims) the two groups shared certain qualities including rigidity and self-righteousness. Furthermore, they both suffered persecution for a myriad of reasons; yet, ironically became intolerant themselves, and in turn, persecuted others. Students came to this conclusion, not only because of the brief research they conducted on the two groups, but also through examining multiple texts.

One of them, Jonathan Edwards' Sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," was highly debated. It offers an example of a harsh-toned religious discourse that tends to portray God as the angry Person,

who is anxiously waiting to crush us like spiders. An interesting debate arose concerning this image of God. The debate centered on fear and love and which of the two is more effective in our relationship with God, or any authority figure, whether they be, for example, a parent, a director at work, or a school principal. The class was divided regarding this matter. Interestingly, some students were not troubled by Edwards' threatening and terrifying tone, believing instead that it is an effective way of making people do good. Students were also assigned to research and give presentations on the life and trial of Ann Hutchinson. She offers an excellent example of someone who, because she was different, was accused of heresy, a common charge awaiting any person who did not adhere to the social norm of the time. Hutchinson's situation was more complicated because she was a woman, which brought forth the issue of gender and women subjugation. This text, as well as Edwards' sermon, offered effective examples of the rigidity and intolerance that were starting to appear on the Egyptian scene at that time. Following January 25th Revolution, some of the people who called for freedom became intolerant of other opinions, which made it appear as if one dictatorship was to be replaced by another form of despotism. Furthermore, in certain sects of the society—namely the Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood—a tone of religious fanaticism began rising against other groups of different and liberal views, even if they were Muslims. They even went so far as to ask those who differ from them to leave the country and immigrate to America and Canada. When I taught the same course with slightly different texts in 2013, it coincided with the rule of another ex-Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsi, a member of the MB group. The same intolerant atmosphere was again dominant in the Egyptian scene. Students were courageously, objectively and deeply comparing the Puritan context with the then current situation and regime. In this way, the study of the Puritans was historically and literally interesting and informative, and the class took advantage of the freedom granted to the university after the Revolution. Cognitively, learners acquired knowledge about this sect's life style and literature. The skills and activities they practiced moved many of them, as they expressed later in their course evaluation. They started to reconsider the ways they regarded those who differ from them politically, ideologically and religiously, and furthermore, the students evaluated the space of freedom that the society allows for expressing themselves as individuals. Students also compared the Puritans with other religious, political and ideological sects who, throughout history and across the world, had also failed to accept others. Thus, the Puritan lifestyle and literature highlighted the themes of the course, namely, liberty, individuality and education. The latter helps us to learn about and to defend our rights and additionally provides us with some immunity against brain washing.

From the Puritans, the students then moved to comparing the American Revolution with their own January Revolution, only to discover similar factors initiating the two events despite the hundreds of years separating them. The students saw parallels in the despotic regimes that both colonists and Egyptians suffered from, the imposition of taxes in an unfair way and the gap between the ruled and the ruling regime, which was detached and condescending in its attitude. The learners were asked to research and give presentations on certain important concepts such as the social contract propagated by thinkers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This brought forth an interesting discussion regarding the contract that exists between the government and the governed. Students were bold in their criticism of the notion of the "patriarchy," which affects our societies, not only politically, but also socially. The majority refused and chal-

lenged the idea of blind obedience to the "father" regardless of what he does. In that regard, they made reference to the speeches given by the ex-president, Hosni Mubarak, during the eighteen days preceding his ousting. He famously played on patriarchal sentiments and the expectance of his subjects' loyalty and obedience. To openly discuss and criticize a political presidential speech, was unprecedented in our university

This discussion brought forth once more the importance of knowing our rights and duties, which in turn is more likely to occur when people receive a proper education. So we discussed the importance of education—a sub theme in this course—and how, according to the French thinker, Michel Foucault, "Knowledge is Power". During the discussion, we also made a cross reference to a great text that the students had studied during the previous year, George Orwell's Animal Farm. This novella highlights the role of ignorance and illiteracy in creating a dictator and in brainwashing the minds of people.

Two of the texts examined in relation to the American Revolution were Patrick Henry's famous speech to the second Virginia congregation that was given on March 23, 1775, and "The Declaration of Independence" by Thomas Jefferson—a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, announcing the independence of the thirteen American colonies then at war with Great Britain. Students gave excellent presentations on the two texts comparing them with what happened in January 2011 and the following months. They were also asked to review the many amazing and moving pictures and videos that were published on YouTube about the Egyptian January Revolution. The videos were of young Egyptians challenging death and literally embodying the meaning of Henry's famous sentence "Give me Liberty, or give me Death!" There was in particular one photo of a young man standing boldly and stretching his arms before a large police car with a water cannon (see fig. 1) It was spraying water at the demonstrators in an attempt to scare and disperse them. Other images of the courageous young martyrs served the same purpose.

Students were also asked to read the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and to compare it with the above-mentioned texts by Henry and Jefferson and with the various statements and slogans that were repeated by the Egyptian demonstrators during the January Revolution, such as "Bread, Freedom and Social Justice". They were also asked to read the different articles of the UN Declaration and to highlight in class the articles that most appealed to them. Another mandatory course for our students during the second term is conversation. Since I did not have enough time in my American Studies course to discuss this topic in detail, I coordinated with the conversation course teacher and asked her to include the UN Declaration in her class. She did. In this way, she continued the debate, and the topic was discussed on a larger scale. One more successful and effective text was Ralph Emerson's "Self-Reliance," which is regarded as the manifesto of intellectual independence. Emerson, a transcendentalist, brought forth the idea of individuality, and his text tackled such important themes as foolish consistency, being oneself and imitation as suicide. A group of students was asked to give a presentation on this text. It was interesting to see how deeply they analyzed it. Many identified with Emerson's ideas and agreed that we ought to look at the world with new eyes and to trust ourselves. The discussion brought about certain issues related to imitation, plagiarism and memorization. One of the major defects of the educational system in Egypt is its dependence on the skill of memorization in most of the teaching methods and assessment tools. Students typically learn by rouge memorization instead of understanding, applying and analyzing what-

ever they study. This was reflected in their performance at university level. They find it much easier to read summaries of texts rather than the originals, and they find it better to memorize certain simplified notes about these texts than to make the effort to analyze them. The discussion we had about Emerson made some of them realize that doing so is a form of suicide by which they put an end to their individuality and creativity. Depriving the people of such qualities and gifts was planned and implemented by the previous political regime in Egypt and by any autocratic government or administration. By doing so, the people will follow blindly one single opinion, which is generally that of the ruler and his men.

One more text that served the purpose and opened ground for comparison with the Egyptian post Revolution context was "The Autobiography of Frederick Douglas," which is categorized among the genre of slave narratives. Time restrictions allowed for only the study of an excerpt from this autobiography, which revealed how Douglas was empowered by his ability to read and write. This brought forth Freire's metaphor of "knowledge" regarding it as "the bread of the spirit" unlike illiteracy which is "a poison herb intoxicating and debilitating persons". Douglas' text and other abolitionist writings fostered the ideas of freedom and the individual's struggle to attain it. Students saw how the spirit of Douglas was weakened and whipped out of him by his cruel master, Mr. Edward Covey, a man known for "breaking" slaves. Douglas ran away and sought the help of his original master Mr. Thomas Auld, but he proved a disappointment. Finally he had to fight for himself, and he was successful. Similarly the Egyptians' spirit was, at one point, broken by the dictatorial and corrupted regime that ruled and enslaved them. However, they experienced their own resurrection, and like the Phoenix, they rose out of the ashes of death when they fought peacefully for their liberty. No other power, country or government would help them. Unfortunately like Mr. Auld, many of the governments that spoke of democracy supported our former regimes as long as their interests were fulfilled.

Students examined other texts that highlighted the course's themes. We ended the course with Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. I could not think of a better and more optimistic ending than this piece of work. His dreams were fulfilled later when America elected, for the first time in its history, an African American President. It was important to make students feel that there is always light at the end of the tunnel. The choice of King was also taken because, like our Egyptian revolutionaries, he insisted on non-violent resistance until the end; ours was also "Salmeya".

In every examined text, during every class discussion, and in every student's presentation, the categories of Bloom's revised cognitive and affective taxonomies were taken into consideration. I made sure that students would answer questions with key words that addressed the main categories of these taxonomies. For instance, targeting the levels of "remembering" and "understanding, "students were able to define, describe and name the characteristics and figures of the Puritans, the transcendentalists, the Harlem Renaissance and other events and movements. They furthermore, had to explain, paraphrase and summarize these features in their own words. In an effort to improve their higher intellectual skills, learners were always asked to apply, for example, the characteristics of the Puritans to their literature. As mentioned earlier, they were also asked to compare and contrast historical groups with other similar sects and with the then current situation in Egypt. They were always asked to judge, evaluate and to give their opinions of whatever they studied, analyzed and presented.

To reach these higher intellectual levels, they were also asked to listen carefully to

the discussion or presentations given in class and to respond to them, that is, to either agree or disagree. They were also given the freedom to offer a completely different opinion. Many times we had debates in class regarding a certain issue, for example Edwards' sermon as mentioned earlier. Again, collaborating with the conversation teacher, these debates would continue on a larger scale. Thus the levels of "receiving, responding, valuing and organizing," which constitute the affective taxonomy, were attempted. This would usually lead to the last category: internalization. Students became more aware of the themes and concepts we discussed and thereby more determined in defending their rights. This was especially true of young women. Some, although not many, decided to help in their neighborhood by teaching reading and writing to illiterate people. This came out of their belief in the power of learning and education.

The course was successful and left a great impact on students as is evident from their feedbacks, assignments and the power point presentations that they showed and discussed in class. Many students related each of the texts and the events we studied to the Egyptian Revolution in an authentic and analytical way. They were also very clever and bright in their choice of pictures and audio visual tracks. In this way, their presentations reflected their understanding of the texts and events that they studied as well as their relation to their own Revolution. The students identified with all that they wrote about and studied. For example, one of the students, Menna El Kelany, wrote in her course evaluation: "The themes of liberty and freedom motivate me to defend my rights in the real life against any one. Moreover, the idea of individuality encouraged me more and more to follow my opinion and do not follow [sic] the herd. It also helped me to be more open-minded and respect the others even if they are totally different."

Another student, Asmaa Taher, wrote: "I think American Studies was one of the hardest but useful subjects that we studied in the second year. The themes that we tackled throughout the semester were very important especially the theme of liberty because it enabled us to understand the current events and our rights as well. We studied many important figures like Abraham Lincoln and Emerson and Jefferson, but I think we have to study literary figures not only politicians. I love this course...."

The students' actual understanding of the course and its contents revealed itself in their answers on their final exams. An important exam question contained excerpts from Jefferson's "Declaration of Independence," Phyllis Wheatley's letter and Du Bois' The Soul of Black Folks. Students were asked to comment on these quotations and to relate them to Douglas's autobiography and Lowell's poem "A Stanza on Freedom". The way many students answered the question revealed a deep understanding of what we had discussed over the course of the semester.

New Courses

The January Revolution not only affected the content and teaching methodology of the existing courses, but also resulted in creating new ones. An example is a fourteen-week course entitled "The Arab Spring and the Media" which I designed and taught in collaboration with another colleague. For two academic terms in 2012 and 2013, we taught the course to American Students studying at the TAFL center (Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language) at Alexandria University. The course discussed the elements that lead to the Arab Spring in the Arab world in general, but also in four specific countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria in the chronological order of their revolutions. Other related issues were: the testimonies of those involved in the Arab Spring, the role of women and the repercussions of the Arab Spring for women, democracy in the Arab world, processes of democratic transition and the ascendance of Islamists to power,

the Arab Spring and the New World Order and power relations in the Middle East after the Arab Spring.

Since this was a media and politics course, we made sure that the reading materials covered a variety of articles, interviews and testimonies written from the Arab point of view and reflecting different—and sometimes even conflicting—opinions regarding the Arab Spring. The reason was that our American students had already been exposed to the West's point of view. Since they were studying in Egypt, it was time for them to read, hear and see the Other's point of view. Students agreed and indeed welcomed the idea. They also watched videos and documentaries. Among the texts they read was "Preface to Orientalism"written by Edward Said and which criticized "the US ['s] hardening of attitudes, the tightening of the grip of demeaning generalisation and triumphalist cliché, [and] the dominance of crude power allied with simplistic contempt for dissenters and "others".

In each of the topics covered during the course, we observed the different categories of Bloom's taxonomies. Students read, analyzed and evaluated every opinion discussed in class. They also gave presentations that compared the situation in different regions of the Arab world. This comparative and contrastive attitude added more depth to their presentations and the debates that we carried out in the class. Once more, we took advantage of the freedom and empowerment that our Revolution offered us in discussing different taboos related to politics and religion. This was evident from the positive feedback we received from students. They found the course "very informative"and engaging. It deconstructed certain clichés related to the Orient, particularly regarding the image of Arab women. It also gave them a chance to read the works of certain thinkers whose views are not always welcomed in America such as Edward Said and Noam Chomsky.

One more course, which I personally designed and taught in Arabic in the second term of 2013 to American Students studying in the TAFL center was, "Literature of the Revolution". We started the course with a theoretical background and a discussion of what constitutes the "literature of the Revolution" and "revolutionary literature." The course included revolutionary texts by polarizing rebellious figures like the Egyptian poet, Amal Donqol, whose poetry, despite his death more than 25 years earlier, is still alive and was even sung in Tahrir Square and by revolutionaries on different occasions. It was a multi-genre course, and students examined testimonies by people who took to the Tahrir Square from January 25 until February 11, 2011, alongside poetry, songs by forbidden writers and artists such as Sheikh Imam, a novel, and an excerpt from an autobiography. This course could never have been designed or taught during the Mubarak regime. But, once more, the space of freedom and the courage inherited from, and created by, the January Revolution allowed me to teach it during the MB regime. The Centre administration shared the same view and agreed to the course and even invited an "unwanted" speaker, an opponent of the regime, the writer and columnist, Alaa al-Asawani, to discuss his novel, Yacoubian Building, and other works with the students. He did not meet the students off campus and had an interesting discussion with them and a video conference with their peers at Middlebury College in the US.

In teaching this course, the class buzzed with discussions, debates and interesting and unusual presentations by the students. One of the original research projects focused on the Harry Potter series as an example of revolutionary literature. The novels were then compared with the revolutionary poetry that the students had studied by Abu al-Kassem al-Shaby, Don-

qol, Zein al-Abdeen Fouad and Abdel Rahman al-Abnoudi. When reflecting upon this course, I see that it preceded the June 30 Revolution, and the reading material somehow anticipated it. The current regime at that time underestimated the power of the people and excluded most of the Egyptians from the decision making process. However, the Egyptian people had the final word and fulfilled the meanings suggested by the first text we studied, a poem by the Tunisian poet, Abu al-Kassem al-Shaby, entitled "If the people want to live, fate has to give in". It was a moving poem, and the students listened to it sung by famous Arab singers. The students' feedback was positive, and they admired the literary texts they studied and their strong revolutionary tones and ideas.

New Activities

The freedom resulting from the Revolution, not only affected the content of the courses taught on campus and the introduction of new courses, but also allowed us to discuss politics openly, and to bring many forbidden speakers to the university. We gave our students at the English Department a crash course, entitled "A, B, C on Politics," the aim of which was to raise their political awareness. They learned about the constituents of the state, the various governing bodies, the different forms of government and election and explored the Egyptian constitution. Some of the students who attended this course were interested in learning even more in hopes of spreading their acquired knowledge to raise political awareness in their neighborhoods and in different parts of Alexandria. We also had, for the first time on campus, a novelist, a columnist and scriptwriter, Belal Fadl, who, due to his opposition of the regime and the concept of heredity, was never favored by Mubarak and his men. He wrote publicly against Jamal Mubarak, the son of the ex-president, who was being prepared to succeed his father in the democratic election. Fadl's meeting and discussion was lively and stimulating. Other guests included the novelist and columnist, Sahar al-Mougy, who shared her testimony from her eighteen days in Tahrir Square.

Having a crash course on politics, meetings with these intellectual and revolutionary figures, and having the mandatory courses geared towards the themes of liberty and individuality were very important. Following the Revolution, some students misunderstood the true meaning of freedom of expression and consequently behaved in a violent and aggressive way. This can be attributed to the fact that they were brought up in a dictatorial regime that gave power to one voice only, that of the ruler. Hence, they were not trained to listen to each other nor to accept or respect a diversity of opinions. Furthermore, the educational system that they had been exposed to for years was also dictatorial and followed Friere's negative theory of the banking concept of education in which

> [...] knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable [the teachers] upon those whom they consider to know nothing [the learners]. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teachers existence—but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher. (72)

Another stimulating post-Revolution activity was electing the deans of colleges and the heads of departments. There was an election for a committee of three members, whose job it was to observe and di-

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rect the debates among the candidates for these academic posts. It was a fascinating and unprecedented experience. As a member of this committee, we organized a day for each of the three candidates for deanship. Each one of them met with all staff members at the college and discussed his/her program and objectives as a future dean. On the fourth day, we had a debate with the three candidates. Despite objection from college administration about holding this debate, we, the committee members, insisted on holding it. It was a success. The majority of college staff members enthusiastically took part in voting, and we had a democratically elected dean for the first time after twenty years of appointments by the National Security Department, which was humiliating to us. We used the same procedure when the department head post became vacant. The same positive attitude was prevalent among college staff members.

The Present

Four years after the outbreak of the January 25 Revolution and less than two years since the subsequent June 30 Revolution, much in Egypt has changed for the better and the worse. This applies to Egypt in general but most especially to the country's University microcosm. As a result of the chaos that followed the fall of the MB regime, there is an attempt to indirectly prohibit politics on the university campuses. However, some university professors and students have learned to cherish their agency and are determined to never relinquish the rights they earned from their two revolutions. As a result, political issues must continue to be raised in the classroom, and students must be made aware of how politics can imposes itself on the study and analysis of literature. We, the teachers and students, continue to refer to our two revolutions in our department's courses.

As for the employment structure, it has unfortunately suffered a drawback. The law regarding the election of deans has changed, and the candidates for the post are to be interviewed by appointed, rather than elected, committees. However, there is no returning to the past. Indeed, the wider territory of freedom provided by the Revolutions has drastically changed the threshold of fear. Inevitably, the majority has learned the language of rights and have realized that no position is immune from accountability.

Conclusion

The outbreak of the January 25 Revolution was a groundbreaking event after which nothing remained the same. The Egyptian university was positively and negatively affected by it. This paper attempted to show the positive effect of this revolution, which has had its imprint on the courses, activities and employment structure of the university. It also brought more freedom to the campus, yet, the battle is ongoing. As a result of the chaos following the fall of the MB regime, there is now a new attempt to prohibit politics on the university campus. The law regarding the election of deans has changed, and the candidates for the post are to be interviewed by appointed, rather than elected, committees. I believe that university professors must continue to carry the torch of light, freedom and democracy brought about by the two Revolutions of 2011 and 2013. Suppressing freedom of expression is never the way to regain order. Rather, we should train our students to accept others and plant in them a respect for humanity, individuality, liberty and creativity, not as meaningless clichés, but as true living values that will make their world, life and countries better. The future is still in the making, but I believe that our dearly earned freedom will not be lost, but rather, will bear its fruit in due time.

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Like on Different Planets? Lebanese Social Scientists in Their Scientific Communities

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Social sciences and humanities (SSH) at Arab universities are often described as suffering from a lack of academic freedom. However, institutional autonomy and the individual academic's opportunities and constraints vary considerably among Arab institutions. Individuals conducting social sciences and humanities under different configurations of local, regional and international influences from the state, the market and the civil society are not equally affected. One problem made evident by existing research literature on Arab social sciences is the comparably weak networking capacity of its academic publishing and library systems. It suggests an over-dependence on international systems, a lack of direct communication amongst local and regional scientific communities, and intellectual bigotry. This article sheds light on the question of how Arab institutions and individuals cope with this particular shortcoming in their academic system. It focuses on the correlations between institutional and individual autonomy as measured by the modes of decision making and funding. The article will also explore the relationship between an institution's autonomy and its interconnectedness as measured by its library services and by the references in faculty's dissertations. Data stem from interviews with faculty, surveys among students, and visits to libraries of two different universities in Lebanon, which are analyzed in comparison. Moreover, several networking initiatives are characterized by which social scientists in the region tackle this problem. Through private initiative, these academics seem to recover regional coherence based on Arab language and experience.

Keywords: Connectivity; Governance; Higher Education; Language Gap; Lebanon; Social Sciences

Introduction[1]

Apart from macro-statistical reports on the development of higher education and sciences in the Arab world,[2] few academics have addressed the status, role, and self-conception of the SSH in Arab countries on a more individual and content-oriented level.[3] Their conclusions were that Arab social sciences either uncritically adhere to Western concepts inherited from colonial power relations (Nasser and Abouchedid), are ‚imposed on' by the international agencies that finance their projects, and are overly influenced by the practices of the international publishing business (Hanafi, *Donor Community*; "Social Sciences Research;" Kabbanji, "Internationalization"), or are highly self-referential, even bigoted in their Islamic or Arab nationalist views (Badawi; Yassin; Sayyid; Salamé; Kawtharani).

The prior of these authors focus on donor communities and so perceived dependencies, the latter on content analysis. Except for Badawi, who deals exclusively and systematically with Egyptian public universities, these works are impressionist, i.e. dealing with examples from the authors' own academic experience.

Later, in another article, Hanafi ("Les Systèmes universitaires") researched Arab SSH publications systematically by counting references in Arab social studies works and by interviewing scholars in the field. He categorized the references in order to discover to what extent Arab social scientists are aware of the output of their colleagues. His findings suggest that there are two segregated realms of SSH in Arab countries: One at public institutions, where social scientists teach, research, and publish in Arabic, the other one at private universities of foreign provenience, such as the *American University of Beirut* (AUB), *American University in Cairo, Université St. Joseph*, *Lebanese American University* (LAU). According to Hanafi, the latter are disconnected from their Arab environment because the criteria for publishing internationally demand the perception of international secondary literature and compliance with international academic standards. Therefore, these academics fall short of appropriate participation in local debates. On the other hand, the researchers in the national systems, who write in Arabic, are isolated from the international current state of research because of their lack of foreign languages and their limited academic facilities including libraries and online media. Assuming, as an academic standard, that scholars should first ensure the originality of their intended research subject, both groups would therefore be substandard in the context of the global scientific community.

Does something exist among Arab social scientists that can be termed a regional scientific community? If so, does it have the capacity to anticipate social processes and give advice in a region in which diplomatic and economic ties to Europe and the US are often more intensive than ties to neighboring states? This article asks what opportunities and constraints form the coordinates of academic work from two sample universities in Lebanon, and it furthermore seeks to reveal what patterns of connectivity result therefrom. Part 1 will be dedicated to the institutional structure of the two sample institutions from which the data were taken: the *Lebanese University* (LU) and the LAU. In part 2, I will present a small set of data gathered by counting out references in PhD theses written by faculty, who work in these two institutions, regarding the origins of these references. Part 3, finally, will present a few initiatives to build a functional scientific community among SSH researchers in and about the Arab region.

Two Environments for Academic Work: Lebanese University and Lebanese American University

Mission and History

LU was founded in the 1950s and 1960s successively, foremost to complement the higher education institutions already existing in Lebanon. It is the only state sponsored institution of mass higher education in Lebanon. In 2011-2012, it enrolled about 38.3% of all university students in Lebanon, i.e. 73,698 students.[4] Because it requires only symbolic tuition fees, it was the first to provide higher education for Lebanese students from low income families. Among these families, Muslims were overrepresented, which resulted in an increase of Muslims in higher education and public office. The share of women among university students rose, too, as many low and middle income families traditionally give priority to their sons when considering high expenses for education at a private university. Hence, hopes were staked on LU that it would foster integration among Lebanon's citizens in terms of class, sex, confessional and geographical belonging.

In 1977/78, after the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon, however, twelve of LU's then seventeen faculties were split into two or more branches and were dispersed over separate regions that were ruled by different warring parties. The measure was intended to enable academic work to continue under the otherwise aggravated conditions resulting from commuting through the country. Simultaneously, it created a system of confessional and political fragmentation that lasts until today. The branches located in East and West Beirut for instance, are mostly populated by Christian and Muslim faculty and students respectively. Moreover, in certain parts of the country, one of the two large political camps, "March 8" or "March 14," clearly dominates local politics, including that of the faculty and student councils in the respective branch.

As for LAU, its precursor institution was a Presbyterian girls college founded by American missionaries in the 1920s. It became co-educational in 1974, and was granted university status by the Lebanese state in 1996. LAU consists of seven schools, entities that parallel the faculties in other universities, and embodies seventeen subject-specific centers and institutes. Its student population numbers 8,000 approximately.

From 2004 on, LAU entered a phase of intensive self-assessment, strategic planning, and expansion. It attained accreditation by the *New England Association of Schools and Colleges* in 2009. Research was made an integral part of faculty's job profiles, and a de-centralized, participatory, structure of councils and committees is successively being established in order to organize the ever-increasing variety of activities.

Structure of Governance

Decision making at both LU and LAU is based on a collegiate structure of councils, which consist of faculty on every level of academic and administrative work (Lebanese Republic; LAU "Faculty Governance"). At LAU, this structure is complemented by specific bodies for the different realms of self-administration, such as the Curriculum Council, the Admission Council, and the Budget Committee. At LU such services are provided by service units of non-faculty professionals—"bureaucrats"—in the LU's administration. Both universities have a supervisory body of non-employees: the Lebanese government in the case of LU, and a Board of Trustees for LAU, the majority of which must consist of US citizens.

The participatory structure at LU was undermined by the fact that, since the war, responsibilities such as the appointment and promotion of faculty members were shifted from the Faculty and University Councils to the Lebanese government (Nauffal 118; El-Amine and Chaoul 40-41).

Important decisions were postponed over long periods of time, such as the promotion of more than 600 contracted faculty members to full time positions between 2008 and 2014 (Touma). So while only a minority of LU's professors have the chance to impact decision making, at LAU on the other hand, the numerous administrative obligations are even sometimes felt as limiting the capacity to pursue other activities including research.

Moreover, after the withdrawal of the Syrian army in 2005, political representation became more competitive in Lebanon, and the selection of cadres and other important decisions at LU was also subject to political competition between the political parties. (LU Political Science 1 Senior; LU Arts 1 Senior; El-Hage; Haidar; Maatouq; Khoder). While some the LU professors that I interviewed asserted that academic freedom at LU is absolute, others mentioned that fear and distrust among faculty result from divergent political loyalties and can clearly be felt. Furthermore they revealed that there are politically sensitive topics, which the majority of students and teachers attempt to avoid. Fears to utter certain opinions on campus was apparent among LU students in a 2010 study (Rahal). Confrontation between different political student factions became violent at times, though not always triggered by political controversy ("Lubnān;" "Tajaddud al-ishtibākāt;" Mushallab, "Tajaddud;" "Ishtibāk;" El-Hage). Hence, the LU's administration prohibited political gatherings and advertisement on campus from October 2012 onward (Lebanese University).

Financial Conditions

From 2008 to 2012, LU's total expenditures nearly doubled to become 3,036 USD per student and 223.7 million in total (Nehme; Lebanese University). LAU, by comparison, spent an average of 15,000 USD per student in academic year 2011/12. It can do so because approximately 80% of its budget springs from the tuition fees paid for its students, more than 12,000 USD on average in 2012/13.

Since a nearly 70% increase in salaries in 2012 (Lebanese Republic), full time professors at LU receive a salary that is well-comparable with that of the best paying private universities in the country. With these salaries, the teaching load also increased considerably. Some faculty members stated that it was hardly possible to pursue serious research and fulfill the teaching obligations appropriately, considering that the teaching load now exceeds 300 hours per year for full time faculty. Others were positive that time for research was fairly enough. At both LU and LAU, research is, at least formally, part of the job description of faculty and is a prerequisite for promotion. Unlike LAU, LU does not follow a tenure track procedure. Assistant professors at LU might go on teaching in their position until their retirement, even if they have failed to publish a single article. Many of the SSH academics who teach at LU, pursue their doctoral studies abroad, mainly France. If, back in Lebanon, they continue pursuing research activities, these do not usually contribute to LU's research profile. Instead they are designed, paid for and utilized by non-university institutions. The institutions are traditionally Western or international private institutions, but regional and local proveniences are also becoming increasingly active. They are, however, reluctant to invest in large public universities, whose deep bureaucracies often consume large parts of the invested funds. Lebanon is responding to this problem since 2003 by including SSH in the funding scheme of the *Conseil national de la recherche scientifique*, a public authority which organizes and funds research in Lebanon. Furthermore, three doctoral schools for different groups of disciplines were established at LU in 2007/2008 in order to provide supervision and coordination for research activities.

Virtually all of LAU's faculty receive their PhD abroad. At LAU, then, non-tenured

faculty must pursue research next to a teaching load of six weekly hours, and must additionally fulfill further obligations in the faculty's administrative bodies. Recently, the criteria by which their research output is judged for promotion have become very strict (LAU Education Junior 1; LAU Education Senior 2): The publication media are not only required to be peer reviewed, but they are furthermore expected to have a minimum impact factor, evidence again for the preference already given to international periodicals.

Facilities and Services

With its abundant funds, LAU can provide Ivy League university services. Its libraries are equipped, organized and networked according to current standards, making electronic catalogues and databanks and a large collection of books and journals easily accessible to its students and faculty (LAU Education Senior 1; LAU Education Junior 2). Internet access for students and faculty is a matter of course.

Libraries at LU, on the other hand, are not yet networked with other libraries, not even with all of those at LU itself. Most of their stocks cannot be found on open shelves, but are only available upon request from the librarians. Borrowing is for graduate students and professors only: In some departments, undergraduate students may borrow books during lecture periods. The very first central library for LU is, just now, under construction. Although the responses to our survey about the use of library services were few, 30 at LAU and 116 at LU, they are markedly in line with what the institutions' self-portrayals and their faculty's statements suggested (see Table 1).

	LAU		LU	
	undergraduate	graduate	undergraduate	graduate
Hours per term spent in libraries on campus, Ø of responses	40	50	6	8
Hours per term spent reading print media borrowed from libraries on campus, Ø of responses	20	33	5	13
Help from librarian to attain print media from other libraries, % of responses	9.7	9	2.8	6.5
Help from librarian to enter electronic databanks, % of responses	41.9	9	19.4	6.5

Table 1: Use of library services by LAU and LU students.

Summary LU and LAU

Our sample consists of two very different institutions: At the public mass university, LU, students pay little tuition and are often enrolled for reasons other than studying (LU Arts 1 Senior). Additionally, the budget, the staff, and a myriad of other factors are determined by politicians, and consequently funds and services are not abundant. Here, faculty is left to their own devices much of the time. If permanently employed, they enjoy a rather wide range of decision on how much time and effort they spend for teaching, research, and other activities respectively. At LU "The faculty member is king in the department" as an emeritus from LU put it (El-Amine, Personal interview). Hence, LU is home to a large number of regionally and internationally renowned SSH scholars. And it has enhanced social mobility in Lebanon considerably.

On the other hand, the limited means and facilities constrain this leeway. Both the creation of doctoral schools and the increased investment in research, appear to indicate a change in Lebanon's academic policies. If academic capacity is not retained in full time and tenured positions, however, LU puts its status as a home for intellectual excellence at risk. Furthermore, the comparatively little care and control by the administration leaves doors open for interference from outside institutions. Reports in the media about politicized student skirmishes, and manipulations—even blackmail—in the distribution of staff positions, corroborate the impression that life at LU can be challenging at times. Exposure of certain political positions in the Lebanese public further intensifies those challenges.

At LAU, too, the strong politicization of the Lebanese public sphere impacts student life through occasional violence outbursts between student factions during elections for the student councils (Alabaster). Beyond that, LAU has thus far managed to remain untouched by the press' scandal pages. The necessity to attract financially strong clientele provides a strong incentive to keep party politics off campus. LAU succeeds in doing so with its Board of Trustees and its accreditation agency, which are situated abroad and are little involved with Lebanese politics. Keeping its faculty busy with mandatory research and administrative activities further aids this endeavor. The tenure track mechanism has the potential to retain intellectual capacity, and the comparatively ample financial furnishings allow for a structure of care, support and control, which protects the academic processes from the rough environment of the institution.

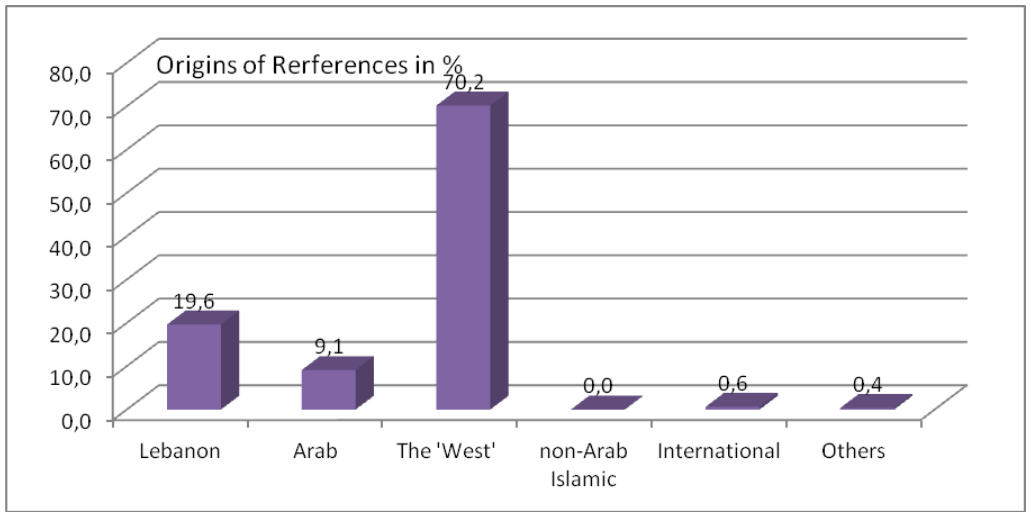

Figure 1: References in dissertations at LU + LAU, in % of all references.

Borrowing and Lending as per References in Theses

How are the differences between the two odd neighbors reflected in the writings of their faculty? What scientific communities do they draw from? The figures of references shown in the following section are counted from fourteen theses from our two sample universities. Eight are from LU, and six are from LAU.[5] Seven of the eight theses by LU professors dealt with a local Lebanese topic and one covered a regional Arab topic. One of them was written in English, two in Arabic and the other five in French. Only the two theses written in Arabic were produced at a local university, the others were written in France and England. The six theses written by LAU professors were supervised at universities in the US, the UK, Canada, and Germany.

In general, the results corroborate Hanafi's findings ("The Social Sciences Research"): The majority of the 3,452 references

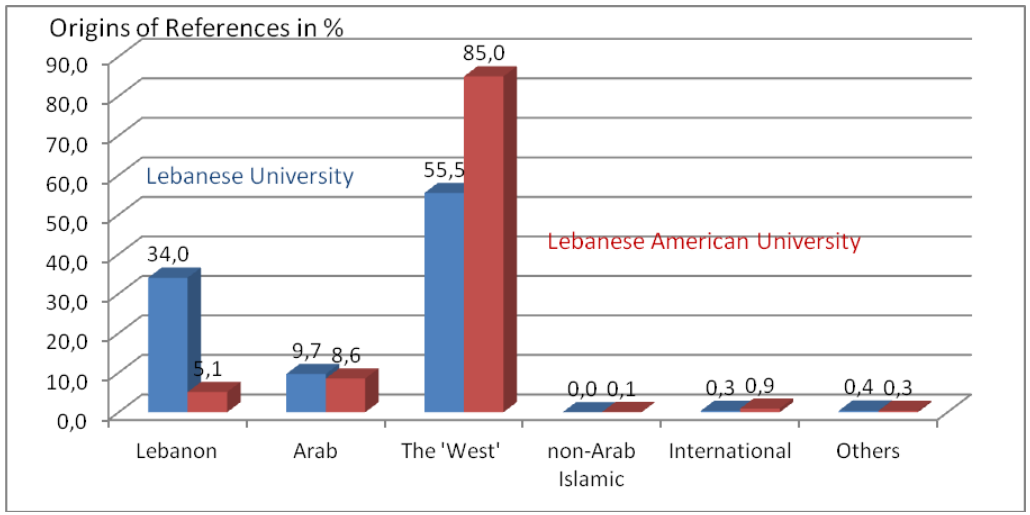

Figure 2: Origins of references in dissertations LU vs. LAU

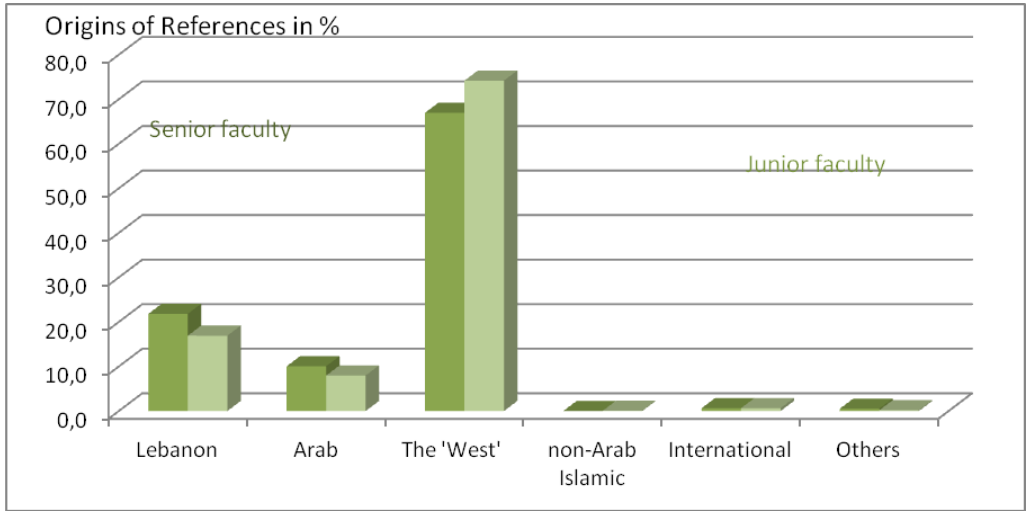

Figure 3: References in dissertations at LU and LAU–before vs. after 2003.

counted, namely 70.2%, were referencing Western literature (figure 1), but there is a striking difference between LU, with only 55.5% references to Western literature, and LAU, with 85% (figure 2).

Researchers who achieved their doctoral degree after 2003, referenced Western literature to a clearly larger extent than their predecessors, who had higher percentages of references to Arab and Lebanese literature (figure 3).

Theses written in Arabic language show a majority of Arabic literature, also in their reception, which makes them indeed look little connected to the international scientific community (figure 4).

Remarkably, theses written in French–at LU–refer with nearly equal frequency to Western literature on the one hand, and local and regional literature on the other. Many of the titles containing French references and that were published in France, were obviously authored by Arabs or Lebanese. The reception patterns in the French language theses resemble that of the Arabic theses more than figure 4 renders visible. The same applies to references to ethnically Arab authors, who publish English language theses in Anglophone countries.

The distribution of references across the range of topics (figure 5)–local, i.e. Lebanese, regional, i.e. Arab, and international–shows a nearly complete absence of local and regional literature from the bibliographies of the theses that cover international topics. It further tells us that there are rather weak ties between Lebanese and Arab research: When dealing with Lebanese topics, authors tend to consult Western more than Arab literature. When writing about Arab topics, in turn, the authors tend to resort to Western rather than Lebanese literature.

When Arab and Lebanese writings are quoted, they seldom belong to the literature by which the theoretical framework or the methodological proceedings are set, but rather are primary sources or secondary literature.

The phenomenon of ethnic Arabs publishing in cities like London, Paris, or New York blurs the boundaries between 'westernized' and 'indigenous' writings. There are an unknown number of researchers publishing in areas such as North America or Europe, who do not originate from there. Are these people westernized, then? Or are the SSH de-westernizing internationally? Such questions can hardly be tackled by reference counting. Particularly in the Lebanese literature on local and regional topics, references to ethnically Lebanese scholars who publish in the francophone, West, are abundant. Conversely, the highly self-referential Lebanese research literature in French indicates a completely different pattern of attachment: These

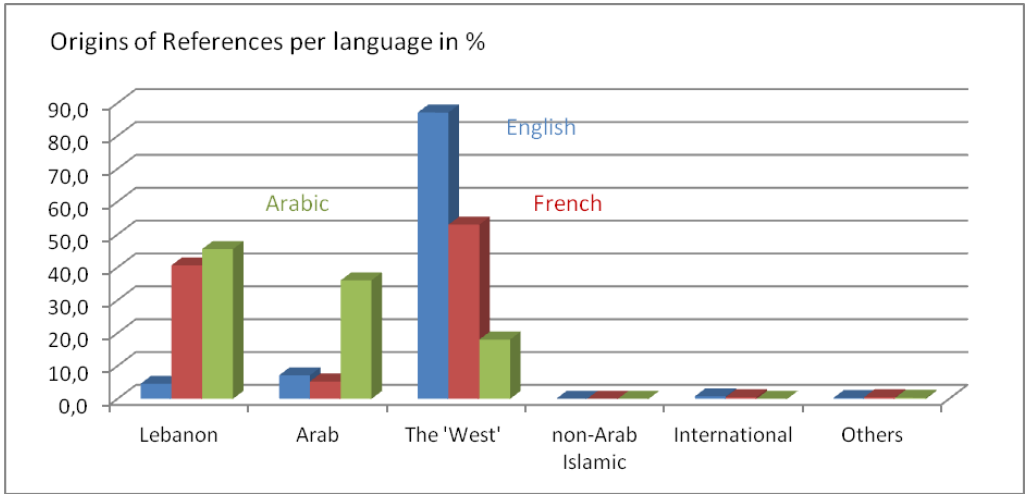

Figure 4: References in theses at LU and LAU according to their language.

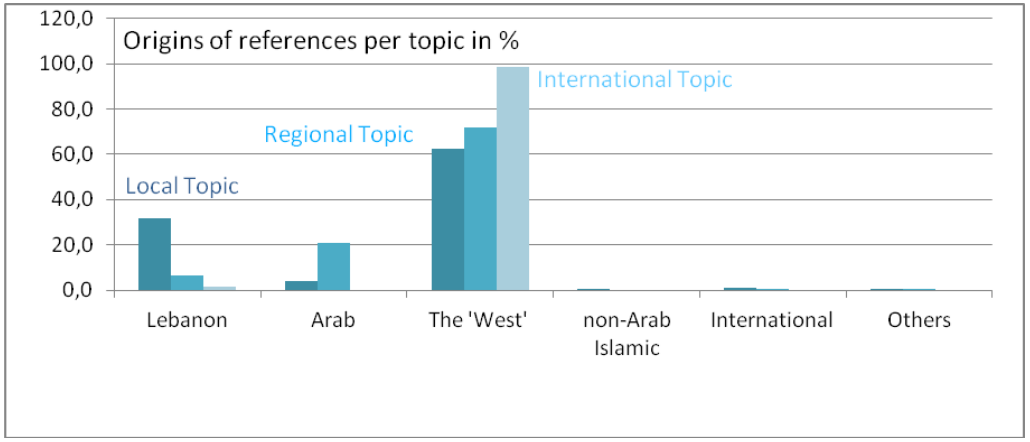

Figure 5: References in theses at LU and LAU per topic.

authors correspond largely with other Lebanese and Arabs authors who work and study in France. They are highly related to a Western–the francophone–academic context, but some seldom refer to other international research literature. Is this a Lebanese or a francophone phenomenon? In evaluating connectivity versus isolation and Western versus indigenous research-orientation, literature can only be vaguely quantified. It is then surely no less difficult to contextualize or value them. Two points should be considered:
First, looking at such figures we should ask: Compared to what? According to prominent data banks and citation indices, the share of non-Western researchers in the sphere of internationally visible so-called hard sciences (medicine, natural sciences, technology) has increased considerably over the last decades.[6] Among SSH articles, on the other hand, the share of North American and European production remained constantly high throughout 1988 to 2007 and covered around 90% of the global output of articles in leading journals. During this period, non-Western authors increasingly quoted Western publications, from 77% of their citations in the middle of the 1990s to 88% in around 2004. This increase occurred at the cost of references to publications authored in their own region or country. Western authors, in turn, increased their reception of non-Western research literature (Gringas and Mosbah-Natanson). Considering this, the distribution of references to English language publications at LAU does not appear overly westernized. If we further take into account that the share of Arab SSH researchers in internationally visible genres is particularly scarce, albeit growing (Arab Thought Foundation 43-61), the quoting habits of LAU's faculty seem predictable for the local academics who participate in the international academic community.
Secondly, the predominant orientation of academics writing in Arabic towards Arabic research literature is, in part, an expression of the isolation that results from a lack of technical capacity. However, it also expresses a division of labor: Here, the national universities, who explain the local societies to themselves versus, there, the universities run by foreign providers that explain local and regional issues to the world and who additionally process international knowledge for use in local contexts.

Networking Initiatives[7]

The lack of unity in the SSH concerning their basic assumptions, their different fields of research, and between national and international scientific communities is a worldwide phenomenon (Bertenthal) and not particular to Arab societies. If only there was not the observation, which is shared by many Arab academics, that the two groups seldom read each other's papers. To tackle this problem, some Arab academics have started initiatives for regional coherence. A few examples will be introduced in this section. Two of them are associations of scholars, and the others are databanks, which record research literature that is written in the Arabic language and/or is pertaining to Arab topics.

Arab Scholarly Associations

The *Arab Council of the Social Sciences* (ACSS) was inaugurated in 2013. Funding is provided by a mix of institutions, beginning with the Swedish government in 2005. The background was the consideration that the SSH tend to address local and regional particularities more than natural sciences and technology do. Thus, in addition to international cooperation, they also require regional cooperation, especially in the Arab world with its large space of a shared language.
Another problem of SSH in Arab countries that the ACSS intends to address is a generational one: Well established 'five stars

professors' hold a discursive monopoly at universities and other institutions because of a general ignorance of the work of younger researchers. Hence, for decades, the Arab SSH did not rejuvenate themselves properly. Consequently, the ACSS' inaugural conference featured a majority of young researchers as participants.

An older and smaller initiative is the *Lebanese Association for Educational Studies* (LAES) founded in 1995. Its sole purpose is to produce and disseminate knowledge about education. To that end, it issues reports, publishes a books series, and convenes conferences. Membership is restricted to educationalists from Lebanon and a maximum of 20% from other Arab states. LAES members have very different political, philosophical, social, and ideological backgrounds. Scholars from LU and a variety of other universities are members and share projects and conferences. Part of LAES' studies in the past were conducted by an initiative of its own members, and other studies were conducted following demands by external bodies. The Lebanese Ministry of Education, for instance, sponsored studies about the national school curriculum (2005), in efforts to develop an educational strategy for Lebanon (2007), and also commissioned a drafted law for a national quality assurance commission for higher education. Some of LAES's works were highly controversial, such as a study about the problems and demands of the Lebanese University at the end of the 1990s (El-Amine and Chaoul). LAES provides an open access guide to the universities of all Arab countries on its homepage, which for example, ALECSO or the *Union of Arab Universities* never provided despite their much longer existence. The largest share in the funding for LAES' projects is provided by the *Ford Foundation*. Additional funds originate from various other American, European and Arab institutions.

Arab Databanks

In 2005, members of LAES had the idea for a database that would specialize in educational research literature. It was born out of the observation that educationalists in Lebanon did not take notice of their peers' work from neighboring universities, let alone from other Arab countries. *Shamaa*, the acronym for *shabakat al-maʿlumat al-ʿarabiyya al-tarbawiyya*, ("Arab Educational Information Network") enables researchers to establish, for the first time, a comprehensive state of the art for any given educational topic, which concerns the Arab world when delimiting their field of research. More than 20,000 studies are documented with an abstract in *Shamaa*, 5,000 with their full text. *Shamaa* concluded contracts with a number of Arab universities to grant access to their postgraduate theses. It holds another contract with the international educational database ERIC, which provides it with all titles that cover educational topics in the Arab world. Although *Shamaa* was modeled on ERIC, it works under different conditions: It is funded by private donors, such as the *Ford Foundation* and other large international and Arab funding agencies. These are generous, but do not compare to the financial capacity of the US federal government, which funds ERIC and other grand databases.

Similar to the scholars of LAES, two individuals, Mohamad al-Baghdadi and Abd ar-Rahman Shahbandar, considered the absence of something that parallels *JSTOR*, *Web of Science* or *Scopus* for Arabic publications a major deficiency. To fill this void, they founded the databases *E-Marefa* and *Almanhal* respectively. Again, these databases are run by private initiatives and with private funds, not by a publicly funded institution.

Conclusions

The seclusion between regionally and internationally oriented research by Arab

social scientists diagnosed by Hanafi ("Les Systèmes universitaires") is obviously valid in the case of the two universities studied here. The same procedure that Hanafi followed has rendered a similar result in our own study. However, to view the dichotomy as an utterance of constraints in academic freedom or as a result of a lack of opportunities, as Hanafi, Kabbanji and peers do, is only one interpretation of the facts. With regard to the SSH, the categories 'international' and 'Western' overlap to an extent that makes them nearly identical. People and institutions in Europe and North America still produce the bulge of SSH literature. For researchers at an American or international university in Lebanon, or in any part of the world, to refer to this output is natural or even indispensable. Conversely, the rate of reference to Western authors in literature written in Arabic would not automatically increase with enhanced research opportunities at Arab national institutions. Furthermore, the predominance of references to Western literature in Arabic research literature, when regarding their theoretical and methodological design, does not necessarily indicate a lack of intellectual independence. Since concepts as basic as society or economy, mass education or parliament, as well as the bulge of their critiques and variations spring from modern Western thought, serious SSH discourse will build on these pillars for the foreseeable future wherever it may be produced.

Regional, international, and even local connectivity is, however, an issue that deserves attention. If something like an 'Arab world' exists, the perception of each others' work among SSH academics from neighboring institutions and countries must be of benefit in the search for generalizations, and in the creation of new hypotheses and theories. It seems obvious that LU, and many of the public universities in neighboring countries, lack the means for such connectivity; a few reasons for which I touched upon in this article. Their common denominator is neglect out of dysfunctional political processes. But, yes, an Arab SSH community does exist. Top academics participate in it and benefit from it, mostly not at their own universities, but in networks, associations, and research centers. The initiators of these networks, which I introduced in section 3, stopped looking to their governments and IGO's. With diversified funding, they succeed in providing easily accessible, independent structures. These have the potential to promote the inclusion of younger scholars and to flatten hierarchies among the Arab SSH community, a development that is so dearly needed when one considers the high quantity of students and graduates from these disciplines.

Will Arab mass universities benefit from networking, or will they become detached from this development and thereby increase their isolation and lessen their significance? Will more Arab academics pursue their postgraduate studies and other research projects at local universities in their home countries? Will this happen in the near future with standards that connect them to their regional and international scientific communities? In order for public institutions to enhance their connectivity locally, regionally and internationally, the following strategies are worth considering:

1. Orientation towards international quality standards, as long as these are reasonable, in order to become more selective and overcome the crowdedness and arbitrariness that is typical for mass universities, would make them more compatible for cooperation. As was observed in Lebanon by Kabbanji, the adherence to standardized quality criteria does not necessarily result in a standardization of academic profiles. Quite the opposite, it can be conducive to a differentiation in profiles between competing institutions ("Heurs et malheurs"). The Lebanese initiative to create national standards, and a na-

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tional authority to that end, is somewhat promising, although it is stagnant and many questions remain unanswered (Bashshur 129-43). With regard to quality, it makes sense to enhance the support for, and control of, faculty and students at LU. Here, they are often left to their own devices, and they lack information about crucial elements such as scholarship programs, research budgets and external funding sources. Furthermore they are liable to interferences from political or sectarian sources.

2. In order to achieve a substantial improvement in services such as counseling and in-service training for academics at public universities, public budget is far from enough and will remain so in the foreseeable future. Tuition fees could be potentially helpful. Moderate tuition fees combined with a well-furnished scholarship program for talented but needy students would not necessarily have to result in inequality.

While the number of university students in Arab countries has multiplied massively during the last decades, vocational and technical professions tend to be understaffed. The national universities have achieved goals such as social mobility and the integration of women into higher education. Research and networking, however, have not kept pace with this development, as the micro-data in this study confirm. The SSH are extremely affected by this development. They suffer from an image as "disciplines for under-achievers and for girls" (El-Amine 2009). Furthermore, the numbers and merits of their graduates do by no means correspond with the demands of their local societies, and their research profile is uninviting. It is now time for them to become more selective. An enhanced focus on quality and connectivity should also mitigate the frequency of interferences motivated by political and parochial interests.

Notes

[1] Data in this article were gathered in 2012 and 2013 from legal and statistical literature, faculty interviews, doctoral theses, and student surveys, in the frame of the research project "Local, Regional, and International 'Borrowing and Lending' in Social Sciences at Egyptian and Lebanese Universities." It was funded by the *Volkswagen Foundation*, coordinated at the *Ruhr-Universität Bochum*, and received scientific and administrative support by the *Orient-Institut Beirut*.

[2] E.g. Galal; Lamine; Maktoum Foundation; UNDP; Yearly by the *Arab Thought Foundation*.

[3] Already in the 1980s a debate about the SSH in their domestic academia went on among Arab and Muslim academics, see Lange, Edipoğlu. As these debates are strictly normative, though, I restrict myself to two tracks of the recent, more empirical debate.

[4] Statistics of the Lebanese *Centre de Recherche et de Développement Pédagogique*, 2011-2012.

[5] References were categorized according to the location of their publishing institution, even if its providers stem from a different country or cultural background. E.g. publications by the *Center for Arab Unity Studies* and the *Institut français du Proche-Orient*, both in Beirut, were categorized as Lebanese, although their providers are Arab and French. Articles in the *Arab Studies Quarterly* were categorized as American, although their providers and most of their authors are ethnic Arabs. All references to Arabic language publications, however, were counted as Arab, even if published in e.g. London or Paris because they address an Arab audience. Translations were categorized according to the author of the original.

[6] Between 2002 and 2008, the share of North America and the European Union in global research output decreased from 73.8 to 67.6%, that of the OECD from 84 to 76.4%. Countries classified as 'developing' increased their share from 21 to 32% (UNESCO, 10).

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→ [7] Where not notified otherwise, this section summarizes a session on the workshop "Social Sciences at Arab Universities: Opportunities and Constraints," held at the *Orient-Institut Beirut* on 28 February 2014. It was mainly covered by Adnan El-Amine and Sari Hanafi.

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INTERVIEW

Arab Higher Education and Research post–2011.
An Interview with Sara Hanafi

Interview by
Ines Braune and Achim Rohde

The upheavals of 2011 and subsequent developments in the MENA region have had substantial effects on universities and research centers within Arab world and in other neighboring countries where similar developments are taking shape (security issues, stricter political control/lesser levels of political control and repression, changing levels of funding, changing focus of donors etc.). META had the opportunity to talk with Sari Hanafi about the repercussions of these developments for scholarly work within the MENA region.

Sari Hanafi is currently a Professor of Sociology and chair of the department of sociology, anthropology and media studies at the American University of Beirut. He is also the editor of *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology* (Arabic). He is the Vice President of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and Vice President of the board of the Arab Council of Social Science. He is the author of numerous journal articles and book chapters on the political and economic sociology of the Palestinian diaspora and refugees; sociology of migration; transnationalism; politics of scientific research; civil society and elite formation and transitional justice. His last book is *Arab Research and Knowledge Society: New Critical Perspective* (with R. Arvanitis) (in Arabic, Beirut: CAUS and forthcoming in English with Routledge).

Keywords: Higher Education; Arab Countries; Post-Arab Uprisings

I.B. & A.R.: To what extent would you define the Arab upheavals and subsequent developments as a game changer for Middle Eastern academic systems and institutions, and for the institutional landscape of knowledge production within the MENA region?

S.H.: The uprisings in the Arab World started out in a marginal town in Tunisia toward the end of 2010, traveled throughout the Arab region like wildfire, inspired various protest movements around the world, then gradually assumed different trajectories that are still underway. As is often the case with revolutions, these events continue to supply us with a repertoire of surprises, counter plots, setbacks, and successes. In this framework, I would say it is affecting the knowledge production in the region and will continue to do so. Previously the situation was disastrous

in many Arab countries. For instance, the Mubarak reign left feelings of discomfort among academics. All that made the public research institutions almost paralyzed. The stress on the university system was enormous: lack of funds, inappropriate structures, and bad management. We cannot but be convinced that some of the dry wood that fed the revolution was to be found among the frustrated academics and students. As an editor of *Idafat–the Arab Journal of Sociology*, I can testify that I received good submissions after the uprisings in Egypt, while before this was rare. However, the protracted period of authoritarianism will have a deep effect on knowledge production. The region was marginalized and invisible in international scholarship.

We have sufficient evidence that the scientific communities in the region are still very weak. In June 2014, I organized a tribute to Samir Khalaf, who is a professor of sociology at the American University of Beirut (AUB). When we sent this invitation to our mailing list, we received seven phone calls and emails asking us when Samir passed away, and four other emails asking when he retired. This anecdote highlights the Arab world's lack of tradition of paying tribute to someone if he is still alive or during his professional life. It indicates an absence of a 'scientific community' in Lebanon which acknowledges the contribution of its members. Of course traditions are the result of an active re-enactment of our history. Scientific, academic and disciplinary communities are fond of these small rituals that revive the intellectual standing of their members and permit us to gauge our own position as a group, inside the 'community'. What is at stake in any of these informal evaluations is where we stand, and at the same time to which group we belong. Institutions make some of this boundary work, and the book I wrote with my colleague Rigas Arvanitis (*The Arab Research and Knowledge Production*: *A New Critical Perspective*), published recently in Beirut in Arabic, unfolds this problematic institutionalization that has taken place in the Arab world. It asks the question why MENA-region scientists wait so much to create an active scientific community, compared to other regions like Latin America. The problem is grounded in deeper social and political realms that influence the production of scientific knowledge.

I.B. & A.R.: To what degree does AUB as an elite western institution of higher learning and research located within the MENA region see the need to reposition itself within the regional institutional landscape as a consequence of such developments?

S.H.: The university system and the system of social knowledge production greatly influence elite formation in the Arab world. Many factors will play a role, but one of them is the compartmentalization of scholarly activities. Universities have often produced compartmentalized elites inside each nation-state who do not communicate with one another: They are either elite that publish globally and perish locally or elite that publish locally and perish globally. The American University of Beirut model has often failed to be connected to its local and regional context instead it orients itself toward an international audience. There are some efforts being conducted under the provost, Ahmad Dallal, but in my sense they are still insufficient.

I.B. & A.R.: How would you characterize the current trends towards the restructuring of universities in the MENA region? In what directions are they leading?

S.H.: There is a massive academic boom in higher education in the Arab world. One important pattern characterizing the current boom is a dual process of privatization alongside globalization. Two-thirds

(around 90) of the new universities founded in the Arab Middle East since 1993 are private, and more and more (at least 60) of them are branches of western, mostly American, universities. While offshore campuses (Qatar Education City, Dubai Campus) can protect the university from their conservative surrounding societies, this results in a tendency for the university to cut its ties with society. The parachuting of these structures does not encourage research output, and the social sciences in these institutions are very marginalized. If one had to choose between the Saudi model or the Qatari/Emirati model, I would argue that the former is much better, as it creates universities with local and Arab hiring, which is more sustainable than the international alternative. Finally, I am so worried about the commodification of higher education. I envy German people who resisted the privatization of their higher education and paying tuition in national universities. As Prof. Alaa Hamarneh once put it, Germans would accept neoliberalism everywhere but not in education and health.

In November 2014, US News, extending its previous repertoire, published a list of the "Best Arab Region Universities". According to this ranking, the "best" Arab five universities are King Saud University (Riyad, Saudi Arabia [SA]), King Abdulaziz University (Jeddah, SA), King Abdullah University of Science & Technology (Thuwal, SA), Cairo University, and the American University of Beirut. Beyond this overall ranking, the newspaper offers rankings in each scientific field, an approximation to academic disciplines. While the whole concept of ranking is problematic, the ranking concerning the social science and humanities (SSH) is fundamentally flawed since most SSH production is in Arabic and the Arabic-language journals are not indexed by Scopus.

As Bourdieu once wrote, "standardization benefits the dominant," and these rankings want to consolidate the idea of a one-for-all standard, a measure that fits all, independent of contents, orientation, location or resources. Instead of thinking about universities as a social institution that fits a certain environment in terms of *ecology* (bio-diversity adapted to its environment), it is thought of in terms of *hierarchy* (how to attain the title of "the best" when competing against the 41-billion-dollar endowment of Harvard University). Limited to this elite formation function, the university becomes a caricature of itself. Effects in the country or the territory, activities beyond publishing, research, community services, participation in public debates, influence of policy decisions, contribution to local political life, dissemination of knowledge and arts, social organization, etc. become invisible in these one-dimensional rankings. Even the actual contribution of individuals highly devoted and loyal to their own home institution becomes a footnote in the career of academic faculty members. Rather more worrying is the fact the promotion reports, produced for promotion inside universities, decide the professional death or life of candidates. They are contaminated by benchmarking and the managerial view of "excellence" that obscures all other dimensions not part of the ranking in terms of publications. Ranking is thus part of an academic *celebrity model* that operates at a global level, in a selective way, as does globalization itself.

While I am not enthusiastic about any ranking, if a ranking is a must I can think of alternative methods and criteria for individual professors. Some principles should to be taken into account in this regard:

All indicators should be scaled against the number of academic staff a university employs.

Bibliometrics may inform, but not replace peer review Creation of national/language portal (such as The Flemish Academic Bibliographic Database for SSH). The newly established E-Ma'refa and Manhal are a starting point for the

Arab world, but they are still insufficient and it is better to have a national or an official pan-Arab organization create such a portal.

Benchmark the whole life cycle of research (i.e. including knowledge transfer and public/policy research activities). We admit that not all research should have an immediate relevance to local society. Thus research should be classified by temporality (research that needs time to have output [because of long fieldwork or because of political sensitivity of its content] versus research that yields quick results) and by public/policy relevance and knowledge transfer/innovation (looking at how much research income an institution earns from industry). Indicators of public/policy activities for the relevant research should be developed, including when these activities will yield relevant public and policy debates.

I.B. & A.R.: It has been argued that among the main challenges for scholars working in MENA academic institutions is the low level of global connectivity and visibility of knowledge production within MENA region. What are the main problems in your view that need to be tackled in order to increase the relevance of knowledge production from within the region, and to what extent is this already happening?

S.H.: The bibliometric study we conducted of 519 academic articles written on the Arab uprisings in Arabic, English and French demonstrated that there is a hierarchy of legitimacy in knowledge due in part to where the articles are produced. The majority of articles are indeed produced outside the Arab World and in English. This is primarily due to the hegemony of the English language in social science research, facilitated by the dominance of Western academic institutions and think tanks, as well as the standards of publication in international journals, which make little to no effort in accommodating foreign languages. Furthermore, what little knowledge is being produced within the Arab world is produced in Arabic and not being translated. In fact, scarcely any authors who write in English or French reference in Arabic. To a large extent, authors who write in a particular language, cite in that particular language. The issue of language compartmentalization becomes significantly poignant here. I see translation an opportunity for increased reflexivity, which might lead to new ways of conceptualizing and articulating concepts. New ways of thinking can indeed be *found* in translation, as long as translation is understood and practiced as a process that is never-ending, dialectical, and imbued with heuristic tensions.
Given Arab scholars' lack of resources, language barriers, and poor publication record in mainstream journals, it is clear that many Arab scholars working in Arabic and within national institutions are virtually invisible internationally. The challenge today is the disengagement of social science research from its local context, which is amplified by the hegemony of neoliberal interests and concurrent narratives for change, as well as the marginalization of local knowledge by many Arab scholars who suffer from both local and global constraints on knowledge production.

I.B. & A.R.: How would you characterize the impact of the ongoing transformations in the MENA region on working relations between scholars and academic institutions located there and those in the global North?

S.H.: The current transformation in the Arab world definitely has begun to foster cooperation with the North. The greatest evidence of this is the northern funding for research and collaboration in the Arab world. Some international social projects do not fund research but merely

workshops. One typical example is the projects funded by the French *Agence National de la Recherche* (ANR). In six recent projects in which I have identified the involvement of Arab researchers, some of them were frustrated that the research they conduct is not paid, even for the research assistant. Many local researchers ended up unable to make their contribution visible: they contribute to two publications among twenty publications resulting from these ANR projects. This does not mean that there is simply a monopoly held by the French research team, but also lack of interest in some Arab researchers. These projects also do not have funding for translation. Overall, it seems that the formation of international teams in the social sciences is rather rare and collaborations are often conducted individually.

On the other hand, the absence of international collaborations is often voluntary, sometimes for personal or ideological reasons. We are amazed to find some faculty in Arab universities who speak perfect English and French unwilling to communicate with their peers abroad. They say clearly that they are not interested. These cases of researchers who adopt a sort of a counter-hegemonic position are, however, not very common.

The fields of natural sciences are often supported by powerful institutional frameworks. In Lebanon, for historical reasons, many relationships are established with France, as we have shown. This trend is now reflected in stronger collaboration within the framework of European projects. Increasingly, these collaborations go through PhD co-supervision, a new practice favored by French universities which has become fairly common with Lebanese PhDs. Articles co-authored with European researchers rose sharply. Little collaboration exists with other researchers in the Arab countries and the Middle East. Finally, the links that AUB and the Lebanese American University have established for the accreditation of their program in the United States facilitate collaborations with this country without excluding access to European and Arab funding.

We should admit that there is a tension between the internationalization of research and its local relevance. One researcher from the Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth [USJ] put it clearly that when Lebanese researchers do not have links to the local private sector, they end up looking for international collaboration. This was repeated by one professor in engineering at AUB who affirmed that "the university should be an ivory tower. We don't approach the private sector. Let it come to us if they need us. We have our reputation." In the Lebanese context, I may schematically consider AUB as the most internationalized university, USJ (specifically in applied research) as most locally relevant and the Lebanese University as having missed the opportunities to be locally or globally relevant.

I.B. & A.R.: How do you see the development of social science in the region in the future?

S.H.: In spite of these amazing developments in the Arab world, propelled by ongoing transformations, there are two forces that seek the de-legitimization of the social sciences: the authoritarian political elites, as well as some ideological groups such as certain religious authorities.

It is rare in the Arab region to hear of a 'white paper' written by social scientists at the request of the public authority and debated in the public sphere. Sociologists are working either as elements in the matrix of modernization projects, though not as an independent body, or as servile agents restricted to justifying the government's decisions. Even when

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the former Tunisian dictator Ben Ali during the 1990s positively referred to science in his discourse and used it as an ideological weapon in his ruthless struggle against the Tunisian Islamists, he did not refer to the social sciences but to the 'hard' natural and applied sciences. In many Arab countries, scientific meetings are treated like any other public meeting and held under police surveillance, and principled social scientists have often been sent to prison, exiled or assassinated. An intelligence officer once told me: "All of my group [of dissident social scientists] fills less than one bus and can easily be taken to prison!" On a positive note, generally speaking, Arab authoritarian states have always underestimated the salience of such "bus people," whether defined as dissident intellectuals or more generally the enlightened middle class, in stirring protests.

Religious authorities have often felt threatened by social scientists, as the two groups competed over the discourse on society. A study on family planning in Syria that I did many years ago revealed tense television debates involving a religious leader and an activist: the late Sheikh Mohamed Said Ramadan al-Bouti (who argued that Islam is against any form of family planning) versus an anti-clericalist activist from the General Union of Syrian Women, a state-sponsored organization. While family planning falls squarely within the domain of sociology and demography, no social scientist was ever consulted for these public debates. Another example can be drawn from Qatar. The Qatari authorities protected themselves from conservative political and religious commissars by asking the Qatari branches of foreign universities to teach the same curriculum as their program at the university headquarters. However, who would protect professors within these parachuting universities? In a recent interview, the President of Carnegie Mellon University Qatar, in order to "protect himself," stated that the Qatari authorities were responsible for the university's curriculum. So everyone tried to preempt the debate in a context already problematic, as the freedom of expression is very limited. The development of a "sphere for science" could become an extra-territorial space of exception, in the sense that local laws do not necessarily apply to it, bestowing the freedom to criticize the surrounding society, but running the risk of being disconnected from societal needs.

While the social sciences worldwide, along with philosophy, were one of the major tools for reforming religion, this has not been the case in the Arab world. Still, some changes are visible that might inspire hope regarding the future of social sciences in the MENA region: In Saudi Arabia for instance, the Namaa Center for Research and Studies and the Taseel Center for Studies and Research are two recently established research centers that aim at connecting the sharia (religious studies) to modernity. Namaa declares in its mission statement the need for moderate Islamic discourse to be integrated with intellectual discourse and its tools for the sake of "conscious development" and of connection to "knowledge and experience of the contemporary world." The titles of the three studies mentioned in the website are very revealing: "Freedom or Sharia?", "Problems of values between culture and science," and "Averroes' school of thought and its connection to the European renaissance." Already invoking positively Averroes' school of thought is something very new in a country dominated by Salafism and Wahabism. More specifically regarding the social sciences, one of the Saudi authors that Namaa promotes is Abdullal Sufiani. In 2004 Sufiani received a PhD in Education from the Islamic University of Madineh (SA) with an endeavor to do crossover between education as a science and fiqh. His PhD thesis is entitled:

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"Regulations of educational critiques through fatwas of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and their application in the field of educational research." In a lecture on the hidden factors influencing the faqihs (jurisprudents or the religious lawyers of Islam), Sufiani challenged the sacrality of faqihs, using psychology and sociology referring to Freud and Ibn Khaldoun.

I.B. & A.R.: Thank you very much!

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REVIEW

Hassan Rachik: "Le proche et le lointain: Un siècle d'anthropologie au Maroc"

Fadma Ait Mous

Book Reviewed
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During the 1960s and 70s, Morocco became what Mohamed Tozy has rightly called "the last anthropological concession." The phrase could not be more fitting given the anthropological scramble for the country during this period. Indeed, this anthropological interest in Morocco, which dates back to the late nineteenth century, became a trend in a brand of anthropology directed at remote geographies.

There are, however, structural factors that could explain this anthropological fascination with Morocco. Moroccan traditional practices survived the Jacobin colonial administration, arousing further anthropological curiosity about the country. Besides, Morocco, unlike other sites, was a country where anthropological investigation could be conducted without much political restriction.

Ever since the 1980s and more specifically the 1990s, the academic scene in Morocco has witnessed the emergence of "local" anthropologists who read, reread, and scrutinized anthropological knowledge produced on Morocco, thereby triggering a debate on the status of the "local anthropologist" and his/her interaction with those anthropologists who produced scholarship on Moroccan culture and society. This interaction of the observed with the observer gave rise to an underlying tension that was in some respects informed by tools and concepts from fields of study such as Orientalism, ethnocentrism, and Eurocentrism as well as Subaltern Studies. However, due to an interesting generational effect, this tension has been defused to a certain extent.

In his latest book *Le proche et le lointain*, Hassan Rachik analyses and interprets a century of anthropological discourse on Morocco, and chooses to defuse the tension through the lens of the sociology of knowledge. He mainly examines the long twentieth century as an object for his ethnographic investigation in order to analyze how anthropologists observed Moroccans. As an anthropologist living in Morocco, he aims to "interpret, […] what has been written about Moroccans, their character, their soul, their mentality, and their ethos." He thus considers how foreign anthropologists as observers have built general propositions, attributing common traits to Moroccans as a whole. Much of the book is devoted to the anthropologists and travelers during the precolonial (De Foucauld, Mouliéras, Salmon, Michaux-Bellaire, Doutté and Westermarck), colonial (Laoust, Montage, Brunot, Hardy and Berque) and postcolonial periods (Gellner, Hart, Waterbury, Geertz). References in the book draw upon close readings of their published works.

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As the title of the book suggests, in *Le proche et le lointain*, Rachik shuttles between what is 'close' and what is 'distant' while positioning himself as a Moroccan anthropologist based in Morocco. He clearly points out that a 'native' position could sometimes constitute a constraint in the study of one's own culture and society. By describing the conditions affecting the processes of knowledge production by these authors, Rachik further asserts that the production of the anthropological discourse depends mainly on academic standards rather than political factors. This particular insight is, in itself, a deconstruction of the essentialism that informs both colonial and nationalist approaches in dealing with the anthropological legacy.

As such, Rachik's work has much to offer scholarship in a variety of ways. The notion of "ethnographic situation" is a substantial theoretical contribution; it is a notion which carries several dimensions such as fieldwork duration and proficiency in local languages. The author does not try to prioritize or single out the best ethnographic situation, but instead to see what any such situation could possibly allow for in terms of the degree or range of observation. For instance, a traveler who does not speak local language would interact less with people but would be more inclined, given the situation, to favor external description of housing, clothing, weapons, and other accessories.

Le proche et le lointain also examines anthropological generalizations with regard to mind, character or soul. Rachik shows how these generalizations are constructed and what their limits are. Geertz and other American anthropologists, for example, in their descriptions of some situations characterized by bargaining, as is the case with traditional souks, conclude that the Moroccan is a negotiator.

Unlike some postmodernist researchers, Rachik does not reject generalizations. He warns of binary oppositions and extreme positions, whether these relate to culturalist generalizations or denial of any generalization, for that matter. Rachik is in support of a conditional generalization; that is to say, a generalization which explicitly outlines sociological and cultural conditions of its relevance.

This book goes beyond the limits of a country to be part of a comprehensive history of anthropology as a discipline. It is a theoretical contribution to the understanding of the evolution of anthropological perspectives on the culture of the Other, a reflection on the near and the distant.

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Umut Özkırımlı (ed.): "The Making of a Protest Movement in Turkey: #occupygezi"

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"Taksim has never felt safer in my entire life," she said with a big smile on her face. "Did you see the rainbow flag on top of the barricade in Beşiktaş yesterday?" he asked curiously. "The mobilization of the common gives the common a new intensity," Hardt and Negri have written (213). "[Its intensification], finally, brings about an anthropological transformation such that out of the struggles come a new humanity." "It's like falling in love", one protestor is on record as saying.

The May to June 2013 uprising in Turkey started as a protest against the loss and commodification of an urban commons in Istanbul, but quickly evolved into the single most important spectacle of anti-authoritarianism in the history of the country. The event itself—that is, the initial street clashes with the police along Istiklal Street on May 31, 2013—really came out of a void. There were hardly any signs or precedents; what was once a foreboding only retrospectively became a harbinger. Among the thousands of people who encamped and reclaimed first Gezi Park and then the entirety of Taksim Square in the first two weeks of June, however, there were many groups which had already carved miniscule anti-systemic spaces out of the now overtly conservative and neoliberal political landscape of the country. Until May 31, socialists, LGBTQs, feminists, football fans, Marxist-Leninist militants, anarchists, environmentalists, anti-capitalist Muslims and many others were all islands in themselves. The tiny green space at the heart of the city electrified in an unprecedented manner their various desires for and attachments to alternative and radical worlds. But more importantly, what it also did was to facilitate a sense of coming-togetherness, instigating commensurability to a certain degree in demands, languages, intensities and sensibilities.

The Making of a Protest Movement in Turkey, the latest of half a dozen edited volumes and special issues on the Gezi uprising that have so far appeared in English, takes this partial convergence in concerns and grievances as its starting point to contextualize and make sense of those eighteen days that have changed the country. The volume brings together eight articles written from a variety of perspectives including sociology of Islam, politics of race and law, poststructuralism, queer studies and political ecology to shed light on the social and political developments and processes that preceded and followed the uprising in May to June 2013.

More than a few contributions explicitly seek to challenge or reveal the limits of well-seated political and academic con-

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ventions of thinking about and through Turkey. I will mention three of them here: Aslı Iğsız's extensive documentation of the effects of deployment of law in order to simultaneously facilitate rampant privatization and expansive criminalization seeks to situate the AKP's rise within a broader context of authoritarianism's marriage with neoliberalism. Contending that 'democratic authoritarianism' has always been the regime's character since the 1940s, Cihan Tuğalby contrast recounts some of the AKP's policies and reactions before and during the uprising as a deviation from this formula. He discerns a novel 'fascistic path' and asks if instead 'Gülenism' could be the new skin for old ceremony. Even if the recent political developments in Turkey fail to support his speculation that the Gülenization of the regime is the domestic and international capital's Plan B, his analysis of the past and future of the 'Erdoğan wing of the regime' remains valuable. Emrah Yildiz's thoughtful piece reflects upon the convergences between the Kurdish political movement and LGBTQ groups and individuals during and after the Gezi uprising to take issue with two things: Joseph Massad's extremely problematic contention that the growing recognition of homosexuality in the global South categorically serves the interest of imperialism, and Jasbir Puar's notion of "homonationalism," which concerns the toleration and protection of LGBTQ bodies in the global North as "the latest litmus test of a genuine commitment" (115) to liberal democracy.

One notable weakness of the book is the absence of conceptual or thematic coherency. Neither the foreword by Judith Butler nor the introduction by the editor Umut Özkırımlı offers much help in pointing to a common theme or problem and this causes partial confusion since the volume brings together articles as diverse as Zeynep Gambetti's Deleuzian reading of body politics during the uprising and Michael Ferguson's notes on the slavery in the Ottoman Empire and the recent distinction between 'Black Turkey, White Turk' to which Tayyip Erdoğan extensively resorts. Only in the afterword, Spyros A. Sofos observes with insight that "the idea of regaining some sort of subjectivity and agency that had been systematically undermined and frustrated" (137) is perceived by most contributors to lie behind the Gezi protest. However, what potential these subjectivities and agencies hold to deepen the cracks that are already opened at the heart of the neoliberal-conservative model is one among many other questions that goes unanswered.
Despite its limitations, *The Making of A Protest Movement in Turkey* is an important edited volume that brings together stimulating pieces written by prominent scholars working on Turkey. One should approach it as an early but valuable contribution to a critical academic and political conversation that we will continue to have for years to come.

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CLOSE UP

Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil: A Political Biography

Jens Heibach

Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil (1942-2014), professor of political science at Sanaa University, deputy secretary-general of the Union of Popular Forces, and pioneer of the human rights movement in South Arabia, was one of the few homme de lettres in Yemen whose intellectual clout extended far into the Arab world. As an outstanding figure of political and scholarly life in the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, his vita exemplifies the ups and downs of Yemeni politics in the post-imamic, republican era up to the fall of ʿAli ʿAbdallah Salih, just as his writings are an enlightening guide to the understanding of the latter and the Yemeni social fabric as a whole. This article seeks to provide a political biography of a man whose calm and sensible voice many will find missing in these times of turmoil.

Keywords: Al-Mutawakkil; Yemen; Intellectual; Opposition; Human Rights; Joint Meeting Parties

Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil: A Political Biography

A rather popular hadith in Yemen attributed to the prophet reads as follows: "The people of Yemen have come to you and they are more gentle and soft-hearted. Belief is Yemenite, and so is wisdom […]." While many European observers today may take pains to reconcile its meaning with the current imbroglio of Yemeni affairs, the hadith seems perfectly apt to characterize one of the most formidable Yemeni thinkers and human rights activists of the last half century: Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil, a pious and highly critical mind whose main endeavor was to build bridges, though he was never at a loss for drawing the line when necessary. In his memoirs, Sinan Abu Luhum, once a big gun in Yemen after the overthrow of Yemen's last imam, noted that "he was a well-versed politician, distinguished by his wisdom, rationality, and flexibility, and one of those rare figures that were accepted by all political parties. We considered him to be a true peacemaker" (Abū Luḥūm 169).

Fitting as they are, Abu Luhum's words did not refer to al-Mutawakkil but to Jarallah ʿUmar, the deceased leader of the Yemeni Socialist Party with whom al-Mutawakkil was compared immediately after his death

(Glosemeyer and Wuerth) and with whom he shared some striking traits, important periods of his political life, and, unfortunately, the same fate. Like Jarallah ʿUmar, who was shot down when reaching out to Yemen's Islamist Islah party in December 2002 (Carapico, Wedeen, and Wuerth), al-Mutawakkil was assassinated on political grounds in the Yemeni capital near his home on 2 November 2014. Like in Jarallah's case, the precise motives behind the murder remain in the dark, although it was quickly surmised that he was killed by extremists too ("Mā warāʾ al-khabr?"). This presumption, however, might be premature. While al-Mutawakkil was always uncomfortable in that he insisted on freely speaking his mind, he had made many enemies toward the end, even amongst his former fellow oppositionists. Yet it is worthwhile to recount his life from the beginning.

From Imamate to Republic

Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil was born in 1942 in the northwestern governorate of Hajja to a father serving in the court of imam Yahya Muhammad Hamid al-Din (1869-1948). Roughly two decades before, Yahya had seized the chance provided by World War I to get rid of Ottoman suzerainty and reinstate a Zaydi imamate which had been in place since the end of the 9th century. In 1918, he declared the northern part of Yemen a sovereign kingdom. Born in a Zaydi imamate as son to a Hashemite father, al-Mutawakkil hence had an auspicious destiny. Under the tenets of the Zaydiyya, arguably the oldest branch of the Shia, descendants of the prophet Muhammad took an eminent position, both theologically and socially. Accordingly, it does not come as a surprise that he received a profound theological education from which he would benefit throughout his life.

Yet he also grew up in a country with sharp social boundaries that were arranged in a triadic order. On the top were the Hashemites, who had exclusive access to higher religious positions and political leadership, as well as the scholarly *quḍā*-families ("judges", sing. *qāḍī*); then came those of a tribal origin and, at the bottom of the social ladder, the *ahl al-thulth*, i.e. non-tribal people of "low birth" offering "lower services" that were needed, but despised by both the tribes and the Hashemites. Descent was thus a crucial prerequisite for the definition of a person's social status, and this al-Mutawakkil learnt in early life. He later recalled one experience in his childhood that critically informed his perspective on Yemeni society:

> My mother was of a tribal origin, and the secondary wife [of my father, *ḍarra*] was a Hashemite. […] I had not yet reached the age of six when I grew upset because my mother was used to be called by her name, while the secondary wife was called 'noble one' [*sharīfa*] ("Al-Duktūr Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil fī suṭūr").

Later on, he began to reflect on the so-perceived humiliation of his mother and connected such deliberations to Yemen's social realities, wondering how they were to be brought in line with the value of equality which to his mind was a central tenet of Islamic teachings. In his later writings as well as in personal conversations, al-Mutawakkil thus often cited hadiths such as the one according to which "human beings are as equal as the teeth of a comb"[1] to highlight the equality of humans irrespective of their denomination, race, and sex. As a six-year-old, however, he stubbornly decided to never again be called 'noble one' but insisted on everyone using his given name.

The (northern) revolution of 1962 and the ensuing civil war, which lasted until 1970 and quickly opened out into a full-fledged proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Nasserist Egypt, saw the end of the imamate and the creation of the Yemeni Arab Republic (YAR). Henceforward, the long-standing differences of Yemen's social status groups were abolished, at least in

formal terms. Gabriele vom Bruck has provided a fascinating account of how the formerly ruling families grappled with adapting to the new political and social environment. Al-Mutawakkil, who had spent most of the revolutionary days in Egypt studying journalism, obviously felt little regret about this newly established order. Even before the revolution, Ahmad Muhammad Nuʿman (1909-1996), a prominent leader of the Free Yemeni Movement and prime minister under ʿAbdallah al-Sallal and ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Iryani, had become a spiritual mentor to him. Many years later al-Mutawakkil would indicate the enormous influence Nuʿman had exerted on him, stating that it was him "from whom we learnt the spirit of tolerance and moderation, the principle of equality, and that we shall never bow to anyone but God" ("Al-Duktūr Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil fī suṭūr").

In 1968, when the war between republican and royal forces was still ravaging northern Yemen, al-Mutawakkil was appointed to his first political position as the First Secretary of the YAR's embassy in Cairo—a quite remarkable development given his family background. Many appointments followed suit, most in the public media sector due to his learnt profession, and in 1976 he became Minister of Trade and Supply. Owing to his multi-talented nature, though, he did not limit himself to the strictly political sphere in this period of life but engaged in diverse activities. In the 1970s he co-founded, amongst others, the Local Development Association of Hajja;[2] he was a member of the national board of the UNESCO; and he co-founded the first Yemeni theater as well as the Center for Yemeni Studies and Research, reportedly the only institute in the whole Arabian Peninsula that had an elected board of administration between 1974 and 1977.

The year 1977, however, not only brought an end to the center's democratic experiment but also witnessed the murder of de facto president Ibrahim al-Hamdi (1943-1977). Since the end of civil war in 1970, the YAR had all but consolidated power, and in many respects was republican in name only. The murder of al-Hamdi, who had sought to truly enforce the equality of all of Yemen's social status groups, was probably the last straw to al-Mutawakkil. With the YAR becoming increasingly authoritarian after the coming into power of ʿAli ʿAbdallah Salih in 1978, he turned his back on politics for the time being and instead resumed his studies, which brought him first to the US and then to Egypt, where he received a doctorate from the faculty of communication of Cairo University in 1983.

Opposition in a United Yemen

Al-Mutawakkil fully re-emerged on the political stage only after the unification of the YAR with its southern socialist counterpart, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), in May 1990. There are many reasons to account for why unity was reached at this specific point in time, most notably perhaps the collapse of the Soviet Union. Intriguingly, regime elites on both sides had simultaneously opted for introducing a parliamentary system with a substantial catalog of basic rights, at least compared to regional standards at that time. Many scholars retrospectively agree that the decision to embrace democracy "was largely a strategic choice by which each [i.e. elites of the YAR and the PDRY] intended to prevent the other from dominating" (Schwedler 48). Yet such deliberations were all the same to most Yemenis who readily took advantage of the newly gained liberties. Within months, some three dozen political parties were founded and eagerly prepared for the first competitive elections.

Among these was the Union of Popular Forces (UPF), a somewhat left-leaning party with a Zaydi character that was mostly run by Zaydi intellectuals (Dorlian 13-14). Al-Mutawakkil significantly contributed to the party's set-up and orientation and in 2001 became its deputy secretary-general.

That the party was rather insignificant in terms of membership and resources did not cause him a headache as, apparently, he was bent on political content, not posts. To this end the UPF was a perfect match. Al-Mutawakkil would frankly confess that the UPF was hardly capable of becoming a governing party but instead embarked on an educational mission with the aim of turning Yemenis into democratic citizens. Connected to this, he considered gender equality and tolerance toward different faiths to be core principles of the party's platform. The Zaydi nucleus of the UPF meshed well with his political convictions. To him, reason (*ʿaql*) was one of the main pillars of the Zaydiyya that provided for the possibility of a steady reinterpretation of Islamic principles, adaptability in general, and, most importantly, the necessity of discrete thinking. The importance of the latter for a sound functioning of democratic institutions was essential, he would argue, and concomitantly substantiated by the Zaydi doctrine of the *khurūj ʿalā al-ḥukm al-ẓālim*, i.e. standing up to oppressive rule, which was also affirmative of the principle of opposition a democratic system could not dispense with (al-Mutawakkil, Personal Interview A).

Democracy in Yemen, however, stood on shaky grounds. After former regime elites of the YAR and PDRY had fallen out with one another over questions pertaining to the distribution of power in the aftermath of the 1993 parliamentary elections, a military conflict was looming on the horizon. In an effort to avert war, several politicians, intellectuals, and notables from southern and northern Yemen promptly organized a National Dialog Conference in November 1993. In on the committee sat not only Jarallah ʿUmar but also al-Mutawakkil, who by then had become a professor of political science at Sanaa University, and both contributed to the passing of a document that can be considered a hallmark of democratic political culture in Yemen. This Document of Pledge and Accord (*wathīqa al-ʿahd wa-l-ittifāq*) suggested plenty of reforms on good governance, the security sector, and the judiciary. Above all, it called for a limited executive, a bicameral parliament, and extensive political, administrative, and financial decentralization (Carapico 178-80). Eventually, though, it was of no avail. In May 1994, a war broke out that was short-lived but had devastating and lasting effects on Yemen's polity and social fabric.

From the very beginning, al-Mutawakkil was clear in his mind about the ramifications of war:

> Imbalance usually generates a totalitarian regime and arbitrary rule. If there were democratic remainders, then these would be little more than décor adorning the regime's face to the external world and misguiding public opinion at home. […] After the war over power in 1994, the [political] equilibrium collapsed […and] the opposition parties had no choice but to embark on coordination in order to re-establish at least some balance ("Al-āfāq" 156).

Developments in post-war Yemen are here accurately put in a nutshell. With his power consolidated, the regime under ʿAli ʿAbdallah Salih became increasingly authoritarian in nature, rolling back political and civil rights in an ever more blatant way. Counter-balancing by peaceful means seemed to be the only viable option, which, as a matter of course, presupposed oppositional cooperation. That said, this was arguably highly unrealistic as Yemen's two most powerful opposition parties, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) and the Islamist Islah, considered themselves archenemies. Again, bridge-builders were needed, and again it was al-Mutawakkil who played a key role in bringing together parties that shared an utterly hostile past. In this context, al-Mutawakkil's standing and personal background was quite meaningful. As Michaelle L. Browers notes, he managed "to communicate with all sides not only because of his personal demeanor […] but also because of the in-

tellectual position he occupies: he is at once highly religious and consistently liberal in perspective" ("Origins and Architects" 577).

The oppositional alliance which arose due to the engagement of committed individuals such as al-Mutawakkil was called the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). It encompassed a range of various Socialist, Nasserist, Zaydi, and Sunni Islamist parties, and, most importantly, the YSP and Islah. The JMP was soon characterized as an unusual example of oppositional cooperation which "both puzzlingly and pleasantly deviates from theoretical expectations about the difficulty of launching and maintaining strategic alliances among ideological diverse political groups" (Glosemeyer and Sallam 327). It was often met by harsh criticism, even by al-Mutawakkil himself who in 2010 became its rotating head for six months, but by all accounts contributed significantly to the fall of the Salih regime in 2011. The JMP's shortcomings notwithstanding, al-Mutawakkil strongly believed in the necessity of Islamist and secular forces cooperating in order to face authoritarianism—not only in Yemen but in the whole Arab world. He thus engaged in scores of regional conferences aiming at their rapprochement, and he served as general coordinator to four such National-Islamic Conferences organized by the Center for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut in the 1990s and 2000s (Browers, *Political Ideology* 86). After all, engaging with Islamists was also one practical way to strengthen the parties' moderate forces and contain their radical fringes—the need for which he could recognize in his daily work as human rights activist.

Pragmatic Idealism

Despite his impressive record as a politician, to posterity al-Mutawakkil will perhaps be known first as human rights activist. This activism rested on several pillars. In his university lectures on human rights he taught many generations of students, and he was vice-president of the independent Yemeni Organization for the Defense of Liberties and Human Rights and president of the Jazeera Center for Human Rights Studies, both of which are amongst the most active and influential NGOs in Yemen promoting human rights and democratic reform. First and foremost, though, he wrote innumerable essays, editorials, and books on Yemen's stalled democratization and the inalienability of basic rights. In 2004, he published perhaps his most important study, which discussed the compatibility of human rights and Islam (al-Mutawakkil, *Al-islām wa-l-iʿlānāt al-duwaliyya*) and which is frequently cited online by human rights organizations all over the Arab world.

This book was of particular relevance for Yemen, as it contributed to the public dispute on *takfīr*, the discursive act of accusing someone of apostasy. Since the early 1990s, many radical forces inside and outside the Islah party had exercised *takfīr* in order to muzzle political opponents, leading to hundreds of assassinations of Socialist politicians (among these Jarallah ʿUmar). Al-Mutawakkil argued out of the classical sources, compellingly dismissed the notion of an allegedly religious obligation of punitive measures against apostates, and strongly vindicated the freedom of religion and the freedom of expression.[3] This was one of the countless instances of him publicly taking sides against Yemen's potent Salafi current, which only a few intellectuals would dare to do. In one of his last public quarrels with the Salafis, he had openly spoken up for the introduction of a "civil state" (*dawla madaniyya*) after the collapse of the Salih regime, which prompted a scathing reply and barely concealed threat from Yemen's ultra-conservative cleric ʿAbd al-Majid al-Zindani ("Maktab al-Shaykh al-Zindānī").[4]

It bears some irony that his staunchest critics came from the radical wing of Islah, one of the JMP's founding members. Yet allying with Islah had not only been a stra-

tegic choice as outlined above, but ultimately a question of pragmatism. Al-Mutawakkil certainly was an idealist. At times, however, idealists also have to engage in pragmatism, especially politicians. Al-Mutawakkil was in no way exceptional in this regard. While, for instance, some twenty Arab political scientists during a 2001 conference in Beirut rejected the notion of opposition parties cooperating with Western powers, al-Mutawakkil preferred to criticize the parties' "totalitarian culture" as well as their ambition to "dominate the institutions of civil society."[5] In a speech delivered some years later he soberly argued that "given the impossibility of effective opposition without resources, the Yemeni opposition has to go for external support."[6] To cite yet another example, while he considered the tribal-military complex to be the biggest menace to Yemen's democratization, he consistently argued that the tribes were part and parcel of its traditional civil society (al-Mutawakkil, "Société civile" 195-96), holding that by way of their integration they would eventually merge into the modern civil society (Personal Interview A).

During the so-called Yemeni Revolution in 2011, he had to take some bitter pills. Already at the very beginning in February, he had admonished the protesting youth that an unbridled revolt could end up in civil war and state failure. Still the rotating head of the JMP at that time, he was convinced that only negotiations with the regime could avert the latter. When a negotiated solution failed several times, he reminded the youth that "in politics, there is no such a thing as an irrevocable position" and that negotiations with the regime had to continue ("Al-Mutawakkil ʿan mawqif al-mushtarak"). Evidently, such negotiations also had to include national power brokers the youth wholeheartedly rejected. On these grounds, he was therefore even criticized publicly by one of his daughters ("Jadal"). Al-Mutawakkil's political pragmatism notwithstanding, there were some red lines that he was not willing to cross. When Salafi militants obviously belonging to the Islah party attacked male and female protesters who had rejected protesting separately but had practiced what they called the "mingling of sexes" (*ikhtilāṭ*), he wrote a public letter threatening to withdraw from the coalition unless the heads of the JMP parties apologized and the culprits were held accountable. Otherwise, he noted, "we will lose all our credibility regarding our strife for freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. And thereby we will also lose our self-respect" ("Al-Mutawakkil yuʿalliq ḥuḍūr").

The Uncomfortable Peacemaker

After Salih's resignation in November 2011, al-Mutawakkil's relations with the JMP parties grew increasingly sour as he became more and more disillusioned by his former fellow oppositionists. According to the stipulations of the GCC agreement leading to Salih's abdication, the JMP had become part of the government for a transitional period that should have lasted for two years. Its governing record after one year in office, however, was sobering at best, irrespective of the huge challenges every new government in Yemen would have faced. Yet instead of getting down to work and at least attempting to tackle some of the most eminent problems, the JMP prioritized differently. Al-Mutawakkil, whose internal criticism was no longer paid regard to, once more appeared before the public while still recovering from a complex surgery. In an interview he blamed the JMP for "only [paying] attention to job distribution, and I criticize them for that because jobs are for all people. They have to pay attention to state construction [i.e. state-building] and development" (al-Mutawakkil, Interview).

Yet there was another serious concern to him. After the fall of the Salih regime, Islah had evolved into the single most powerful force, which not only had a strong tribal backing, but by then had also gained sig-

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nificant influence in the military. Al-Mutawakkil's fear of political imbalance resurfaced, and it was far from ill-founded. He thus arrived at the conclusion that the former ruling party, the General People's Congress, which at that time was at the verge of falling to pieces, had to be kept alive and reformed so it could henceforth act as a counterbalancing force to Islah (Personal Interview B). Such calculations were shared by others, too, and they were in accord with Yemen's traditional formula that sought to establish a political equilibrium by integrating all social and political forces into the political realm. To many of his former co-oppositionists, however, this came close to treason. Once again al-Mutawakkil had tried to build bridges, and once again he had offered some uncomfortable ideas and had spoken some uncomfortable truths to power. This time, however, he had antagonized too many sides—some of which had a vested interest in quieting him, while some of which left it at merely sidelining him. In the end, even his own party, the UPF, had deposed him from the office of deputy secretary-general, purportedly "on health grounds" ("Iʿfāʾ").

Muhammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil died at the age of 72. Almost certainly, it will never be fully investigated who was responsible for his murder. He had lived to see imamic and republican Yemen, unification of North and South, and many revolutions, coups, and counter-coups. His influence on Yemeni politics, its modern political culture, and its human rights movement was meaningful, although not always visible at first sight. He will first and foremost be remembered by Yemen's younger generation and, most notably, his students, all of whom have grown weary of party politics but nevertheless admired him as an incorruptible politician, as a teacher, an activist, and as a role model for integrity and farsightedness. It is in these days in which Yemen can find no peace that the country lost one of its major peacemakers.

Notes

[1] See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAslaqānī. *Fatḥ al-bārī li-sharaḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1:658-59 and 3:204-05. For the introductory hadith, see Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. *Kitāb al-maghāzī* [vol.5]: *Bāb qudūm al-ashʿariyyin wa ahl al-Yaman* [book 59], hadith 671.

[2] Throughout the YAR, the Local Development Associations were community-based and non-governmental instances of grassroots state-building efforts and a splendid example of civil society activism in Yemen until they were integrated into the authoritarian regime under ʿAli ʿAbdallah Salih in 1985 (Carapico 107-08).

[3] For a discussion of Mutawakkil's arguments and his contribution to this debate, see Philbrick Yadav 151-54.

[4] In order to undermine al-Zindani's call for the introduction of a caliphate, al-Mutawakkil had contrasted al-Zindani's views with a recently published fatwa of the al-Azhar. Al-Mutawakkil summarized and commented on al-Azhar's reasoning on the legitimacy of a political order that was based on democracy, nondiscrimination, and freedom of religion. Following this interpretation, al-Mutawakkil's notion of a civil state came close to that of a secular state: Legislature was to be confined to popular representatives only, and the affairs of the state were to be run "in accordance with the [man-made, *al-qānūn*] law, and only with the [man-made] law." See al-Mutawakkil, "Al-Azhar wa-l-Zindānī."

[5] The transcript of the discussion was published in Balqazīz 113-62. For this particular statement of al-Mutawakkil, see p. 137.

[6] The speech, which was given during a meeting of the National Solidarity Council in Sanaa in April 2010, was published by al-Masdar Online, see "Al-Duktūr Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Mutawakkil yushakhkhiṣ."

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OFF-TOPIC

Syrian Kurdish Political Activism: A Social Movement Theory Perspective

Wietse van den Berge

Syrian Kurdish politics is complex. While the political parties appear rather similar in terms of their goals, fierce inter-party rivalry exists, nonetheless. Shedding some light on Syrian Kurdish politics using Social Movement Theory as a theoretical framework, this article deals with how and why Syrian Kurds choose a specific political party. Interviews with Syrian Kurdish political activists in Iraqi Kurdistan provide the data. The interviews point out that a striking cleavage exists: Respondents sympathizing with the dominant political party preferred social equality, while interviewees belonging to other parties have a preference for nonviolence.

Keywords: **Syria; Kurds; Political Parties; PYD; KNC**

Introduction

During 2014 the Syrian conflict, which began in 2011, a new stage was reached as Syrian Kurdistan came under threat from the Islamic State. The Syrian-Kurdish canton of Kobanî became the focal point of global media reporting on the fight between jihadists and Kurdish forces. The shared threat presented by the Islamic State appears to bring the politically fragmented Syrian Kurds closer together (Rudaw).

Almost three years into the Syrian civil war a de facto autonomous Syrian Kurdish political entity was established (Hawar news). It appears the conflict provided the Kurds with the opportunity to create an entity in which the dominant party was able to create transitional governments in the three Kurdish cantons, albeit without elections ("Flight of Icarus?" 1).

Rojava–the Kurdish name for the areas forming Syrian Kurdistan–became relevant not only within Syria but for the whole Middle East as a potential regional political actor and the second autonomous Kurdish area after the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq (Gunter 1). This article focuses on the dynamics between macro and micro level occurring within Syrian Kurdish politics. From both a scientific and a societal perspective, future analysis benefits from better understanding regarding the intentions and interests of the new entity. The main research question in this study is why do Syrian Kurds choose to support specific political parties?

Since Rojava declared autonomy, two major blocs have dominated its politics: the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat; PYD) and the Kurdish National Council (Encûmena Niştimanîya Kurdî li Sûriyê, KNC) (Hevian 46; Hokayem

78-79). The self-description of both emphasizes their struggle for an autonomous and democratic Syrian Kurdistan in which minority rights are guaranteed (KNC; PYD; Sinclair and Kajjo). But neither have yet outlined what they mean by these key concepts. (Savelsberg, "The Syrian-Kurdish Movements" 102). Their resources differ greatly: "Although the KNC is a coalition of more than a dozen Kurdish parties, it wields no real power in the region. It lacks, above all, the military force and other necessary means […] to counter the well-organized PYD" (Hevian 47). Furthermore, it is argued that both blocs are influenced by foreign actors. PYD is closely linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*; PKK), originating in Turkish-Kurdistan. KNC's parties have strong connections to different foreign parties like the Kurdistan Democratic Party (*Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê*, KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (*Yekêtiy Nişt îmaniy Kurdistan*, PUK) from Iraqi-Kurdistan. In addition, some KNC-parties sympathize with the PKK as well (Savelsberg, "The Syrian-Kurdish Movements" 94-96).

Although exact numbers are lacking, it is estimated that approximately ten percent of Syria's nearly two million Kurds are members of organizations that are labeled political parties (Sinclair and Kajjo). However, these organizations do not exactly match the western idea of political parties—associated with electoral processes (Allsopp 6). If the party narratives are rather similar, then how and why do people choose one specific political party and not another one? To answer this question, which is essentially about political mobilization, this study will use Social Movement Theory to provide an explanatory model.

Applying Social Movement Theory to political mobilization among Syrian Kurds is not completely new. Jordi Tejel studied the Syrian Kurdish 2004 Qamishli revolt using an implicit Social Movement Theory model, focusing on the macro level. According to Karl-Dieter Opp political mobilization involves a reciprocal process in which both the macro and micro level are involved. It makes this research—that does include the macro-micro dynamics—a necessary complement to Tejel's to understand political mobilization in Rojava. As far as the studies overlap, studying similar phenomena in different times and circumstances makes a comparative analysis possible. Other research has applied Social Movement Theory in a Middle Eastern setting but not to Syria (Munson; Wiktorowicz), nor to the Syrian Kurds (Leenders and Heydemann).

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Social Movement Theory's different schools focus on collective action (Opp 47-48). Framing Theory assumes individuals interpret situations according to an idiosyncratic reference, the frame, which influences their consequential behavior (Benford and Snow 614). Collective Identity Approach assumes that the more an individual feels a sense of belonging to a group, the greater the chance that the individual participates in politics on behalf of that group (Klandermans 889). Political Opportunity Structure assumes "exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization" (Meyer and Minkoff 1457). Finally, Resource Mobilization Theory focuses on social support and assets within society that need to be mobilized (McCarthy and Zald 1213). These different approaches appear to complement or overlap one another. They share Mancur Olson's Theory of Collective Action of an individual being a rational actor, despite different interpretations of the concept of rationality (Opp 2-8).

Theoretical Framework: Structural-Cognitive Model

Opp combines the schools of Social Movement Theory mentioned above into a comprehensive model. In it, he considers these approaches as hypotheses. He

assumes that micro-macro-level dynamics (between individuals and groups) are essential in understanding political mobilization:

> The *framing perspective* deals with macro-to-micro relationships (effects of social movement activities on frame alignment) and […] with the relationships of framing and incentives. […] The *resource mobilization and political opportunity structure perspectives* focus on the macro model and—implicitly—adumbrate macro-to-micro relationships. The *theory of collective action* is the only one that explicitly addresses micro and macro relationships, but the theory does not mention framing. The *identity approach* is mainly a micro model, although there are hints of effects of macro structures on identity formation. The micro-to-macro relationship from individual to collective protest is not addressed by any perspective. (Opp 335, italics in original)

Opp's is a cyclical model in which macro aspects influence the individual, but in which the individual's shared preferences also affect the macro level. For this article to focus on micro-macro-dynamics, it will use Opp's model to explain why individuals (micro level) choose specific parties (macro level).

Methodology: Literature Review and Semi-Structured Interviews

The study's contextual base is a literature review of Syrian Kurdish politics. Apart from Tejel's, relatively few studies exist about politics in Rojava (Allsopp 7; Tejel 1). Developments in the Syrian conflict trigger new research and publications on politics in Rojava. For current affairs (social) media are important but unreliable sources. In order not to rely completely on secondary or tertiary sources, interviews were conducted in the region. The literature review provided the basis for the semi-structured interviews.

Syrian Kurdish History and Present Situation

While the origin of the Kurdish people can be traced back approximately 5,000 years, the traditional starting point of modern Middle Eastern history appears to begin with the First World War (1914-1918) and the consequential fall of the Ottoman Empire (Fisk; Tejel). Strictly speaking, this is correct in the case of the *Syrian* Kurds, because Syria as a modern political entity only came into existence as a French mandate region after the First World War (Allsopp 20) before which only *Kurds* existed.

In the Ottoman Empire the Kurds experienced autonomy as part of the *millet*-policy, providing a high level of self-rule to minorities within the Empire with Kurds having their own principalities and kingdoms (Black 210). This history, together with a culture distinctive from that of the neighboring Arab, Persian and Turkish people, lead to the inclusion of the Kurds in the 1920 Sèvres Treaty, intended to achieve peace between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies of World War I. Article 62 of the treaty promised "local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas" and Article 64 spoke of "an independent Kurdish state of the Kurds". The Sèvres Treaty was never ratified and the 1923 Lausanne Treaty sealed its fate by granting Turkish borders. Meanwhile, following the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement Iraq and Syria had come under control of Great Britain and France, respectively (Khidir 26), dissolving the creation of a Kurdish state.

France acknowledged the sectarian difficulties of its inter-war Syrian mandatory area and divided it into several autonomous regions, although, the Syrian Kurds did not receive an autonomous area (Dorin), and Syria gained independence in 1946. A series of coups d'états occurred during the first two decades of independent Syria, until Baʿth Party seized power in 1963. The Baʿth Party had a secular,

strong Arab-nationalist agenda. They changed the country's name from Syrian Republic into Syrian *Arab* Republic when they assumed power (Allsopp 22), excluding people considering themselves non-Arabs, like the Kurds. They enforced programs of Arabization upon non-Arabs whom the Baʿth considered a threat. Harsh repression of Kurds occurred: they erased Kurdish references from culture, enforced relocations (Tejel 65) and took Syrian nationality from between 120,000 (Tejel 51) and 300,000 (Allsopp 148-75; Hokayem 78) Kurds. The Arabization policy also frustrated Kurdish political ambitions to unite the different Kurdish areas and create a Kurdish state. With this ambition in mind the first Syrian Kurdish political party was established in 1957. Together with its offspring it aimed at political, cultural and socio-economic emancipation of the Kurds and the democratization of all of Syria (Allsopp 28).

Under Baʿth Party rule, Syrian Kurdish political parties went underground (Allsopp 31-34). This appears in sharp contrast with Baʿth Party's aid to PKK during the 1980s and 1990s: "[I]ts [Baʿth Party] support was not due to its love for in Turkey; but rather was the result of its adversarial policies with Turkey" (Hevian 46). The PKK-leader Abdullah Öcalan lived in the Syrian capital, Damascus, until 1998. Only when Turkey threatened war and to cut off water supplies to Syria the regime forced Öcalan to leave, which eventually led to his arrest. It shows how the Syrian regime used the Kurds in its regional power play (Hokayem 79), bringing Tejel to label the rule under Baʿth Party leader Hafez al-Asad (1970-2000) "the years of exploitation" (Tejel 62). The death of Hafez al-Asad and succession by his western educated son Bashar in 2000 led to expectations and hope of modernization and democratization within Syria. However, disappointment increased among Syria's population, including its Kurds, when these expectations were not fulfilled (Hokayem 21-38).The combination of disappointment and the repressive measures ignited the 2004 Qamishli revolt among Kurds in Rojava. It was named after the city where the main protests occurred. Eventually the uprising stopped after Kurdish parties urged for cessation of violence. It made the Syrian regime aware of the Kurdish capacity for collective action. Since then, as there was no active civil society among the Kurds, the regime allowed Kurdish parties a pivotal role between authorities and the Kurdish people.

> [T]he pacification of the protests led by the Kurdish parties themselves was a prelude to a new balance between the Kurdish movement and the regime. The former has gained a certain freedom of action to create space for protest where Kurdish ethnicity can be openly displayed. The latter seems to confirm the selective withdrawal of the state. […] Bashar al-As'ad [sic] seems prepared to tolerate the consolidation of a Kurdish space (cultural and symbolic), at least for the time being. (Tejel 136-37)

Nevertheless, dissatisfaction among the whole Syrian population remained, especially when the regime proved incapable of coping with a drought that greatly affected Syrian agriculture. In the wake of uprisings in other Arab countries small scale protests occurred in Damascus in February 2011, without any follow-up. Only when regime forces cracked down hard on protests by schoolchildren in the southern city of Derʿā in March 2011, a process of escalation ignited that eventually lead to the Syrian Civil War (Hokayem 9-20). Syria's Kurds initially kept a low profile in the conflict. Only when regime forces withdrew from Rojava mid-July 2012 did the Kurdish militias fill the power vacuum and hence became a prominent actor within Syria (Crisis Group "Syria's Kurds" 2-4).

Current Syrian Kurdish Politics: The PYD and the KNC

Kurdish militias of the People's Defense Corps (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*, YPG) affiliated to the PYD replacing regime forces in Rojava raised suspicions of cooperation between the PYD and the Syrian regime. PYD demonstrations are characteristically more pro-PYD than anti-regime.

Rival Kurdish groups argue the YPG belongs to Syria's branch of the PKK—which the regime hosted for so long—, sharing the same organizational principles and Marxist ideology. Further, the YPG-militias are trained by the PKK (Crisis Group "Syria's Kurds" 11). The YPG provides the PYD with the necessary military means to control Rojava in order to administer political power as its best-organized political party (Hevian 46-47).

The KNC which formed in October 2011 is a coalition of around twelve minor parties.[1] Most of these have their roots in the first Syrian Kurdish party, the Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (*Partîya Dêmokrat a Kurd li Sûriye*, KDPS) (Allsopp 17). Political and personal rivalries make the KNC vulnerable to internal struggles, which can lead to a lack of effective political power (Hevian 47).

The PYD's image suffers from its link with the PKK, designated by both the European Union and the United States as a terrorist organization. Alliances between the KNC and the PYD eventually failed (Tanir, Wilgenburg and Hossino 9-10), even though they share the same implicit ideal of an independent Kurdish entity (Hokayem 78-79) and both can benefit from cooperation. The KNC has "international partners and legitimacy, it is increasingly divided internally and lacks a genuine presence on the ground; conversely, the PYD's strong domestic support is not matched by its international standing" (Crisis Group "Syria's Kurds" iii). Violent clashes between KNC and PYD supporters have been reported (Wilgenburg) and the PYD is accused of assassinations, harassments and kidnappings of KNC members (Savelsberg, "The Kurdish Factor"). These might reflect a regional rivalry on which an organization represents the wider Kurdish community (Crisis Group "Syria's Kurds" 18). Arguably, only after a new external threat appeared in the shape of the Islamic State, Kurdish parties in Rojava agreed to form a new alliance, known as the Duhok Agreement (Rudaw). Spring 2015 the Duhok Agreement seems to have failed as well.

Interviews

In the complex Syrian Kurdish politics—as sketched above—people decide on which political parties to support. How and why they choose these parties, as well as which specific bloc they support, is an important question. The two camps are assumed to be quite similar with respect to ethnic composition, their overall goals, and the level of repression they have experienced.

Between March 1 and 10, 2014, twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted among politically active Syrian Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan in the cities of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah and a refugee camp. Contacts with political activists were established through academic and Syrian Kurdish political networks. Respondents proved helpful in introducing new interviewees, often from other parties, and sometimes even from rival parties.

Interviewees' Backgrounds

The interviews were conducted with people from seven different parties, as well as two independent activists (both, however, with clear sympathies). Eight interviewees including the two independent activists, are active on a national (that is Rojava) level, three on a regional level, and one on village level. In total ten men and two women were interviewed, of whom nine

were middle aged and three were in their twenties and thirties. Of the seven people talking about their origins, two originate from peasant families, four from a village and one from a major city. Three villagers and one of peasant background moved to a big city during childhood, usually as a consequence of regime policy. Four respondents originate from contested areas within the Syrian Conflict, such as Damascus or the Afrin region in northwest Syria. Of the eight respondents who mentioned their education, one had finished elementary school and six completed secondary school. One respondent has a doctor's degree.

Interviewee Motivation: Why Become Politically Active?

Education proved to be one of the fields where interviewees experienced repression by the Syrian regime: not being allowed to attend university, being forced to study Arabic literature, or not being allowed to discuss Kurdistan or Kurdish identity. On the other side of the spectrum, one interviewee became politically active following the receipt of a grant from his father's Kurdish political party. Six people became politically active during their secondary schooling. Other factors that made people politically active include the regime's agricultural policies (that discriminated against Kurdish farmers), the fight for women's rights and the emergence among individuals of a feeling of Kurdish nationalism.

The interviewees all share awareness of the regime's repressive measures towards the Syrian Kurdish population and indicated that this was a key element in becoming politically active. For both female respondents women's emancipation was an additional aspect. In a broader context, four interviewees emphasize their activism is for Kurdish rights in particular, but for Syrian rights in general as they recognize the Syrian regime discriminates other ethnic groups as well.

The political ideas of Mustafa Barzani are also important for the KNC affiliated activists and Abdullah Öcalan for the PYD and their affiliates. These names were mentioned nine times in total, but respondents also mentioned other political thinkers. Among the PYD, left wing writers are popular, such as Marx, Lenin, Gorki and Chekhov, while Nietzsche and Rousseau were also named. A number of interviewees—both PYD—named the Kurdish nationalist poet Cigerxwin among others as a main source of inspiration.

Poems and other cultural expressions play an important role in the lives of many of those interviewed. One KNC activist summed up his feelings by reciting a self-written poem. Singing and dancing and the Kurdish New Year celebration of *Nowruz* are also important points of reference. Finally, Marxist revolutions inspired solely the PYD supporters have been important. They see Angola, Cuba and Vietnam as examples of peoples who freed themselves from oppression as they consider the Arabs the oppressors in Rojava. One independent respondent also used these revolutions as an example, however, he did so in order to emphasize that violent revolutions eventually lead to less than good outcomes.

The Interviewees and Leverage: Becoming Politically Active

How, then, do people become politically active? Six respondents answered that family members were politically involved; five in the same party as their family members, one was independent. Three interviewees became acquainted with political ideas through the media, especially radio broadcasts. Here education also played an important role because it created awareness among the respondents regarding the regime's repression. Some undertook further research independently and then volunteered for political action, as one of

the female activists tells about her joining the armed rebellion:

> In 1996 comrade Zilan committed a suicide attack in Turkey. I named my name after her. At that age, the comrades refused to accept me in the armed revolution. I was allowed to do only political activism […]. [W]hen Öcalan was arrested, my sympathy grew so strong– due to my own research and since I knew about the Kurdish situation in the Middle East–, that I insisted on joining.[2]

In one case the *peshmerga*, the Kurdish fighting force, triggered political activism by passing through villages and recounting their stories.

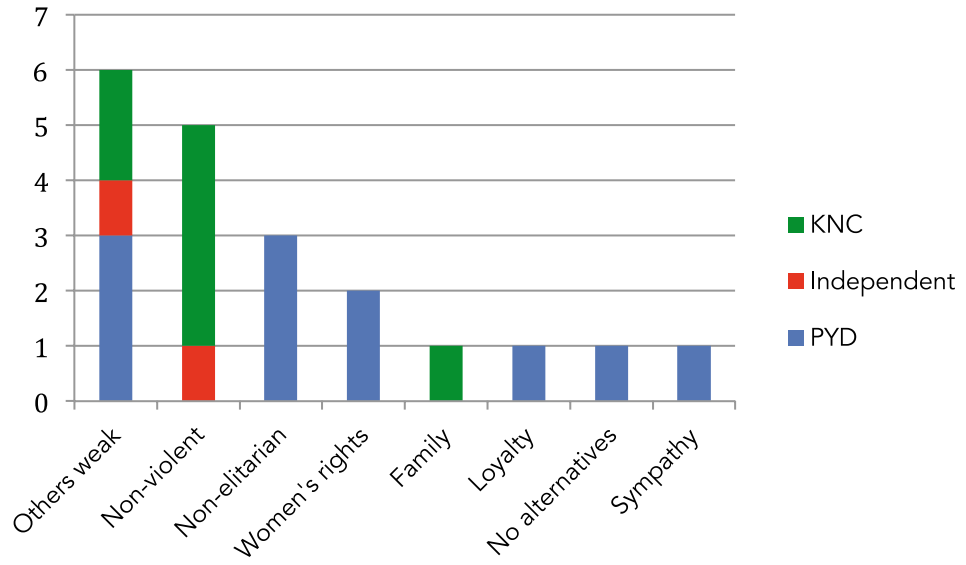

Figure 1: Respondents indicating why they support a specific party, categorized according to party affiliation and answers given. Scores in absolute numbers, n=12. Respondents usually give multiple answers for why supporting a political party.

The Interviewees and Choice: Why Become Member of a Specific Party?

As most of the respondents were of middle age, most answered that the choice was limited when they became politically active. One interviewee said the he remains loyal to his party. Four PYD members emphasized the focus on the whole of society–in case of the female activists including women's rights. Five non-PYD respondents claim the choice of their party depended on its non-violent nature. When asked about the use of violence for political ends PYD members commented they are willing to use it in the case of self-defense. In four cases, choice was a matter of lacking other alternatives, either because only one party was active in the village of origin, or that other parties were deemed to be worse. Five people joined the parties in which relatives were already active. Figure 1 summarizes these responses.

Overall Findings

Although twelve respondents is a small number, the observations are interesting and point the way to further research. Respondents referred to either Mustafa Barzani or Abdullah Öcalan on nine out of twelve occasions as an inspiration in becoming politically active. It appears, therefore, that these leaders and their thinking have exerted great influence on Kurdish political life, even though Barzani is dead– his son Massoud has succeeded him–and Öcalan is imprisoned in Turkey. An interesting development, then, is the ostensible approach by Öcalan towards Barzani, claiming the latter to be the leader of all Kurds (Kurdpress).Another important factor is family, which appears to be of great

influence in the way in which someone becomes politically active and with which party they ultimately become involved. Furthermore, one of the primary reasons given for why people join a specific party is the preference—emphasized by PYD members—for a party to be based upon social equality and accepting violence only on the basis of self-defense—all of which are reminiscent of Rousseau (Russell 695). It is also revealing that Rousseau is mentioned directly by one of the respondents as having influenced his political thought. KNC-members emphasize they choose non-violent politics, and while other factors appear to be evenly distributed between both sides, the preference for social equality versus non-violence seems to be mutually exclusive among the respondents. The related observation that only PYD-members regard Marxist revolutions abroad as positive examples seems to confirm this cleavage within Syrian Kurdish politics.

Structural-Cognitive Model and Syria's Kurds

Incorporating the results into the Structural-Cognitive Model leads to somewhat ambivalent outcomes, especially in relation to the impact of relatives on political participation. Research suggests that members of the same group—family—share common experiences leading to similar political preferences (Barner-Barry and Rosenwein 94). Family as phenomenon in Social Movement Theory can be situated among all main sub-theories of the Structural-Cognitive Model. How to locate family within the model needs further exploration.

From a Framing Theory perspective the choice for either the KNC or the PYD is a dynamic process in which the macro level influences the individual. This explains the importance of family members as the cultural expressions emphasizing Kurdish identity and focusing on collective repression. In case of the PYD, this feeling is enforced by class awareness (itself influenced by left wing literature), creating an image of the colonized people whom must free themselves from repression. Another aspect is that each respondent seems to present their answers in correspondence with the framing of the respective parties when it comes to the acceptance of violence.

Cultural expressions—and, for the female respondents, their gender—that emphasize the group's uniqueness and offer the individual a feeling of belonging can provoke political activism, an argument which is supported by Collective Identity Approach. Perhaps the issue of family might fit here as well.

In all twelve interviews the respondents mention repression of Kurds as a key factor in becoming politically active. Some scholars use Political Opportunity Structure as an explanatory model for the Kurds political activism during the Syrian Conflict: "The weakening of a state that proved oppressive, manipulative, and oblivious to their needs presented new political options for them" (Hokayem 78). As obvious as this might seem, it does not explain the macro level reluctance of the Kurds to join the opposition in initial years of the Syrian Conflict. Following Tejel, the coming to power of Bashar al-Asad and his tolerance of some form of Kurdish entity after the Qamishli-revolt explains why the Kurds are reluctant to give up this position. Only after the regime withdrew from Rojava did they participate in the conflict. This implies that the political opportunity is not primarily the Syrian Conflict, but al-Asad's changing attitude towards the Kurds.

Resources cohere with opportunities and both are recognized within a specific frame of reference. Hence, Resource Mobilization Theory interprets the framing elements as necessary instrumental assets for creating popular support. Political op-

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portunities are only considered as such if there are enough assets to actually regard them as a viable option. In their reciprocal relationship, Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Opportunity Structure identify the same important factors, such attractive leadership and organization, both of which were mentioned by KNC and PYD supporters.

Further research is necessary to gain greater insight into the processes of political mobilization among Syria's Kurds. In addition to having experienced repression, leadership inspired respondents to become politically active. Half of the respondents became involved through relatives, while others were influenced by the media. Why they choose their specific party is mainly due to individual perceptions regarding the weaknesses of other parties, although in some cases there were simply no alternatives. Both sides displayed fairly similar opinions on these issues. The major difference which emerged concerns other reasons that underpinned the choice of party: KNC respondents were clearly motivated by the narrative of non-violence, while PYD respondents chose social equality while accepting violence in cases of self-defense.

Notes

[1] Some parties have different factions that operate independently and are practically separate parties (Allsopp 17; Hevian 47-50; Hossino and Tanir 5).

[2] Interview in Suleymaniyah, 7 March 2014.

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Policing January 25: Protest, Tactics, and Territorial Control in Egypt's 2011 Uprising

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On January 25th, 2011 thousands of protesters took to the streets of major cities in Egypt–referred to as the "day of wrath"–to express their grievances and frustration with the ruling regime, ultimately leading to the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak after three decades in power. The street, as a socially constructed space of discontent, had become the central locus of political change. In this paper, I will tackle the question of how and why policing strategies in Cairo failed to contain protesters, eventually leading to the withdrawal of security forces on January 28th. I will analyze the interactions between security forces and protesters in protest events during the uprising, focusing on policing strategies, tactical repertoires, and spaces of resistance. Through this, I hope to offer a way of looking at the politics of territorialization and space production in protest, and by extension, the negotiation of power relations between authority and resistance actors.

Keywords: Protest; Space; Egypt; Tactical Repertoires; Protest Policing; Arab Uprisings; Cairo.

Introduction

Under an authoritarian regime there is no transparent, legitimate set of state institutions through which a citizenry can express demands and discontent. As sociologist Asef Bayat remarks, however, when people are deprived of the electoral power to change the status quo, they "are likely to bring collective pressure to bear on authorities to undertake change" (11). This is particularly evident in the case of Egypt. When thousands of Egyptians took to the streets of Cairo and other cities in the country to contest then-President Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian rule, the country's security forces were overwhelmed not only by the sheer number of protesters, but arguably also by their tactics in appropriating and maintaining spaces of resistance.

In this paper, I will shed light on the protest policing of what has come to be known as the "January 25 uprising" in Cairo. Grounded in a sociology of space and social movement research, this paper assumes that the negotiation of power relations during the uprising was expressed in attempts by protesters to gain territorial control through tactical repertoires in order to produce and expand spaces of resistance; whereas the security forces attempted to maintain territoriality through policing strategies to control and contain

these spaces. The data for this endeavor consists in participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and qualitative documentary analysis.

This paper is structured as follows: first, I will conceptualize notions of tactical repertoires and policing strategies in social movement research, before elaborating on the relationship between social space, territoriality and tactics in protest. What follows is a case study of key events[1] during the January 25 uprising, in which I seek to relate the theoretical considerations, mentioned above, to my ethnographic findings. Through this, I hope to offer a way of looking at the politics of territorialization and space production in protest, and by extension, the negotiation of power relations between authority and resistance actors.

Tactical Repertoires and Policing Strategies

Tactical repertoires, or simply tactics, are at the heart of any protest action. They embody the means for gaining territorial control over places and expanding or containing spaces of resistance. As Taylor and Van Dyke note, tactical repertoires are tools of "*contestation* in which bodies, symbols, identities, practices, and discourses are used to pursue or prevent changes in institutionalized power relations" (268 emphasis in original). They do not "just exist" in a vacuum, but operate within structural constraints, such as repression, or poverty of resources (Ennis 520).

As social movement research indicates (McAdam; Suh; Tilly), the development of tactical repertoires occurs over time within structural constraints—a process that I call *political learning*. As shown elsewhere (Abdelrahman; El-Mahdi and Korany; Soudias), Egypt's January 25 uprising can be understood as the culminating episode of five contentious cycles since 2000. Each cycle included a predominant protesting actor, ranging from pro-democracy actors to the labor movement, which introduced particular tactics from which other (involved) actors were able to learn. Here, actors implement those known and available tactics that—through individual and collective experiences and observation of other actors' experiences—have proven to be successful in order to pursue a goal. In this vein, Tilly rightly points out, "the existing repertoire constrains collective action […] people tend to act within known limits, to innovate at the margins of the existing forms, and to miss many opportunities available to them in principle" (390).

This is true also for the tactics of security forces. In social movement research, these can broadly be subsumed under the label of policing strategies. Della Porta and Reiter (33) found out three strategic approaches for policing protest events: coercive strategies (use of force, violent means, or agents provocateurs to control or disperse a protest action in a legal or illegal manner), persuasive strategies (attempt to control protest through contacting activists, organizers and leaders prior to protest event), and informative strategies (gathering widespread information about an event and targeted information to identify law-breakers). Throughout the January 25 uprising, coercive strategies were dominant. As one protester notes, "the state security has an […] automatic program to counter protests" (protest participant, personal communication, 23 Mar. 2011). The main goal of policing is territorial control and will be discussed in detail below. As I will show, Egyptian security forces regularly resort to coercive strategies in order to suppress dissidents. As far as mobilization is concerned, coercive policing strategies may increase the risk of collective action and make it less attractive for bystanders to join, thus constraining mobilization. However, it is important to note that coercive policing strategies can very well backlash and lead to increased mobilization. As della Porta and Diani note,

> […] many forms of repression, particu-

> larly when they are considered illegitimate, could create a sense of injustice that increases the perceived risk of inaction. It is not surprising therefore that these two divergent pressures produce contradictory results, and empirical research indicates a radicalization of those groups most exposed to police violence in some cases and renunciation of unconventional forms of action in others. (200)

As I will illustrate, protesters still widely feared the state's repressive power, predominantly expressed through coercive policing. However, with protesters taking over more and more streets during the uprising, protesters' perception shifted as the perceived strength of the movement increasingly outweighed the fear of state repression (Kurzman).

Territoriality and Spaces of Resistance

Tactical repertoires and policing strategies are the means of gaining territorial control, and for protesters they are the prerequisite for constructing spaces of resistance. I concentrate on Henry Lefebvre's notion of spaces as it underlines that the social and the spatial are inseparably linked and mutually constitutive.[2]

In Lefebvre's conception, spaces are constructed through social relations and structures. Acknowledging that spaces are experienced in multiple ways, Lefebvre (33; 38-39; 245) identifies the triad of perceived space (spatial practice), conceived space (representations of space), and lived space (representational spaces); seeing a unity between physical, mental, and social space. An example that incorporates these constructs is Tahrir Square in the heart of Cairo. The Square has been *conceived*, designed and produced through labor, technology and institutions. The meaning of the space, however, is adapted and transformed as it is *perceived* and *lived* by social actors. Tahrir Square, which had been conceived as a traffic junction, may have been perceived as a central and popular meeting spot, and lived as a hub of transportation, consumption and socializing on January 24, 2011. But on January 25, 2011, when the Egyptian uprising began, it has widely been perceived as a space of protesting authority and lived as a heterotopia of resistance despite its initial conception (Schumann and Soudias; Telmissany).

Tactical repertoires, then, are a means for inducing and maintaining such a transformation. As people use Tahrir Square in a way other than its initial conception as a traffic junction, it can become something else entirely, appropriated in use. This is true for various streets, squares and buildings during the January 25 uprising, where their "orderly"[3] use changed towards an "exceptional" appropriation with shifting actions, symbols, and discourses that can be subsumed under the banner of resistance.

This experience is not unique to Cairo, but occurred in similar ways in the squares of Taksim, Syntagma, Euromaidan, Puerta del Sol, or Tagheer—to name just a few occupations around that time. But why do protesters take their demands to city centers? Building on Bayat (167-69), I argue that protesters chose to take their dissent to downtown Cairo for a variety of interrelated reasons: (1) mobile crowds can rapidly assemble and disperse at large streets and squares, such as Qasr al-Aini Street and Tahrir Square; (2) downtown Cairo has historical and political significance as most political institutions are located there (symbolizing state-power) and major historical uprisings have occurred in the area (1881 Urabi revolt at Abdeen Square; 1919 Anti-British uprisings, where women protested alongside men for the first time;[4] 1977 bread riots at Tahrir Square); (3) downtown Cairo serves as the intersection for mass transportation networks, facilitating easier access and escape for potential protesters; (4) downtown Cairo is the center of media attention, which allows protesters to extend their discontent *beyond* their immediate environment.

In line with my argument, security forces attempted to prohibit this change, that is, the construction of spaces of resistance, through territorialization in order to maintain public order. As Herbert notes,

> Territorial control is an inherent outcome of the social organization of the police [...] modern policing has meant the development of a capacity to intrude into and control space. […] officers can, when necessary, secure control of the flow of action in space. The police […] are expected to be effective agents of territoriality, to be able to control social action by controlling area. (6-10)

Many policing strategies involve enacting boundaries, restricting access and using force in creating and maintaining "public order." As Sack notes, "social power cannot exist without these territorial rules. Territorial and social rules are mutually constitutive" (327). Complementing Foucault's notion of disciplinary power, the capacity to use force is central to the role of the police. The nation state needs the capacity to exercise systematic control over its population in order to maintain itself. In Egypt, this has been reinforced with the Emergency Law. In place since President Sadat's assassination in 1982 until 2012, it allowed security forces to arrest people without charge, limit freedom of assembly and expression and effectively criminalize any kind of protest.[5] In summary, the state's authority and existence is dependent on "the capacity of the police to mark and enact meaningful boundaries, to restrict people's capacity to act by regulating their movements in space" (Herbert 13). Because state power is embedded in a concrete territory and particular spatial routines, contention over space is a direct challenge to state control and authority (Zajko and Béland 721). This is especially true when strategic buildings with an immense political significance, such as the Ministry of Interior (MoI) that usually houses the police, are being besieged or taken over.

As I will show in the following section, protesters during the January 25 uprising were aware of the security forces' coercive policing strategies and carefully considered their tactics accordingly. By attempting to gain territorial control of streets and squares, protesters targeted constructing, maintaining, and expanding spaces of resistance.

January 25: A Diary of Resistance[6]

With the fall of Tunisian President Ben Ali on January 14, 2011, hopes and worries for a similar revolutionary uprising for Egypt were widely discussed in Cairene cafés and elsewhere. Various blogs and Facebook pages were quick to announce a major protest event on January 25 with a catalog of demands, ranging from minimum wage to ending the Emergency Law. Widely labeled as the "Day of Wrath," the demonstration was scheduled to coincide with National Police Day to protest routine brutality and torture by the state security apparatus. On January 24, I contacted an activist with the April 6 Youth Movement to find out where the protest would be located and he told me there was no specific location. He explained that the absence of protest locations was in part a strategic omission; hinting that protests were intended to be all over the country, predominantly in residential areas. I interpret this as a tactical stance in countering territorial control by security forces. Whereas, previously, protests had taken place in locations symbolizing state power, such as in front of the cabinet building or the parliament, the January 25 protest was intended to mobilize people in residential neighborhoods. The security forces would expect protests in the same old locations as occurred over the previous decade. But demonstrations scattered across the city would soon prove difficult to police.

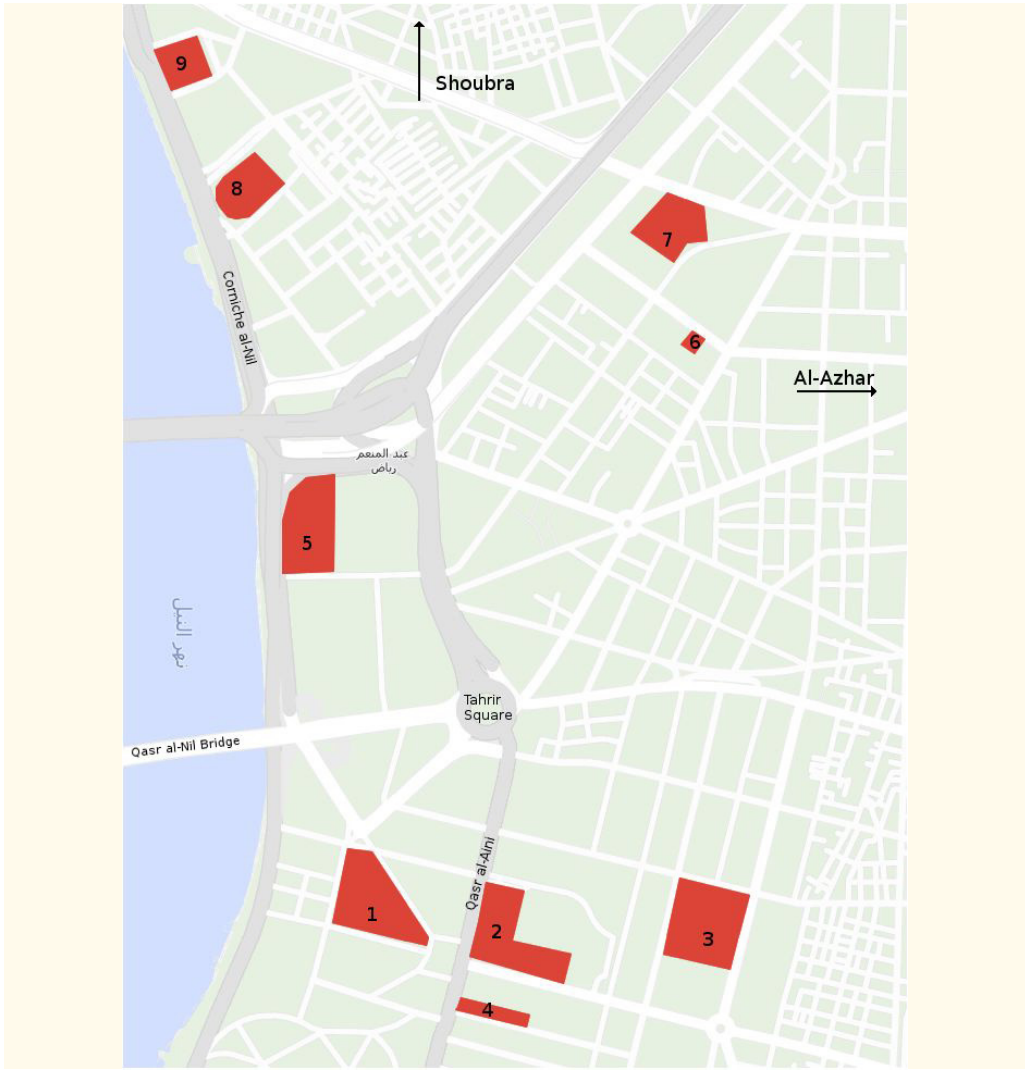

Figure 1: Map of Downtown Cairo
1 US Embassy, **2** Parliament, **3** Ministry of Interior, **4** Ministerial Cabinet, **5** NDP Headquarters, **6** Journalists Syndicate, **7** Supreme Court, **8** Maspero Television Building, **9** Ministry of Foreign Affairs

January 25: To New Beginnings

On the morning of January 25, downtown Cairo was practically deserted. A massive security presence in front of the MoI and on Tahrir Square was intended to intimidate potential protesters. Plainclothes state security agents urged passers-by to keep moving and not stand in the square—attempting to preemptively disrupt protest crowds from gathering and maintaining "public order." Around noon, a group of some 40 protesters approached the square from Qasr al-Aini Bridge, which leads to the square, but were immediately blocked by riot police. The individuals fled towards Corniche al-Nil (a wide street along the Nile), reassembled and marched away from Tahrir Square towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Within minutes they joined up with another group of a few hundred people who were already marching on Corniche al-Nil. Behind the marching crowd, a large group of riot police was keeping a constant distance. Only when the protesters attempted to approach Tahrir Square did the riot police violently intervene.

By the time protesters arrived at the state TV building (Maspero), the group numbered in the thousands. As Maspero symbolizes state-power, the demonstrators stopped there and chanted against the regime. Following this, the group attempt-

ed to march to the heavily populated Shoubra neighborhood to link up with another emergent protest group. The security forces blocked off certain streets on the way, but the crowd would always avoid confrontations and continued to shift to more peripheral side streets, while remaining cohesive. As one respondent noted,

> If you imagine the protesters were like a body of water, the police would not necessarily try to stop the water, because the water would break through. So what the police would do is channel the protesters. When I was in Shoubra […] I would see the police block roads, but always keep one road open, so protesters would keep flowing. Instead of trying to block them all […] the police would block the important routes. They would not want them to go to certain areas, but then they would open insignificant routes and try to keep them circled. (Protest participant, personal communication, 21 Mar. 2011)

The security forces were still following the crowd but did not crack down. This hesitancy was surprising. Usually, as soon as protests emerge, the police would set up cordons and beat protesters down. But this day passers-by joined in, the protesters physically expanded their space as they marched, and soon the demonstrators outnumbered the surrounding security forces. This appropriation amounts to a process of negotiating what is allowed and "orderly," and what is not. While more research needs to be done as to why the police were so reluctant to use force, many of the participants I talked to interpret this initial hesitancy as a move by the regime to avoid the same mistakes of indiscriminate and brutal protest policing as Ben Ali in Tunisia.

After hours of marching, the demonstrators arrived in Shoubra and were confronted by a massive police cordon on Shoubra street. This time they confronted the blockade and some fighting erupted between police and protesters. The blockade opened due to the sheer number of protesters, and they were allowed to keep marching. The security forces were unable to contain the masses with their usual cordoning tactics. Arguably, the unprecedented experience of breaking through police cordons contributed to the protesters' perception that they, and by extension the protest movement, have grown stronger than the state's capacity to repress dissent.

The appropriation of space continued that day, as thousands gathered in front of the Supreme Court, the headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), Maspero and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and outside Cairo in Alexandria, Tanta, Mansoura, Aswan and Asyut ("Egypt Warns Protesters"). While neither of the "organizing" movements explicitly and publicly called for it, at around 5 pm, thousands marched into Tahrir Square. One respondent reported:

> Everybody knows: 'When in doubt, go to Tahrir.' […] I don't know if protesters organized it together to go to Tahrir or if they knew instinctively—because in 2003 [anti-Iraq war protest] that was where everyone met up in the end. (Protest participant, personal communication, 17 Mar. 2011)

This underlines the political learning process I outlined earlier. In this case, and in other interview situations, the protesters recalled the success of occupying Tahrir in the 2003 anti-war protest, and chose to assemble there again for January 25. Protesters approached the square from different directions, making it impossible for a significantly outnumbered security force to contain them. The protesters were able to converge in the square. The only street off Tahrir with an overwhelming security presence was Qasr al-Aini—the street near which many ministries as well as the parliament are situated. Qasr al-Aini was off limits. When the protesters attempted to appropriate this street, riot police responded with water hoses, massive amounts of tear-

gas, and rocks thrown by what appeared to be paid thugs (baltagy). Protesters responded by breaking street pavement and hurling it at riot police. Whenever the protesters retreated, the battle would stop. This process of negotiating space lasted several hours. Later, additional riot police positioned themselves on all streets leading to Tahrir Square. Yet protesters were free to enter and exit. One protester on January 25 asked me to spread the word to stay at the square because the crackdown might occur at midnight, when the number of protesters had decreased, as had happened in the 2003 anti-war protests. This protester had learned from his experiences in 2003 that police might try to violently disperse the demonstration at night, after many of the protesters had left. Another protester reported:

> Around 10:30 pm, I met a correspondent for Al Jazeera and he told us they [police] are going to sweep it [Tahrir Square] around midnight. It was pretty known, even to media. We knew that they would attack us at 1:00 am and the objective was not to keep the [square]—because of the amount of riot police we saw getting prepared outside. The objective was to get them on camera, beating […] us and firing at us. That was the actual objective. And an organizer [of the protest], […] came and told me: "Stay strong at 1:00 am. Make sure that you uphold it to the point they [police] get very violent, so we can get it on camera." (Protest participant, personal communication, 17 Mar. 2011)

The security forces marched on the square around 3:00 am with massive force, arresting hundreds, including the protester quoted above. The protesters had learned the police tactic from previous confrontations, and applied the counter tactics they believed to be most suited for maintaining their protest. Activists used the media as a platform for spreading their dissent beyond Tahrir Square, arguably by appropriating the space of news coverage, in order to attract other Egyptians to join and prompt an international response to police brutality. The MoI issued a statement blaming the Muslim Brotherhood for initiating the protests, a claim the Brotherhood denied. This move was intended to delegitimize the protests while legitimizing repressive policing; suggesting the regime was only fighting the "Islamist threat". January 25 marked the beginning of a seemingly horizontal uprising, in which protesters increasingly gained territorial control over Cairo's streets and squares.

January 26: New Situation, Old Policing Strategies

As policing did not manage to contain protesters, which is certainly related to the unusual hesitancy in cracking down on the appropriation of space by protesters, interior minister Habib al-'Adly issued orders to "arrest any persons expressing their views illegally," thus trying to legitimate coercive policing by a narrative of upholding 'public order' ("Timeline: Egypt's Revolution"). That day, with mobile communication cut off, I went to the journalists syndicate—then a stronghold of opposition to the regime—assuming protests would be staged there. As with previous protests at this location, protesters stood on the steps in front of the syndicate and were surrounded and contained by a police cordon twice their size. Some 80 protesters chanted "leave, leave [Mubarak]" and "down, down, Hosni Mubarak." The protests were more energetic and vocal than I had witnessed on other occasions. Thousands of riot policemen were on standby, spanning the entire distance from the Supreme Court's main entrance to the lawyers and the journalists syndicate, as hundreds of protesters approached the area and attempted to join the many small, scattered protests in the area. The protesters seemed angry, confronting police by yelling, pushing, and at-

tempting to break through the cordon. When they did, the riot police hit them with batons and plainclothes agents would drag some of them behind the cordon and severely beat them. Despite the presence of international reporters, often associated with police restraint, the police did not hesitate to beat protesters.[7] After some hesitancy during January 25, the policing strategies returned to the same coercive and brutal ones the protesters were demonstrating against in the first place. The coercive policing that day was intended to reestablish the norms of what protesters are and are not allowed to do.

A few meters away from the journalists syndicate, passers-by were stopping to watch and condemn the violent interactions. In less than half an hour, some three dozen by-standers gathered and started chanting against police brutality. In response, the police opened traffic on the street to disperse the bystanders and protesters, who increasingly started to surround the very police cordon surrounding the protesters on the steps of the journalists syndicate. Opening traffic worked to an extent and the crowd scattered, but soon by-standers turned protesters started marching away from the police presence and further into downtown Cairo.

As protests and marches were taking place all over town, the standard police tactic of cordoning became impossible. Instead, they reverted to chasing protesters and beating them up. Yet the protesters would reassemble and keep marching. I suggest that on January 26 the protesters continued to recognize and fear the state's coercive powers but to a lesser extent than in the past. At this point, relative to the state security presence in and around downtown, they felt these powers were hardly comparable to the strength of the protest movement. The perceived strength of the movement became a decisive factor in people's decision to participate (Kurzman).

January 28: Policing Breakdown

Protests continued on January 27 across several cities, including Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and Ismailia, and hundreds were arrested. Yet by upholding spaces of resistance through their continuing engagement in street protests, protesters made it clear that they would not give up until their demands were met. On January 28, Internet and mobile telephone services were entirely cut off. This tactic was intended to weaken demonstrations but it backfired instead: as the protesters were unable to communicate and coordinate protest locations, they were scattered all over Cairo, making it all the more difficult for the already weakened police to contain and cordon them.

For the first time since January 25, the Muslim Brotherhood announced it would "allow" individual members to participate in protests, but not join as an organization. One protest participant recalled, "on the 28th, when we started from the mosque it was extremely apparent there were people of the Brotherhood that made a huge impact on the amount of people [protesting]" (protest participant, personal communication, 17 Mar. 2011). After Friday prayer in mosques, which had also been appropriated by protesters, tens of thousands of people took to the Egyptian streets. The main places of contention in Cairo were the Sixth of October Bridge, Qasr al-Nil Bridge, Al-Azhar Mosque, the Presidential Palace and Tahrir Square. That day protesters set fire to the NDP headquarters. Setting this building on fire not only contributed to the protesters' perception that power structures were negotiable, but went further and set a concrete example of abolishing authoritarian structures as the regime was slowly "burning down." Not merely metaphorical, the burning down of the headquarters had concrete logistic and strategic consequences, as it disturbed the inner cohesion and organization of the regime.

Downtown Cairo was filled with teargas. Residents who chose not to actively participate in protests would throw supplies, such as water and vinegar against the clouds of teargas, from their balconies as an act of solidarity and sympathy. Some would even throw water from their windows and balconies on police forces as a means of attacking them. To me, and as I assume to other participants, these efforts were extraordinarily touching emotionally, as they solidified affective bonds between protesters and helped them sustain their efforts in the battle over protest spaces. As Cairo's streets were filled with masses of protesters, security forces retreated from most places in order to defend key ministries and government buildings. As a result, the bridges leading to downtown Cairo were marked by a huge security presence. Qasr al-Nil Bridge, which leads to Tahrir Square, was a center of conflict on January 28. Thousands of protesters attempted to cross the bridge while masses of riot policemen countered with water trucks and armored vehicles in an attempt to quell the (re-) appropriation of space by the protesters. One participant notes:

> Protesters marched towards the police with their arms up in the air, chanting "peaceful, peaceful." They really tried not to make it violent. These were peaceful protesters marching towards security services who were responding with violence; who were beating them, shooting with teargas [and] rubber bullets at them. In the face of such provocation, the restraint on the site of the protesters was incredible. (Protest participant, personal communication, 21 Mar. 2011)

The protesters chanting "peaceful" were negotiating the terms of their space expansion through discursive practices in a Foucauldian sense. The chant can also be understood as a moral exhortation to delegitimize police violence. Most communication with security forces would take place through chants that reflected the protesters' intentions and goals. Some chants even asked for the police to join them. Still, the police generally responded using massive force, making January 28 the bloodiest day since protests started. The riot police attacked protesters with large-scale use of teargas and with water hoses. The protesters used trashcans and previously occupied police outposts as shields and barricades and some threw the teargas grenades back at the police. Policemen seemed unable to cope with the situation, as their trucks ran over other policemen, teargas was thrown into the Nile and some riot policemen threw teargas grenades at protesters without considering the wind direction, effectively gassing themselves. After several hours of battle and ineffective policing, the security forces retreated and thousands of protesters were able to march into Tahrir Square, starting an occupation that would last for weeks. As one participant noted,

> I think that what January 28th really demonstrated […] was how completely rotten to the core the police state had become. […] Honestly, how hard should it be for a police state to hold a bridge? That should be one of the easiest tasks for a police state that is able to deploy hundreds of thousands of security personnel. Instead what you saw was the incompetence of their security forces, lack of coordination between them and their total unpreparedness for an […] outpouring of political discontent. (Protest participant, personal communication, 20 Mar. 2011)

Even in trying to perform the usual functions of territorialization as a means of policing areas through massive security deployment and violent crackdowns, it became apparent that the police were unable to perform their fundamental tasks. The training most riot policemen had been given was simply not enough to cope with such massive protests and the coercive policing strategies that they used generally failed to suppress dissent.[8] According to a journalist respondent who

was able to interview security forces, riot policemen were ordered to work 16 to 18 hours a day beginning on January 25, which was likely detrimental to their performance. The respondent further claimed that policemen were threatened with jail and sexualized torture by their supervisors, if they refused to confront protesters (protest participant, personal communication, 21 Mar. 2011). When I was observing police movement in my apartment right across the MoI on January 27, I witnessed how police officers slapped lower-ranking riot policemen and hit them with their guns if they refused to return to the frontlines of battle on the opposite side of the ministry.[9] Additionally, scale and determination of the protests overwhelmed security forces, forcing the police to surrender certain areas and congregate at perceived critical locations key to the regime's survival. After Tahrir Square, university campuses, the bridges leading into downtown Cairo, and virtually all mosques that served as starting locations for protests had been "lost," the police shifted their presence to the fortress-like MoI all the way up to nearby Qasr al-Aini street, as well as to Maspero. The regime would by no means allow these two buildings to "fall" as this could have severe implications for the protesters' perception and fear of the regime, but also the regime's organizational performance. Clearly, losing control of these buildings could have induced a complete collapse of the regime. The MoI represents domestic state-power and houses the planning of police activity, while Maspero houses propagandistic state-broadcasting that reaches almost every Egyptian household and represents the interface of communication and information production, and distribution. It became apparent that the protesters' appropriation of spaces put the regime's survival at stake as the streets slowly changed ownership.

A curfew starting at 6 pm was announced on January 28 to intimidate protesters and keep them off the streets. Yet thousands defied it and some attempted to approach the parliamentary assembly and the MoI, turning adjoining Qasr al-Aini street into a battlefield. The protesters set cars on fire, which then served as burning barricades against the police, and hundreds of protesters continuously advanced towards the parliament equipped with sticks and stones. Pick-up trucks transported desks, chairs and wood laths to the front line to sustain the barricades, while cars and mopeds transported the wounded from the front lines to hospitals. Different protesters had different tasks ranging from physical fighting to efficient supply chain management. The usual coercive police tactics of throwing teargas, beating with batons and shooting rubber bullets could not stop the protesters from expanding their space of protest to the parliamentary assembly.[10] Protester numbers, tactical considerations and implementation, as well as their perception of state-power compared to their own were superior to the police's. After hours of fighting, hundreds wounded and some killed, the protesters were able to appropriate the area around the parliamentary assembly and Qasr al-Aini street, and forced the police to retreat to the MoI. Although it was heavily contested, protesters did not manage to occupy the premises of the MoI as police were prepared to use lethal means in order to defend their "last frontier." Yet the act of besieging the MoI, had a considerable impact on the organization and internal cohesion of the police. The next day, after severe and bloody fighting, riot gear and many police uniforms were found in the streets surrounding the ministry, as policemen reportedly changed into plainclothes and fled the scene. Since the police had been unable to control territory, contain protesters, or even keep its own men in line, military forces took over on late January 28, after which the police virtually disappeared from the streets. The police's withdrawal facilitated the occupation of Tahrir Square, which quickly became the sym-

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bolic epicenter and a heterotopia of the Egyptian uprising (Schumann and Soudias; Telmissany). The streets at that time, it appears, no longer belonged to the country's autocrats, but to the people.

Conclusion

During the January 25 uprising in Cairo, protesters constituted spaces of resistance and expanded them through the employment of tactical repertoires. The security forces on the other hand attempted to maintain control over spaces through policing strategies, trying to keep the streets contained and "orderly." The struggle over protest spaces is a key expression of the negotiation of extant power structures between protesters, on the one hand, and the regime represented by their security forces, on the other.

The battle over spaces by these actors underlies strategies of spatial control. A premise of the modern nation state is its control over territory. The police are given a set of legal and coercive powers to implement this control in terms of Foucauldian disciplinary power. This is an inherent outcome of the social organization of the police as modern policing has meant the development of a capacity to intrude into and control space. Social power hence does not exist without territorial rules. The protesters' attempt to constitute spaces of resistance is an act of a) resisting dictated modes of territoriality, and hence b) renegotiating existing power structures by "liberating" places, redefining symbols and meanings, expressing demands, grievances and desires.

In my case study, the capacity of the police to mark and enact meaningful boundaries, to restrict people's capacity to act by regulating their movements in space has proven insufficient and jeopardized existing power relations in favor of the protesters. The police were not only unable to contain protesters, but barely managed to defend key state institutions. The latter in turn severely restricted the regime's capacity to organize and act, which temporarily led to the breakdown of state security services and their monopoly of force.

As suggested here, the modes of thinking the concepts of territorialization,space production, and tactical repertoires together can serve as a helpful analytical looking glass well beyond Egypt's January 25 uprising. To name just one example: following the coup d'état against Mursi in 2013; the occupation of Raba'a al-Adawiya Square by Mursi-supporters; the rallies in Tahrir Square by his opponents, as well as supporters of the armed forces; and the establishment of "The Third Square" on Sphinx Square were an embodiment of power relations at that time.

This too is the case outside of Cairo, in the occupations of major squares, parks, and streets like in Athens, Istanbul, Madrid, New York, or Sanaa. These are all cases in point for how protesters produce spaces of resistance in order to challenge extant power relations. The coercive policing strategies through which security forces in each of these occupations cracked down on protesters not only show their attempts at social control through territoriality. They also show that when the status quo is seriously under threat and authorities in jeopardy, violence appears to be the primary policing choice – regardless whether the political systems are labeled authoritarian or democratic.

Notes

[1] A detailed ethnography of the entirety of the uprising is impossible, and due to lack of space, I will focus on those protest events in which I have participated in, and that provide fruitful examples of police-protester interactions in relation to my argument. Data has been gathered through participant observation throughout the 18 days, qualitative documentary research, as well as semi-structured interviews in March and April 2011 with participants, i.e. self-described first-time protesters, activists, and journalists. During my participation in the January 25 uprising, I framed my role as a researcher, but strongly sympathized with the protesters' cause and even became friends with many of the people I have met during the uprising or while conducting interviews. Albeit I did not participate in chants and direct action against police, I too was part of the research situation: I too marched and maintained solidarity with protesters in the face of continuous police attacks. Whether or not I was successful in maintaining critical distance to my research subject, I leave up to the reader to decide.

[2] For a review of space conceptions and their relation to protest, see Soudias 28-44.

[3] According to the United States Institute of Peace, public order describes the "absence of widespread criminal and political violence, such as riots and intimidation against targeted groups or individuals" (73). One needs to keep in mind the problematic nature of the constitution of the term: The police are the agent of enforcing public order. As they usually hold the monopoly of the 'legitimate' use of force, they too can exert massive amounts of violence, therefore disrupting what is considered 'public order'. I need to stress the very political, rather than normative connotation of the term as it is the authorities who usually decide upon the definition of order and disorder.

[4] For a gender-focused perspective on the Egyptian revolutionary process, see Amar; al-Ali; Sholkamy.

[5] Though the emergency law in Egypt was formally suspended in 2012, a new protest law introduced in late 2013 perpetuates the widespread criminalization of protest.

[6] Where not marked differently, the following is based on personal observations in protest events in Cairo between January 25 and February 11 2011.

[7] Multiple respondents noted that journalists, particularly international reporters, have a restraining effect on violent policing, as regime and security forces have no interest in police brutality being reported abroad.

[8] For more detailed information regarding the organization of security forces in Egypt prior to the January 25 uprising, see Soudias 61-65.

[9] These observations indicate struggles within the security force during that time. While further research is required, it is fair to say the police did not act and function as a monolithic unit during these 18 days.

[10] Unverified sources even reported police use of live ammunition on Qasr al-Aini.

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