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A note from the editor:

The McGill Journal of Middle East Studies attempts to bring forth a multifaceted approach to issues pertaining to the Middle East region. Each year, a variety of submissions are reviewed in terms of the diversity and depth of scholarship they offer. The Journal publishes papers submitted by members of the McGill community and beyond. The authors come from a variety of fields, engaging with a rich variety of topics and using various approaches in doing so.

Following a tumultuous few years in the political landscape of the Middle East, this volume of the Journal features four diverse works highlighting recent happenings and analyzing the causes and effects of various events. Adib Bencherif's paper discusses the Arab Spring and Egypt while civil-military relations in North Africa and the complexities therein are examined in the work by Jaïs Mehaji. Rachel Mulbry's paper examines sectarian dynamics within Iraq following the US occupation of 2003 followed by Hannah O'Rear's work which takes a look at the formation and evolution of faith in post-Soviet Azerbaijan.

Please note that the production of this volume of the journal took place over two years, necessitating multiple editors.

March 2013

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Les Réseaux Sociaux et le Printemps Arabe : Étude de cas Portant sur l'Égypte

ADIB BENCHERIF

INTRODUCTION

Partant de la « révolution du jasmin », un parfum semble s'être répandu dans le monde arabe au point de voir un vieux pharaon tomber et être guidé vers son tombeau dans la disgrâce. Par delà la métaphore, nous constatons que de nombreux observateurs se sont penchés sur le rôle qu'auraient joué les réseaux sociaux dans ce printemps arabe, et plus particulièrement dans les printemps tunisien et égyptien. Les médias ont ainsi mis en avant ce débat se questionnant sur le poids du numérique dans ce printemps arabe.[1] Se laissant aller à la tentation de titres accrocheurs, les révolutions dans le monde arabe ont été qualifiées par les journalistes de « révolution Facebook » ou de « révolution 2.0 ».[2] Bien que séduisantes, ces appellations amènent à des simplifications et l'établissement d'une relation exclusive et donc fallacieuse entre réseaux sociaux et printemps arabe. En effet, de pareilles dénominations pourraient conduire à des conclusions faisant des réseaux sociaux les uniques responsables de la démocratisation entamée dans le monde arabe.[3] Il est vrai toutefois que l'on a assisté à une croissance exponentielle de la population utilisant Internet dans le monde arabe. En 2009, nous pouvions compter 53 millions d'utilisateurs d'Internet dans la région, soit une augmentation de 300% du nombre d'utilisateurs en l'espace d'une décennie.[4] Les utilisateurs d'Internet sont ainsi de potentiels cyber-acteurs interagissant au sein de ces différents réseaux sociaux.

Il s'avère ainsi nécessaire de se questionner sur les effets des réseaux sociaux sur ce printemps arabe. A notre sujet : Les réseaux sociaux sont-il un vecteur de démocratisation

ou un outil de répression ? Nous tenterons d'esquisser une réponse à travers une étude de cas portant sur la révolution égyptienne. Au sein de notre sujet s'articule la question suivante : Comment les réseaux sociaux ont-ils contribué à la révolution égyptienne? Notre question de recherche portera ainsi l'emphase sur la nature des réseaux sociaux.

La distinction et la définition de certains termes est primordiale pour une bonne appréhension du sujet. Si le Web [5] se désigne comme l'ensemble des moyens de communication et des flux d'information disponibles, il est subdivisible en deux sous-concepts décrivant deux générations d'utilisateurs. En effet, nous pouvons parler de Web 1.0 et Web 2.0. Le Web 2.0 est un terme inventé par Dale Dougherty et Tim O'Reilly en 2003 « pour désigner tous les sites participatifs, dans lesquels les utilisateurs sont aussi les éditeurs du contenu. Ils comprennent notamment les blogs, les sites wiki et les réseaux sociaux ».[6] Le Web 1.0, quant à lui, est un terme utilisé après l'apparition du concept de Web 2.0 « pour désigner l'ensemble des sites non participatifs où les éditeurs de contenu sont distincts des utilisateurs ».[7] Dans le Web 2.0, les réseaux sociaux comme Facebook ou Twitter rendent tous les utilisateurs capables d'interagir; tous participent et démultiplient les nœuds de communication et d'information.[8] Ainsi les réseaux sociaux font des utilisateurs des acteurs d'où l'intérêt de se pencher sur l'envergure du changement qu'ils peuvent générer.

Dans notre sujet, l'expression « vecteur de démocratisation » requiert un effort d'éclaircissement. En effet, le terme vecteur peut prendre deux sens dans le présent sujet. Dans un premier temps, vecteur peut-être pris au sens d'outil de communication, véhiculant des messages et de l'information. Dans un second temps, vecteur peut-être interprété comme un segment amenant d'un point à un autre. Le second sens de vecteur nous présente les réseaux sociaux comme causes potentielles d'un changement de comportement au sein de la société égyptienne encourageant le renouveau et la démocratisation.

Éléna Aoun dans une récente étude considère que :

> Le printemps arabe aurait été inconcevable il y a encore quelques mois. D'une certaine manière, il résulte d'un acte isolé qui intervient dans un contexte rétrospectivement perçu comme explosif, où les conjonctures internationales aggravent les frustrations sociales, économiques et politiques internes, et où les vecteurs d'information (tels qu'Al Jazeera) et de communication – les fameux « réseaux sociaux » tels que Twitter et Facebook – facilitent l'émulation et la mobilisation. Les

> revendications économiques liées à l'augmentation du coût de la vie et au chômage sont l'un des dénominateurs communs à toutes les contestations, l'autre correspondant aux revendications démocratiques : dénonciation de la répression, soif de libertés, fin des discriminations ethniques et religieuses, lutte contre la corruption.[9]

La double nature des réseaux sociaux se devine dans cette citation sans toutefois lever le voile sur la définition du mot vecteur témoignant de l'ambigüité de notre objet d'étude. Le plan est alors d'étudier dans un premier temps (I) le contexte, c'est-à-dire les variables dites structurelles qui sont le terreau dans lequel la révolution égyptienne a éclos, en soulignant quelques indicateurs politiques et socio-économiques qui expliquent les revendications de la population. Le second axe (II) revient à s'interroger sur les différentes utilisations faites par le gouvernement et les insurgés de l'outil que sont les réseaux sociaux. Il s'agit d'appréhender les stratégies employées et de constater que l'outil fut à l'avantage des insurgés dans le cas de la révolution égyptienne. Même si dans sa nature même, la technologie se veut neutre, les insurgés ont utilisé de manière plus efficace l'outil. Dans le second axe, il s'agit ainsi du premier sens du mot vecteur. Enfin, au sein du dernier axe (III), il s'agit de constater que les réseaux sociaux sont responsables de l'émergence d'un espace public qui permet de véhiculer des idées et donc d'être porteur de modifications dans le comportement des individus. Dans le dernier axe, le vecteur est à considérer à travers sa dimension d'émulation et d'initiateur.

I) UN CONTEXTE SOCIAL, POLITIQUE ET ÉCONOMIQUE FAVORABLE À UN PRINTEMPS ÉGYPTIEN

Le printemps égyptien éclot dans un contexte marqué par la paupérisation de la population et une précarité endémique, particulièrement au sein de la jeunesse. Les indicateurs politiques et socio-économiques annonçant une rupture sont nombreux.[10]

A) Jeunesse et précarité

Au cours des années précédentes, la société égyptienne était considérée comme passive et résignée, voire fataliste, à l'égard du régime de Moubarak, à l'image des autres sociétés arabes. Cependant, la frustration et l'exaspération de la société égyptienne auraient

pu être attestées par un ensemble d'indicateurs affichant des résultats alarmants dans les dimensions politiques, économiques ou sociales.

La population égyptienne s'élève à 82 millions et l'âge moyen est de 24 ans. Le taux d'alphabétisation est relativement élevé et est de 71,4% et le taux de chômage est de 9,7%. Cependant, le taux de chômage chez les jeunes, c'est-à-dire dans la frange 15 à 24 ans, est de 24,8%. Ce sont pourtant des jeunes éduqués, mais près du quart d'entre eux sont sans emploi et ceux dans le monde du travail occupent souvent des emplois précaires. Enfin, près de 20% de la population égyptienne vit en dessous du seuil de pauvreté.[11] La conjoncture économique s'aggravant avec la crise économique et financière de 2008, la population égyptienne, et plus particulièrement la jeunesse, étaient laissées à une précarité participant à l'amplification des frustrations.

Le gouvernement égyptien tentait pourtant au cours des dernières années de diversifier l'économie jusque là très vulnérable car dépendante des exportations en hydrocarbures et a attiré de nombreux entrepreneurs étrangers dans le domaine des nouvelles technologies. Ces derniers ont pu ainsi installer leurs firmes[12] et profiter du réservoir humain incarné par une population égyptienne jeune, bien éduquée, « high tech savvy »[13] et parlant anglais, profil existant au sein de la classe bourgeoise mais aussi des classes moyennes.[14] Des emplois ont été créés mais n'étaient accessibles qu'à une partie de la population; celle capable d'épouser ce profil.

Enfin, le gouvernement égyptien est très mal classé pour tous les indicateurs relevant de la gouvernance. En effet, pour un indicateur estimant la liberté d'expression des citoyens et le droit de choisir leur gouvernement[15], l'Égypte se classe au 23ème centile.[16] Pour la stabilité politique, l'efficacité gouvernementale et le contrôle de la corruption, l'Égypte se classe respectivement aux 25ème, 40ème et 30ème centiles.[17]

Ainsi, c'est dans un climat de corruption endémique et de bureaucraties mal réglementées conjugué à un haut taux de chômage et des violations des droits de l'homme que la patience de la population a fini par laisser place à la colère et la frustration, principalement chez les jeunes. Les jeunes exclus du jeu politique et sans-emploi ont fini par porter cette révolte contre le gouvernement de Moubarak.

Par ailleurs, le gouvernement, en donnant un tel poids aux entreprises en technologie de l'information a permis de renforcer l'attrait de la population pour les nouvelles

technologies de l'information et de la communication (NTIC). La présence de tribune d'expression apparaissant avec l'émergence des nouveaux médias et des NTIC a vu une opinion publique se reconstruire au cours des dernières années, distante et autonome du pouvoir en place, capable de le critiquer dans un premier temps, permettant un agir éventuel dans un second temps.[18]

B) L'autonomisation de l'opinion publique ou prémices d'un soulèvement

Dès la fin des années 1990 s'est amorcée une transformation des relations entre gouvernants et gouvernés dans le monde arabe. Le peuple prenait aussi de la distance avec les forces politiques ou idéologies façonnant le paysage politique. La révolution de l'information dans le monde arabe, symbolisée par l'arrivée de chaînes télévisées aux ambitions panarabes telles qu'Al Jazeera, a mis en contradiction les informations et les efforts de propagande de l'État face aux informations alternatives.[19] En effet, les populations étaient de plus en plus soumises à des informations contradictoires les incitant à porter un regard critique sur la réception de l'information et son traitement par les citoyens. Comme l'énonce Mohammed El Oifi, l'autonomisation de l'opinion publique et sa transformation par la suite en un acteur collectif efficace est le résultat d'un changement social tridimensionnel.[20] Dans un premier temps, l'urbanisation et l'alphabétisation conjuguées ont facilité la diffusion de l'information.[21] De manière concomitante, la politisation des individus appelait à la fin du monopole des États sur l'information et a contribué à l'éveil des consciences et au soulèvement de la société arabe contre le pouvoir autoritaire. Un nouvel espace public est ainsi en formation, les réseaux sociaux s'inscrivent comme le dernier outil arrivé dans cette révolution de l'information dans le monde arabe initiée par Al Jazeera.

Ainsi, c'est la réunion d'une condition économique, sociale et politique accablante, conjuguée au phénomène d'autonomisation de l'opinion publique, qui a constitué les variables structurelles de ce printemps égyptien qui a vu l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux. Il s'agit à présent de se pencher sur les réseaux sociaux et leur rôle dans la chute du régime de Moubarak.

II) LES RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX : DE LA NEUTRALITÉ DE L'OUTIL AUX STRATÉGIES EMPLOYÉES

Dans cette partie, nous appréhenderons le vecteur incarné par les réseaux sociaux en tant qu'outil. La sociologie des médias établit la neutralité des outils technologiques. Les usages peuvent être multiples et réalisés par les différents acteurs protestataires et régimes en place auquel cas, la réussite ou non dans l'utilisation de cet outil dépend davantage de la stratégie employée.[22]

A) Continuités et hiatus des mondes virtuel et réel.

La révolution de l'information dans le monde arabe s'est faite en trois étapes.[23] La première fut institutionnelle. Elle se résume par le développement de la presse et des médias sur le Web.[24] La seconde étape revient à l'apparition des blogs et donc au début du Web 2.0, soit le Web participatif. Enfin, la dernière étape s'est concrétisée avec l'utilisation et l'exploitation des réseaux sociaux. Ces deux dernières étapes sont à associer aux mouvements de révolte et de manifestations.[25]

Un nouvel espace public dans le monde arabe se structurerait grâce aux développements d'Internet et des chaînes satellitaires, particulièrement Al Jazeera. Cet espace public se construirait dans le virtuel sur la Toile avec des répercussions sur le réel. En cohérence avec les modèles développés par Marc Lynch et Jürgen Habermas, l'espace public se formerait à partir de personnes issues de la sphère privée cherchant à créer un débat critique au sein de la société.[26] Dans les modèles de Lynch et d'Habermas, l'opinion publique est portée par les intellectuels. Ils ont une vision élitiste de la formation de l'espace public mais aussi de la diffusion des idées. En réalité, ce sont les intellectuels appartenant à l'élite et à la classe moyenne qui s'expriment dans cet espace et y font naître l'opinion publique en influençant le peuple.[27] Ils s'affirment alors en tant que leaders d'opinion suivis par les classes populaires.

Cette grille de lecture peut paraître étroite, confinant le peuple à un rôle de suiveur et les élites à des leaders d'opinion. Cependant, dans le cas de la révolution égyptienne ces modèles semblent se révéler pertinents, comme le souligne Julien Saada.[28] La jeunesse pouvant bénéficier directement de l'outil appartient aux classes aisées sinon moyennes et généralement à un environnement assez cultivé.[29] En 2009, en Égypte, il n'y avait que 18%

d'utilisateurs d'Internet passant pour la plupart par les cybercafés, un million d'abonnés ayant une connexion établie à leur domicile ou au travail et seulement 800 000 utilisateurs de Facebook[30]. Le nombre de personnes ayant accès à cet espace reste *in fine* très limité.[31] Malgré tout, il existe une connexion entre la virtualité de cet espace public construit autour du Web et la révolte qui fit tomber Moubarak. Ces réseaux sociaux ont bel et bien été utilisés pour faire tomber le régime et leur rôle doit être considéré, même si la chute de ce dernier ne leur est pas due exclusivement.

Les réseaux sociaux ont été utilisés comme un outil pour communiquer librement et former des groupes pour s'opposer au régime de Moubarak. Ils ont permis le partage d'opinion sur une plate-forme entre personnes appartenant à des partis politiques différents, des idéologies et religions différentes, et même entre laïcs et islamistes.

Il y a ainsi une continuité entre le virtuel et le réel. Deux profils de révolutionnaires peuvent être identifiés.[32] Il y a les « propagandistes » qui protestent, contestent et organisent les manifestations par la Toile, que l'on peut aussi qualifier de cyberdissidents ou de cyber-acteurs. Parallèlement, dans la dimension du réel, se trouvent les « activistes », ceux qui font de l'action de terrain et qui manifestent. Ces deux catégories ne s'excluent pas.[33] En effet, les propagandistes sont aussi sortis manifester dans les rues.

Les réseaux sociaux ont ainsi été au cœur des opérations de communication des manifestants. Les protestations égyptiennes étaient relayées par les réseaux sociaux. Le 25 janvier 2011, sur la page Facebook « *Nous sommes tous des Khaled Saïd* » – page administrée par Wael Ghonim, figure de la révolution égyptienne – 90 000 personnes s'étaient inscrites pour manifester et participer à la « journée de la colère ». Le gouvernement avait d'ailleurs, par mesure de prévention, bloqué partiellement Twitter vis-à-vis de tous les messages faisant référence à l'évènement.[34]

L'organisation des manifestations permises, sinon véhiculées, par les réseaux sociaux a créé un mouvement révolutionnaire totalement décentralisé. La structure du mouvement n'obéissait à aucune hiérarchie. Il n'y avait tout au plus que quelques leaders d'opinion très actifs, mais là encore leurs arrestations – à l'image de celle de Wael Ghonim – ne pouvaient juguler la vague de contestation. Aucune organisation, ni parti, n'était à la tête du mouvement, ce qui le rendait encore plus difficile à endiguer.[35] En effet, les citoyens ordinaires étaient au cœur de cette révolution.

Notons qu'Al Jazeera demeure le carrefour stratégique de l'information. Tous les flux numériques, réseaux sociaux, témoignages, vidéos amateurs et micro-messages convergent vers cette plate-forme. Al Jazeera parvient à recouper très rapidement l'information recueillie et soumise par le public. Al Jazeera contribue ainsi à structurer davantage l'information.[36] L'information est abondante et circule dans l'ensemble des réseaux sociaux, il devient très difficile, sinon impossible, de la contenir. Cette surexploitation de la Toile s'explique justement par la stricte police de l'information menée par le gouvernement égyptien. Cela a conduit la population égyptienne à ne pas se limiter aux circuits ordinaires de circulation de nouvelles et à utiliser des méthodes de contournement telles que les réseaux sociaux, transformés, pour l'occasion, en véritable plate-forme de communication.[37] Nous constatons aussi, par mesure de sécurité, que les cyberdissidents en Égypte vont remplacer progressivement leurs outils. Utilisant des blogs au commencement, ils vont préférer les réseaux sociaux de la génération Facebook, diminuant l'identification et l'exposition des individus à la répression du gouvernement pour enfin basculer dans une stratégie de communication utilisant des micro-messages de type Twitter.[38] Les Frères musulmans jugeaient d'ailleurs ces plateformes non sécurisées et proposaient à leurs membres de ne pas s'inscrire dans ces réseaux sociaux qui pouvaient être infiltrés par la police et le renseignement égyptien mais d'utiliser l'«Ikhwan Book», sorte de Facebook des Frères musulmans.[39]

Les réseaux sociaux sont alors à considérer comme la mèche de cette révolution.[40] Si le bidon d'essence reflète le contexte politique et socio-économique difficile, personnifié par la figure de Mohamed Bouazizi, les réseaux sociaux constituent l'outil qui a permis un début de mobilisation, l'affirmation de leaders d'opinion mais aussi l'affirmation du mécontentement de la population aux médias occidentaux.

En effet, les réseaux sociaux ont été un outil précieux pour sensibiliser la communauté internationale et signifier qu'il n'était plus temps d'être complaisant à l'égard de ces régimes autoritaires. Les réseaux sociaux ont ainsi été aussi un véhicule d'information pour rendre la révolte du peuple égyptien plus intelligible, permettant aux médias occidentaux de ne pas se laisser à certains biais où les révoltes auraient été traduites par une instabilité régionale et non pas par les revendications d'un peuple.[41] Le régime de Moubarak ne pouvait plus être soutenu au vue de la pression populaire, incarnée dans

l'imaginaire collectif par le rassemblement sur la place Tahrir. Les États-Unis, alliés de longue date de Moubarak, finirent par lui tourner le dos au fur et à mesure que s'intensifiaient les révoltes et que disparaissait le reste de légitimité du vieux pharaon.[42]

Cependant, au cours des 18 jours de cette révolution qui fit chuter Moubarak, le gouvernement prit un certain nombre de mesures pour lutter contre cette diffusion de l'information, cet appel au renversement et ces messages envoyés à l'international. Les réseaux sociaux et Internet seront ainsi aussi visés par le gouvernement égyptien.

B) Un outil de répression et « contre-insurrectionnel » pour le pouvoir.

Le pouvoir égyptien, avec le précédent tunisien, a tenté de prendre des mesures pour empêcher l'amplification des révoltes et les faire taire. Avant de revenir sur les stratégies employées et tenter d'apporter une explication de l'échec de la répression du gouvernement égyptien, il convient d'identifier les différentes méthodes utilisées par les régimes en général pour lutter contre une insurrection prenant origine sur la Toile. Nous appréhenderons ainsi d'une manière plus éclairée les décisions prises par le gouvernement égyptien.

Les États peuvent intervenir de trois manières différentes: en ligne, par proxy ou directement. Intervenir en ligne revient à fermer les sites politiques ou portails portant atteintes aux mœurs ou jugés déviants de la propagande officielle. Agir par l'intermédiaire des proxys permet de contrôler les fournisseurs d'accès à Internet, d'être capable de forcer certaines compagnies à fermer certains sites Web, d'être en mesure de refuser l'accès à des contenus gênants et voire dans les cas extrêmes d'effectuer un arrêt total de toute connexion Internet, un « black-out » dans le pays. Enfin, agir directement consiste à arrêter les personnes jugées influentes ou à l'origine du « désordre » public : les blogueurs, les journalistes ou les activistes et citoyens en général.[43]

Dans le cas du régime égyptien, les deux dernières méthodes ont été utilisées au cours des 18 jours de la révolte mais cette « répression » n'a pas eu l'effet escompté et a attisé davantage encore la révolte.

Une contradiction originelle est présente au commencement de l'arrivée d'Internet en Égypte. En effet, si l'avancement de cet outil dans le pays peut permettre d'accélérer le développement économique, il permet aussi de communiquer et d'apporter un certain libéralisme politique, représentant ainsi un danger pour un régime autoritaire. D'un côté, l'État égyptien engage de façon très volontaire le pays dans la société de l'information, de

l'autre il refuse le laisser-faire (soit l'expression de l'opposition politique sur Internet) révélant alors des craintes quant à l'impact des NTIC sur l'opinion publique et la formation d'un espace public. Cette crainte est similaire à celle qui avait suivi l'avènement des chaînes satellitaires, telles qu'Al Jazeera.[44] Le régime de Moubarak se dote dès 1999 d'un ministère de la communication et des technologies de l'information chargé de la publication de rapports officiels dont sur la blogosphère locale.[45] Le régime était alors conscient des enjeux politiques autour de ce nouvel outil. Cependant, le régime pensait être capable de maîtriser l'outil. Pour ce faire, il aurait fallu élaborer un important système de surveillance, ce qui nécessitait un investissement conséquent en hommes et en services spécialisés dans le suivi des réseaux sociaux.[46] Les services de police et de renseignement égyptiens n'étaient ainsi pas suffisamment équipés pour étouffer et prévenir tout début de révolte sur la Toile.

Moubarak a toutefois eu la présence d'esprit de faire un système de connexion Internet assez centralisé. Ainsi, à défaut d'une capacité à traquer parfaitement les cyberdissidents, le régime était capable de bloquer l'accès à certaines informations et censurer des sites.[47] Avec le précédent tunisien et l'échec de celui-ci dans la récupération du contenu des échanges alors que le régime de Ben Ali était pourtant bien équipé, le régime égyptien allait prendre la décision radicale : effectuer un arrêt total de la connexion Internet dans tout le pays.

La coupure d'Internet dura quatre jours et elle n'eut pas l'effet attendu par les gouvernants. En effet, le nombre de manifestants augmenta de manière exponentielle après la tentative de « black-out ». Le 25 janvier il y avait des dizaines de milliers de manifestants dans les rues, après la coupure, leur nombre se comptait en millions.[48] La décision du gouvernement a été traduite comme une mesure désespérée encourageant davantage encore les personnes engagées. Pour les indécis, cette mesure allait les faire basculer dans le rang des activistes et révolutionnaires – radicalisant alors davantage la population – le régime perdant ainsi ses derniers restes de légitimité et de capacité à effrayer la population. Parallèlement, les cyber-activistes allaient trouver des stratégies alternatives de communication. Les « tech-savvy » et certains leaders de la société civile allaient organiser des stratégies de communication à l'aide de système de téléphones par satellites et de connexions bas débit passant par Israël ou l'Europe.[49] Google mit d'ailleurs à disposition des Égyptiens un système pour leur permettre de continuer à « twitter » par téléphone ou par

messagerie vocale.[50] Ainsi, les médias étaient toujours tenus au courant de l'évolution des évènements en Égypte. Au final, seul le gouvernement s'était totalement déconnecté de l'extérieur. Comptabilisant les pertes des grandes entreprises et les chutes de la bourse au cours de ces quatre jours, l'OCDE considère que cette coupure a coûté à l'Égypte 90 milliards de dollars.[51]

Par ailleurs, l'arrestation de Wael Ghonim, l'un des cyber-activistes les plus influents, manqua de pertinence. Le gouvernement a tenté d'étouffer le vent de révolte soufflant sur la Toile comme l'on se débarrasse d'un témoin gênant. Mais la fluidité de l'information ne permet plus l'isolement des dits « témoins ». Wael Ghonim a ainsi été élevé aux yeux du peuple égyptien en figure de martyr et de héros augmentant encore l'importance dans l'imaginaire collectif de l'impact des réseaux sociaux.

Dès le 2 février, les autorités choisissent de rétablir le réseau et de l'utiliser à leur tour. Plutôt qu'à censurer massivement, les autorités vont investir les bureaux des opérateurs mobiles et faire diffuser des messages textes appelant à la délation des opposants et au soutien du Président Moubarak.[52] Parallèlement à cela, le gouvernement tente de diffuser dans les réseaux sociaux des messages similaires.[53] Cette seconde stratégie plus moderne est plus adaptée pour lutter contre les mouvements de contestation. Seulement, cette stratégie est appliquée tardivement. Utiliser les moyens de télécommunication pour faire du régime en place une victime de « complots » de l'étranger, une victime persécutée n'est plus possible après avoir coupé totalement Internet. Cette coupure s'est traduite comme un aveu de culpabilité et la peur de la circulation de l'information.

Enfin, si la première stratégie consistant à couper radicalement Internet fut une mauvaise décision, la seconde aurait pu être appliquée dès le commencement pour mener une campagne de désinformation et de sensibilisation de l'opinion publique quant à la légitimité du gouvernement de Moubarak. Cependant, Internet permet d'exposer les utilisateurs à des informations contradictoires et de les aider à se forger leur propre opinion. Avec l'arrivée d'Internet, la jeunesse n'était plus soumise à la construction idéelle véhiculée par la propagande officielle.

Pris au sens d'outil, les réseaux sociaux ont constitué, dans le cas égyptien, davantage un vecteur de démocratisation qu'un outil de répression. La difficulté du régime à

appréhender la nature des NTIC, d'Internet et des réseaux sociaux, et en conséquence les mesures inadéquates prises pour juguler la contestation, sont en grande partie responsables de la victoire des insurgés dans la bataille de l'information ainsi que dans la chute de Moubarak.

III) LES RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX AU CŒUR DU CHANGEMENT COMPORTEMENTAL

Constatant que la révolution de l'information semble avoir précédé le printemps égyptien, de nombreux analystes se sont alors penchés sur les déterminants d'un possible changement comportemental des utilisateurs par l'intermédiaire des réseaux sociaux. Dans un premier temps, nous tenterons d'identifier les éléments qui font que la nouvelle génération ayant accès à ces technologies tranche dans son comportement avec les générations passées au sein des régimes arabes, et plus particulièrement du régime égyptien.[54] Les réseaux sociaux sont alors entrevus comme un vecteur pris au sens d'« émulateur » dans cette dernière partie.

A) Une révolution aux origines numériques

L'arrivée des télévisions satellitaires voit la fin du monopole étatique de l'information. Une distance se crée alors entre le pouvoir et les citoyens qui n'obéissent plus au moule préconçu du sujet loyal et servile.[55]

Le retard accumulé par le monde arabe dans les technologies de l'information lui fait sauter une génération d'Internet et en décuple l'impact puisque les nouvelles générations se retrouvent dès le départ immergées dans le Web 2.0.[56] Les réseaux sociaux permettent alors aux utilisateurs découvrant Internet d'entrer en contact. Cette génération n'a pas connu la passivité de la première époque vécue en Occident où l'utilisateur n'était que récepteur. Les réseaux sociaux font que nous sommes « tous émetteurs, tous connectés et tous coopérants ».[57] Ainsi, les réseaux favorisent des manières de penser en commun, de lutter ensemble et peuvent entraîner la volonté de se révolter. Les réseaux sociaux peuvent avoir pour premier effet d'encourager et de développer les mobilisations collectives.

Par ailleurs, les utilisateurs interagissant sont soumis à davantage d'informations mais aussi aux débats et à la dialectique leur permettant de structurer leurs idées et former leurs opinions. Ainsi, le second effet dû aux réseaux sociaux serait la transformation de l'individu, de son univers idéel et donc de son comportement.

Le régime de Moubarak reposait sur l'obéissance stricte des individus aux règles édictées par le pouvoir, conjuguée au rôle prédominant de la religion dans la vie de tous les jours. Le gouvernement réduisait ainsi l'incertitude attachée au comportement des individus et prévenait toute éventuelle révolte. Les nouvelles générations sont toutefois exposées à de nouvelles valeurs, de nouveaux modes de pensées et paradigmes par le biais des réseaux sociaux.

> Ces technologies favorisent en effet, en particulier dans la sphère des relations envers l'Autre et envers l'autorité politique, religieuse, familiale, des attitudes, des représentations, des pratiques toujours plus autonomes et individualisées qui rendent à l'évidence aujourd'hui impossible ou presque le maintien des anciennes formes de légitimité. [58]

Dans les classes moyennes et bourgeoises, la jeunesse égyptienne est capable de prendre de la distance avec les autorités en place, questionnant leur légitimité et leur raison d'être.

Enfin, les réseaux sociaux ont permis l'établissement d'un nouvel espace public qui a conduit à un processus d'individualisation et à un processus d'acculturation opérant une rupture des règles traditionnelles de dévolution de l'autorité.[59] Les individus formés dans cet espace présentent alors pour caractéristiques d'être « rationnels, informés et adroits ».[60] Ils sont alors capables de désirer le changement politique et d'agir pour sa réalisation.

B) L'impact des réseaux sociaux sur la recherche du changement politique

La littérature existante traitant des réseaux sociaux semble dégager un ensemble de facteurs influençant le comportement des individus que les réseaux sociaux pourraient véhiculer. Ces facteurs sont au nombre de cinq. Ce sont : la confiance, la loyauté, les valeurs, le « bouche à oreille », et les rapports et relations entre utilisateurs.[61] Ces facteurs vont ainsi affecter le comportement des utilisateurs mais aussi leur manière d'utiliser les réseaux sociaux réalisant alors une sorte de cercle harmonieux.

La confiance permet de réduire l'ambigüité sociale et la suspicion des personnes quant aux méthodes de communication employées. Les informations fournies par les autres utilisateurs sur les réseaux sociaux sont considérées comme crédibles par l'ensemble des utilisateurs puisqu'elles peuvent être sujettes à débat.[62] Elles ne sont pas considérées comme ayant comme objectif une quelconque instrumentalisation des destinataires. Cela alimente et amplifie alors le sentiment général de confiance en ce qu'offre l'environnement des réseaux sociaux.

Le facteur « bouche à oreille » quant à lui devient plus puissant lorsque la population perd confiance en le régime et dans les discours de celui-ci. Durant la révolution égyptienne les utilisateurs avaient cessé de croire le gouvernement. Ils croyaient davantage les informations échangées par le biais des réseaux sociaux et la diffusion contribuait à renforcer ce sentiment.[63]

Dans ce climat de confiance et par ce mécanisme de « bouche à oreille », les utilisateurs ont développé des relations entre eux dans leur lutte pour le changement. Les recherches ont démontré que les jeunes utilisateurs des réseaux sociaux développent des relations par le partage d'intérêt commun, tel que leur lutte pour le changement, et maintiennent ces relations. [64] Les réseaux sociaux renforcent les discussions interpersonnelles, le débat, la participation politique ainsi que la conscience civique. Notons qu'une étude réalisée en 2009 et dirigée par Cardon révélait que les utilisateurs égyptiens avaient développé des liens très forts entre eux, même s'ils ne s'étaient jamais rencontrés dans la vie réelle.[65]

En conséquence de quoi, la perception des relations va affecter les préférences des Égyptiens, établissant et renforçant la conscience collective. Le besoin et le désir de changement vont créer et diffuser un sentiment de loyauté au sein du groupe relatif à l'idée de changement. La loyauté se développe ainsi entre les membres des réseaux sociaux et envers l'idée de changement.[66]

Si les gens avaient été loyaux envers Moubarak, leurs comportements n'auraient pas changé. Mais la confiance et les nouvelles attitudes développées en Égypte ont fait que les égyptiens étaient prêts à dépasser la censure d'Internet au cours du « black-out » tenté par le régime.[67] Une vision positive attachée au changement politique avait été suffisamment cultivée auparavant.

L'ensemble de ces facteurs amènent ainsi à définir l'intention comportementale. L'intention comportementale est l'étape qui précède l'engagement. Il est l'indicateur qui signale si les citoyens vont continuer de supporter le régime ou au contraire désirer sa fin.[68] La vision des égyptiens de plus en plus attachée au changement va ainsi modifier leur comportement.[69]

Les réseaux sociaux pourraient alors avoir engendrés un changement comportemental des utilisateurs, épousant alors le rôle d'« émulateur » et d'éveilleur des consciences.[70]

CONCLUSION

Le contexte socio-économique et politique constitue le terreau de ce printemps égyptien. La précarité d'emploi et la paupérisation de la population, conjuguées à une mauvaise gouvernance et à un régime corrompu, constituaient les motivations originelles de la révolte portée par les jeunes Égyptiens. Ces derniers étaient d'ailleurs la frange de la population subissant le plus cette précarité.

Les réseaux sociaux ont été alors un vecteur de démocratisation. Ils ont en effet constitué d'abord un outil utile aux manifestants et aux cyberdissidents. Ils ont permis de créer un espace de discussion, de dialogues, de partage de points de vue et un lieu de rassemblement. Les réseaux sociaux ont aussi permis d'établir, sinon d'amorcer la constitution d'un véritable espace public. Ils ont facilité la mobilisation des personnes en organisant les rassemblements et en permettant de coordonner les actions. Parallèlement à cela, les réseaux sociaux ont été un outil pertinent et efficace pour sensibiliser la communauté internationale à la cause des insurgés. Malgré la tentative du régime de déconnecter les manifestants de l'extérieur et de les empêcher de communiquer entre eux par un arrêt total des serveurs Internet, le peuple égyptien a continué à demander le départ de Moubarak. En réalité, les mesures prises par le régime ont radicalisé l'opinion publique et les Égyptiens n'ont réclamé que davantage la fin de ce dernier. D'un point de vue purement stratégique, les manifestants ont mieux utilisé les réseaux sociaux. Malgré la neutralité de l'outil technologique, il fut en la faveur des manifestants vue la maladresse du régime de Moubarak.

Par ailleurs, les réseaux sociaux, en permettant aux Égyptiens d'interagir entre eux, ont renforcé la volonté collective de la nécessité d'un changement de régime. Ils ont aussi exposé la jeunesse égyptienne à d'autres cultures, d'autres univers idéels et d'autres paradigmes. L'allégeance aux autorités traditionnelles, avec la révolution de l'information et

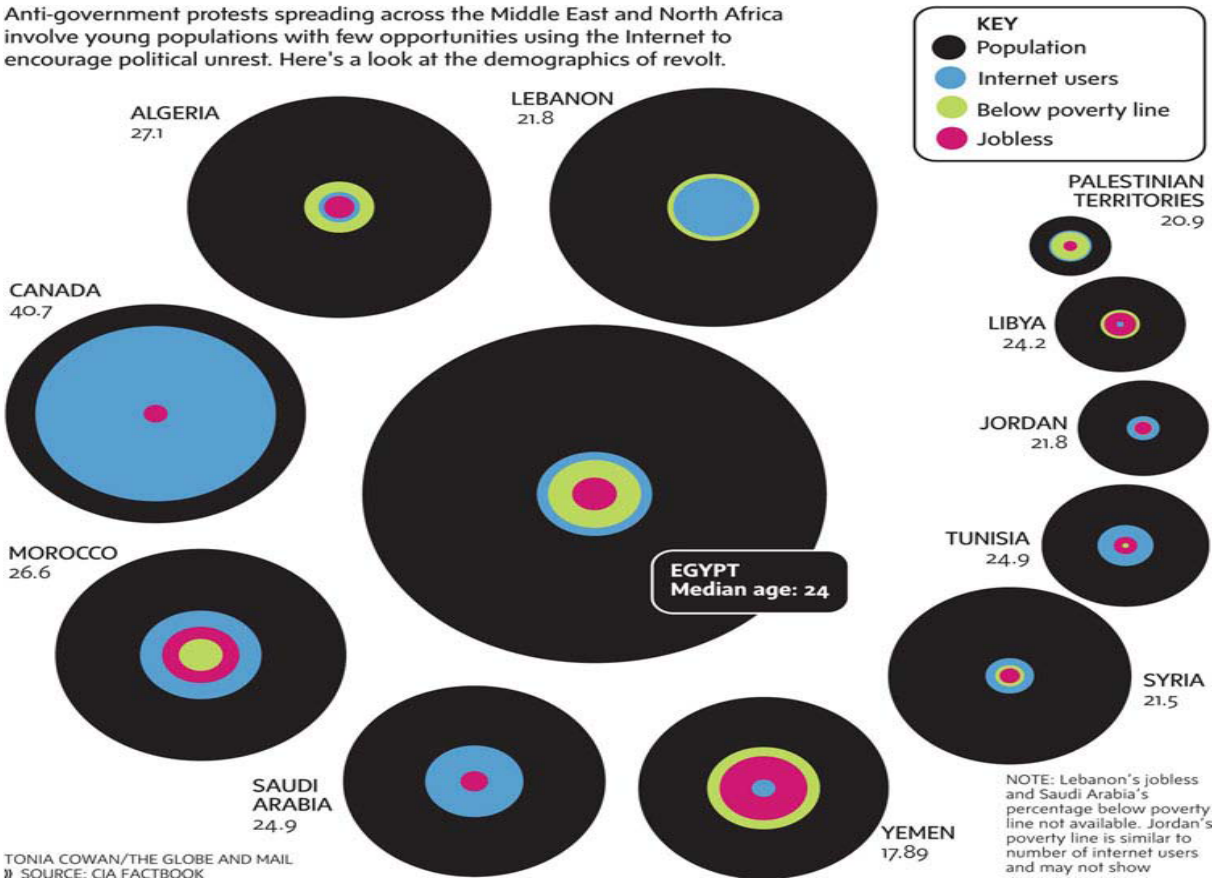
du numérique commencée dans les années ‘90, s’est ainsi estompée au sein de la nouvelle génération, par le biais des réseaux sociaux.

Ainsi, les réseaux sociaux ont constitué la mèche déclenchant la révolution. Cependant, il ne s’agit pas d’oublier le contexte dans lequel s’est opérée cette révolution et surtout de considérer que c’est une large partie du peuple qui s’est soulevé et non uniquement les élites et la classe moyenne. Les personnes n’ayant pas interagi au sein des réseaux sociaux étaient nombreuses dans la rue.

Wael Ghonim, s’adressant aux manifestants de la place Tahrir le 8 février 2011, décrivait avec pertinence et nuance ce printemps égyptien : « J'aime à appeler ça la révolution Facebook mais après avoir vu les gens ici, je dirais que c'est la révolution du peuple égyptien. C'est formidable. Ceci est la révolution des jeunes d'Internet, qui est devenue la révolution des jeunes d'Égypte, puis la révolution de l'Égypte entière.»[71]

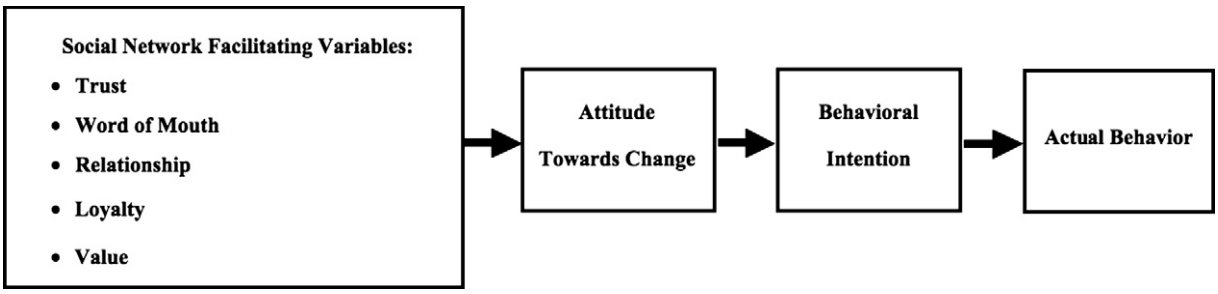
Annexe 1

Figure 1 : Utilisateurs d'Internet dans le monde arabe et démographie.



Julien Saada, « Révoltes dans le Monde Arabe : une révolution Facebook ? », Chronique sur le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du Nord, Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en études stratégiques et diplomatiques, [En ligne], 1er février 2011, http://www.dandurand.uqam.ca/uploads/files/publications/rflexions/Chronique_OMAN/Chronique_OMAN_fev2011.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.4.

Figure 2 : Les facteurs des réseaux sociaux induisant le changement comportemental.



Ashraf M. Attia, Nergis Aziz, Barry Friedman et Mahdy F. Elhusseiny, 2011, « Commentary : The impact of social networking tools on political change in Egypt's "Revolution 2.0" », *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, vol.10, p.372.

Notes

[1] A titre d'exemple, nous pouvons citer les articles suivants: Rebecca J. Rosen, *So, Was Facebook Responsible for the Arab Spring After All?,* The Atlantic, [En ligne], 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/09/so-was-facebook-responsible-for-the-arab-spring-after-all/244314/ (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011), Julien Saada, *Révoltes dans le monde arabe- Peut-on parler d'une révolution Facebook?,* Le Devoir, [En ligne] http://www.ledevoir.com/international/actualites-internationales/315879/revoltes-dans-le-monde-arabe-peut-on-parler-d-une-revolution-facebook (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011), Andrew K. Woods, *These Revolutions Are Not All Twitter*, The New York Times, [En ligne], 1er février 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/02/opinion/02iht-edwoods02.html (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011).

[2] Catharine Smith, "Egypt's Facebook Revolution: Wael Ghonim Thanks The Social Network", The Huffington Post, [En ligne], 2 novembre 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/11/egypt-facebook-revolution-wael-ghonim_n_822078.html, (Page consultée le 5 novembre 2011). Bien qu'ayant un article plus nuancé, le titre est trompeur et contribue à véhiculer dans l'imaginaire collectif un miracle de démocratisation par le numérique.

[3] Cet avertissement est énoncé très souvent dans les billets du Professeur Yves Gonzalez-Quizajo sur son blog d'analyses. Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, « Les « origines culturelles numériques » de la Révolution arabe », *Culture et politique arabes*, [En ligne], 15 février 2011, http://cpa.hypotheses.org/2484 (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011).

[4] *Id.,* « Internet en Égypte : une redéfinition du champ politique ? », *Culture et politique arabes*, [En ligne], 23 février 2011, http://cpa.hypotheses.org/2533 (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011).

[5] Le Web, internet et la Toile sont utilisés comme des synonymes.

[6] Serge SUR, (sous la direction de), *Internet à la conquête du monde*, Question internationales, la documentation Française, n°47, janvier-février 2011, p.83.

[7] *Loc.cit*.

[8] Les blogs sont une structure assez statique ne bénéficiant pas de la dynamique et des flux de communication possibles par les réseaux sociaux tels que Facebook ou Twitter. Cependant, ils sont à concevoir comme les complétant. Ils appartiennent à la génération des outils où tous les utilisateurs d'internet peuvent être considérés comme participatifs.

[9] Éléna Aoun, 2011, « Du Moyen-Orient à l'Afrique du Nord. Le temps des révolutions », dans Gérard Hervouet et Michel Fortmann (sous la direction de), *Les conflits dans le monde 2011,* Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2011, p.6.

[10] Dans cette ouvrage collectif, les auteurs reviennent sur les différentes dimensions ayant changé dans la société égyptienne et amorçant de profonds bouleversements, notamment dans le domaine des médias. Cet ouvrage parut alors que Moubarak venait de tomber mais avait été élaboré au cours de l'année précédente. Vincent Battesti, et François Ireton (sous la direction de), *L'Égypte au présent. Inventaire d'une société avant révolution*, Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2011.

[11] Ces données sont issues du « The World Factbook » de la CIA, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html.

[12] Parmi elles, nous pouvons citer Microsoft, Oracle ou encore Hewlett-Packard.

[13] C'est-à-dire douée dans l'utilisation des technologies, particulièrement dans le domaine de l'informatique.

[14] Ashraf M. Attia, Nergis Aziz, Barry Friedman et Mahdy F. Elhusseiny, 2011, « Commentary : The impact of social networking tools on political change in Egypt's "Revolution 2.0" », *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, vol.10, p.370.

[15] Indicateur nommé « voice and accountability » dans la base de données de la Banque Mondiale.

[16] Centile est une valeur utilisée en statistiques. Etre le 23ème centile signifie qu'il y a 77% des unités de notre étude qui nous sont supérieures.

[17] Ashraf M. Attia *et al., op.cit,* p.370.

[18] C'est ainsi que dans différentes places publiques ont commencé à se délier les langues et que le mécontentement commençait déjà à s'exprimer quelques années avant le printemps égyptien, comme le témoigne le dialogue recueilli en 2007 par Vincent Battesti. Vincent Battesti et Safa Dahab, « Prélude : conversation dans un taxi du Caire », dans Vincent Battesti, et François Ireton (sous la direction de), *L'Égypte au présent. Inventaire d'une société avant révolution*, Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2011, p.17-28.

[19] Mohammed El Oifi, « L'autonomisation des opinions publiques », dans François Bernard Huygue (sous la direction de), *Facebook, Twitter, Al-Jazeera et le "Printemps arabe"*, Observatoire Géostratégique de l'Information, *IRIS*, [En ligne], 4 avril 2011, http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm_docs/docs/2011-04-04-facebook-twitter-al-jazeera-et-le-printemps-arabe.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.10.

[20] Mohammed El Oifi, *op.cit.,* p.9.

[21] La population urbaine s'élève à 43,4% et croît environ de 2% par année. Central Intelligence Agency, « The World Factbook », *CIA,* [En ligne], https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html (Page consultée le 5 novembre 2011).

[22] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[23] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, « Les « origines culturelles numériques » de la Révolution arabe », *Culture et politique arabes*, [En ligne], 15 février 2011, http://cpa.hypotheses.org/2484 (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011).

[24] *Loc.cit.*

[25] *Loc.cit.*

[26] Julien Saada, « Révoltes dans le Monde Arabe : une révolution *Facebook ?* », Chronique sur le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du Nord, *Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en études stratégiques et diplomatiques*, [En ligne], 1er février 2011, http://www.dandurand.uqam.ca/uploads/files/publications/rflexions/Chronique_OMAN/Chronique_OMAN_fev2011.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.2.

[27] *Ibid,* p.3.

[28]*Loc.cit*.

[29] *Loc.cit.*

[30] Ashraf M. Attia *et al., op.cit,* p.370.

[31] Une représentation graphique figurant dans un article de Julien Saada offre un support visuel intéressant pour observer la pénétration d'internet au sein de la population égyptienne. Julien Saada, « Révoltes dans le Monde Arabe : une révolution *Facebook ?* », Chronique sur le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du Nord, *Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en études stratégiques et diplomatiques*, [En ligne], 1er février 2011, http://www.dandurand.uqam.ca/uploads/files/publications/rflexions/Chronique_OMAN/Chronique_OMAN_fev2011.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.4. La figure a été mise en annexe. Voir figure 1, annexe 1.

[32] Mathieu Guidere, « Tunisie, Égypte, Libye : A chaque révolution sa communication », dans François Bernard Huyghe (sous la direction de), *Facebook, Twitter, Al-Jazeera et le "Printemps arabe"* , Observatoire Géostratégique de l'Information, *IRIS*, [En ligne], 4 avril 2011, http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm_docs/docs/2011-04-04-facebook-twitter-al-jazeera-et-le-printemps-arabe.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.2.

[33] *Loc.cit.*

[34] Dans la partie suivante, nous développerons les différentes méthodes utilisées par le gouvernement pour tenter de lutter contre les manifestations et la révolution fomentée.

[35] Julien Saada, *op.cit.,* p.5.

[36] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, *op.cit,* p.4.

[37] *Loc.cit.*

[38] *Loc.cit.*

[39] Mathieu Guidere, *op.cit,* p.3.

[40] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, *op.cit,* p.3.

[41] Cependant, les témoins informant les médias étaient membres de la diaspora ou/et de l'élite, ainsi le message politique diffusé put être éloigné des revendications des classes populaires manifestants dans les rues. Julien Saada, *op.cit.,* p.5.

[42] Jonathan Paquin et Adib Bencherif, « Washington face au dilemme des interventions militaires », dans Gérard Hervouet et Michel Fortmann (sous la direction de), *Les conflits dans le monde 2011,* Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2011, pp. 115-140.

[43] Philip N. Howard, *et al., op.cit,* p.223.

[44] Vincent Battesti et François Ireton (sous la direction de), *L'Égypte au présent. Inventaire d'une société avant révolution*, Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2011, pp.945- 952.

[45] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, *op.cit,* p.3.

[46] *Loc.cit.*

[47] Ashraf M. Attia *et al., op.cit,* p.370 et Vincent Battesti et François Ireton (sous la direction de), *L'Égypte au présent. Inventaire d'une société avant révolution*, Sindbad, Actes Sud, 2011, pp.945- 952.

[48] 1 à 2 millions de manifestants dans toute l'Égypte le 28 janvier, pour atteindre 20 millions le 4 février.

[49] Marie Benilde, *Internet sème la parole démocratique*, Manière de voir, n°117, juin-juillet 2011, pp.39-40. Ainsi, les tweets continuaient à être très nombreux et les révolutionnaires continuaient à communiquer avec l'extérieur.

[50] Jean-Loup Richet, « Internet et usages : ce que la Libye a appris de la révolution en Égypte », Analyse Stratégique, *Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en études stratégiques et diplomatiques*, [En ligne], avril 2011, http://www.dandurand.uqam.ca/uploads/files/publications/rflexions/Chronique_OMAN/Richet_Internet_MO260411.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.3.

[51] *Loc.cit.*

[52] Marie Benilde, *op.cit,* pp.39-40.

[53] *Loc.cit.*

[54] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, « Trois remarques à propos du « Web 2.0 arabe » », *Culture et politique arabes*, [En ligne], 22 mars 2011, http://cpa.hypotheses.org/2587 (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011).

[55] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, *op.cit.,* pp.4-5.

[56] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, *op.cit.,* p.2.

[57] François Bernard Huygue, « Facebook, Twitter, Al-Jazeera et le "Printemps arabe" », Observatoire Géostratégique de l'Information, *IRIS*, [En ligne], 4 avril 2011, http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm_docs/docs/2011-04-04-facebook-twitter-al-jazeera-et-le-printemps-arabe.pdf (Page consultée le 15 février 2011), p.2.

[58] Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, « Les « origines culturelles numériques » de la Révolution arabe », *Culture et politique arabes*, [En ligne], 15 février 2011, http://cpa.hypotheses.org/2484 (Page consultée le 15 septembre 2011), p.5.

[59] *Loc.cit.*

[60] Julien Saada, *op.cit.,* p.2.

[61] Ashraf M. Attia *et al., op.cit.,* p. 372. Les auteurs puisent dans la littérature existante de différentes disciplines telles que le marketing, le management et la communication.

[62] *Loc.cit.*

[63] *Loc.cit.*

[64] *Loc.cit.*

[65] *Loc.cit.*

[66] *Ibid.,* p.373.

[67] *Loc.cit.*

[68] *Loc.cit.*

[69] Voir en annexe 1, la figure 2 qui résume par un schéma les facteurs des réseaux sociaux facilitant le changement politique.

[70] Cet aspect là mérite d'être davantage étudié dans les années à venir en multipliant les études de cas.

[71] *Wael Ghonim : nouvelle icône de la révolution égyptienne,* Le Monde, [En ligne], 9 février 2011, http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2011/02/09/wael-ghonim-nouvelle-icone-de-la-revolution-egyptienne_1477199_3218.html (Page consultée le 5 novembre 2011).

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Revisiting North-African Civil Military Relations

JAÏS MEHAJI

INTRODUCTION

In the Middle East and North Africa, the military has been a key and enduring element in understanding the durability of authoritarianism, having constituted the backbone of many authoritarian regimes.[1] Military politics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have held a particular importance for scholars of the region for many reasons. Chief among them is that Arab politics in the postcolonial period has been characterized by "the continuous interference and the ascendance of army officers in the political life of their countries."[2] This has been the case in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq and other countries at different historical junctures. The region, notorious for its frequent coups, experienced no less than three dozen actual and abortive coups in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.[3] Furthermore, the military has played a central role in the Arab Spring, beginning in 2010 up to the present day. This has particularly been the case in Tunisia and Egypt, but Arab militaries have also played decisive roles in the Libyan, Syrian and Yemeni uprisings. Thus Arab armies have been propelled to the forefront of Arab politics once again.[4] Civil-military relations in the Middle East and North Africa have, however, been under-appreciated and neglected by scholars in recent years. This is primarily because of the decline of Arab coup politics since the late 1970s, despite the fact that the army has still continued to play a crucial role in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern states. A brief look at the trajectory of this literature is warranted.

Though the theorizing has been relatively modest, a number of arguments have been put forward to explain the 'praetorianism' or frequent interventions of Arab militaries in

their countries' political affairs. Hurewitz (1969) invoked political culture arguments to suggest that the Islamic tradition has provided a foundation for the intimate link between fighters and politicians. Samuel Huntington (1971) and Perlmutter (1970), under the rubric of *praetorianism*, argued that the political gap created by the disintegration of the traditional patrimonial system in the Arab world was filled by the bureaucracy and its military wing. Halpern's 1963 book *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa* theorized that the army was an agent of modernization and the vanguard of a new salaried middle class. Halpern contended that because militaries were among the most educated, organized, technologically-oriented sectors of society, they were best equipped to be exponents of society's search for modernity.[5] Although flawed and problematic in retrospect, Janowitz's typology of 'civil-military models' in the Middle East also received considerable attention.[6] He classified regimes into five types: authoritarian-personal control (Saudi Arabia), authoritarian mass party, democratic-competitive (Morocco, Tunisia, Israel, and Lebanon) and semi-competitive systems, civil-military coalition (Turkey, Algeria, Syria and Jordan), and military oligarchy (Pakistan, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen).[7] In 1977, Janowitz recognized the need to focus on the proliferation of paramilitary coercive institutions such as the national police, intelligence organizations known as the *mukhabarat*, and other militias.[8] While many of these theories have since been undermined[9], the decline of coups after the 1970s meant that this literature also became outdated, losing touch with the complex integration of military institutions in Arab politics and their more subtle interactions with the state.

The waning of the Arab military coup era could be attributed to the fact that military élites have successfully consolidated themselves in countries like Egypt, Syria, and Iraq by using more sophisticated tools of coercion and by integrating themselves with other segments of the political élite such as the technocratic and commercial bourgeoisie classes.[10] The retreat from direct and open interventions has compelled the military to "operate through more subtle, and sometimes structural, intertwinings between civil and military networks."[11] This suggests that although the military coup era has declined, the weight of the military in Arab states' internal affairs has not diminished. As coups decreased in frequency and as regimes became more consolidated and stabilized, "the

debate on the nature of the military regimes in the Arab world had lost much of its importance in the Arab Middle East and the Maghreb."[12] Furthermore, Arab armies became professionalized (or rather 're-professionalized') and thus left behind their previous roles as guerilla or revolutionary armies, a fact that was interpreted by Huntington as a return to the barracks – yet Huntington's interpretation was mistaken since no link has been found between professionalization and depoliticization.[13] At the same time however, this change in the nature of Arab militaries and their role vis-à-vis the state and society requires serious analysis.

As Elizabeth Picard noted well before the advent of the Arab Spring, interpreting Arab military participation in politics requires the adoption of a new perspective in the post-1970s era. Exactly how armies in the Arab world have been integrated in what Stephen King terms the 'new authoritarianism' of the 1980s and 1990s requires a look at regime strategies in ensuring their armies' loyalty. These strategies might include an ethno-sectarian, tribal, economic, or institutional dimension. Effectively, it is necessary to revisit civil-military relations in the Arab world and approach them with a new analytical paradigm, one that takes into account social and political changes during the last 30 years, as well as the remarkable diversity in the politico-military "encephalogram".[14] This call is echoed by Gregory Gause's argument that the failure of the Middle East academic community to anticipate the seismic shifts of the Arab Spring should be attributed to an under-appreciation of the importance of civil-military relations in the region.[15] Moreover while the literature has understandably focused on civil-military relations in countries where militaries have patently dominated the political scene such as Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, very little has been written about civil-military relations in the North African region, whose importance has been somewhat neglected as it has historically been peripheral to the major Arab theatres of war. But with the Arab Spring and the toppling of regimes in two North African countries (Tunisia and Libya), the region has gained a renewed importance that merits reflection.

This paper will shed light on civil-military relations in North Africa, through case studies of how regimes have interacted with their militaries in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. As the Arab Spring has demonstrated, militaries are often the fulcrum of

revolutionary dynamics, playing determinative roles in sealing the fates of Ben Ali, Mubarak and Muammar Qadhafi. In fact, no revolution can succeed without the armed forces' acquiescence; the backing of the army is not a *sufficient* but a *necessary* condition for revolutionary success.[16] Because the North African regimes have been cognizant of the necessity of maintaining their military's loyalty to stay in power, a range of methods have been used. These include increasing non-military support by cultivating social, economic and religious groups; courting the high command and officer corps with corporate and private benefits; appointing members of specific groups – often privileged minorities – to key posts in the armed forces; and preventing officers from building a support-base within the military by purging potential opponents, monitoring military activity, rotating commands and establishing independent security services reporting directly to the presidency or the palace.[17]

The purpose of this paper is to account for the different strategies that North African regimes have used to ensure their respective military's loyalty, to draw theoretical implications, and to contextualize these strategies with ongoing developments, providing answers as to how successful the strategies have been. In the case of Tunisia, the paper will focus on the marginalization of the military establishment by presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali, which resulted in a civilian transition to democracy in 2011. Conversely, the paper will demonstrate that in Libya, Muammar Qadhafi's marginalization of the military as a result of his deep distrust and fear of a coup can explain the army's implosion and fragmentation, which in turn led to the armed civil war in 2011.[18] Though threats to the ruling élites in Morocco and Algeria have paled in comparison to their neighbors, two interesting developments and consequences of the regime's courting of their militaries have been observed: In Morocco, there has been a remarkable continuity and stability after the two abortive coups in the early 1970s, and in Algeria the army has been neutralized as kingmaker in national politics via the institutional strengthening of Bouteflika's civilian presidency since the 2000s. Two important factors have contributed to the divergent strategies vis a vis civil-military relations in North Africa: (1) the army's role in the achievement of postcolonial independence and the subsequent state-building process; and,

(2) the agency and political mastery (or lack thereof) of leaders like King Hassan, Houari Boumedienne, Habib Bourguiba, or Muammar Qadhafi.

It is important to note that because two of the cases studied here, Morocco and Algeria, have not undergone any serious revolutions as part of the Arab Spring, a comparison might appear to be problematic *prima facie*. Yet the objective here is to gain analytical insight by highlighting the different approaches taken by regimes and to emphasize how those have contributed to regime stability over time. This objective is not affected by the difference.

MOROCCO: MONARCHICAL DISEQUILIBRIUM AND CONTINUITY

Although the Moroccan monarchy has historically tried to ensure that its army remained apolitical through strategies such as ethnic recruitment and integration into the palace's patronage network, two abortive coups in 1971 and 1972 underscored their failure to achieve this. Since the 1970s, King Hassan has managed civil-military relations in a different manner, by focusing on the achievement of a number of foreign policy successes that have in turn kept the military in their barracks. For this section of the paper, the two periods – pre-1972 and post-1972 – must be distinguished, as civil-military relations were deeply restructured in the latter.

Since its inception in 1956, the Forces Armées Royale (FAR) have been tightly controlled by Sultan Mohammed V and particularly by his son the Crown Prince Hassan, who cultivated a close personal interest in military affairs and was named chief of staff, becoming the de facto supreme commander.[19] The creation and consolidation of an army were some of the new regime's first tasks since the country had been occupied by an 85,000-man garrison of the French army and a 60,000-man garrison of the Spanish army in the north during the colonial period, leaving the newly independent Morocco without troops of its own.[20] The new army offered the throne immediate physical protection after the country gained independence from France in 1956, as well as providing the regime with defense capabilities, prestige and sovereignty, particularly in light of the possibility of war with neighbouring Algeria. Commanders of military units were personally supervised by the king and the ministry of interior. Yet the king was adamant about preserving the tradition of

a *royal* army, hence his aversion to putting it in the hands of the nationalist Istiqlal party. It is clear that the Moroccan monarchy did not want the military to play any political role whatsoever, as the prince at the time removed many police powers from the governors and administrators, leaving operational control in the hands of the king and prince, "for they saw in their army, properly controlled, the most effective support of the throne."[21]

The army's apolitical and disciplined tradition since the time of the French protectorate was initially an effective bulwark against political infiltration and instability. Though the Istiqlal party tried to penetrate the officer corps, the young officers most susceptible to partisan indoctrination were insulated from the rest of the troops. In May 1957, the prince sent a strong warning to the Istiqlal, emphasizing that "the Army should keep out of politics."[22] This was followed by a *dahir* which formally forbade any officer's affiliation with any political movement.[23] By 1960, this apolitical role was ensured by Crown Prince Hassan himself as he took charge of all the security forces: the army, gendarmerie, auxiliary forces and police were all united under one regional command. This move was precipitated by the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958, with the prince observing: "Here there will be no generals' and colonels' revolt as there was in Iraq, because I do not give command [of troops] to my generals and colonels."[24] This stance meant that Hassan was deeply suspicious of overly dynamic officers and limited the number of senior officers in his army. When King Hassan acceded to the throne in 1961 following the death of his father, the army followed him because it knew him and because during the period of military consolidation, the FAR had effectively been seen to be a support of the system and of the prince himself, thus guaranteeing his future claim to the throne.

King Hassan tried to keep his army out of politics by conferring upon it social tasks unconnected to any military action. Thus he assigned the army a social and logistical role where it would contribute to the social and economic development of the country. Massive battalions of youth labor were enlisted to construct a Unity Road between the North and the South, supply food, build camp sites, transportation and communications infrastructure, as well as build schools and assist flood and earthquake victims.[25] This allowed King Hassan to not only foster national support for the army but also to increasingly associate it with the throne, mirroring the king's role as social stabilizer and arbiter of competing interests.

Furthermore, by implementing social and economic programs the army was able to "steal the thunder of the opposition",[26] highlighting the army's role as a political lever in the king's policy of dividing and balancing different elite segments of society. Thus the Moroccan army was not a popular army like in Algeria, nor was it solely a state army; its apolitical role was articulated in such a way that it was a royal army – a role premised on the *makhzen* tradition where the army was exclusively the sultan's army. The army was, in an analogous way to the monarchy, above and outside politics. King Hassan famously stated that political neutrality was to be the dogma of military morale.[27] Though still loyal to the monarchy, the army became increasingly cognizant of its political force despite its putative apolitical role.

As Risa Brooks maintains, leaders try to ensure their army's loyalty by "cultivating social, economic, and religious groups."[28] One of the key practices of the Moroccan monarchy since the time of Sultan Muhammad V was to disproportionately recruit officers from a Berber background, which echoed earlier French colonial practice.[29] Thus loyal Berbers from the countryside were appointed to the defense and interior ministries and constituted the backbone of the military organization, which proved particularly useful when they were ordered to suppress political dissent in the largely Arab zones.[30] King Hassan followed in the footsteps of his father in recruiting senior officers from men of Berber origin who had fought in the army of the French Protectorate since they were thought to be disinclined to undertaking a coup d'état. At the same time, the fact that they were of rural and Berber origins was intended as a political counterweight to the Istiqlal and urban establishment. From the point of view of these Berber army elites, there was a belief that robust ties to the palace were the only way to protect the rural and Berber world from being subordinated to the urban elite. Furthermore, Berber elites viewed the alliance as an avenue for personal upward mobility and increased access to resources typically reserved for the urban elite.[31] Nonetheless, what the regime perceived to be a loyal ethnic base in the army did seriously threaten the regime and break the alliance between the army and the monarchy on two occasions in the early 1970s. The two abortive coups of 1971 and 1972 proved to be critical junctures in the monarchy's management of civil-military relations.

Because of the army's predominant Berber identity, Michael Herb argued Morocco was "the most conspicuous failure of selective recruitment."[32]

In July 1971, a small group of army cadets and infantry units stormed the king's birthday party in his summer palace in Skhirat, killing a number of guests and senior officers thought to be staunchly royalist. The King miraculously survived by hiding in the palace's bathroom and gave his trusted General Oufkir full civil and military powers to suppress the attempted coup. The coup underlined the failure of King Hassan's strategy of attempting to fragment the elite by isolating the urban bourgeoisie through a policy of selective recruitment. The Berber tradition of loyalty could not supplant political discontent, a discontent that Frank H. Braun cogently documents in his analysis of the failed palace coup. Though their motivations have still not been fully determined because all the putsch leaders were summarily executed, "the putsch occurred against a general background of growing unrest among the senior officers, which related directly to the conventional system of royal patronage, clan politics, and corruption."[33] In fact, the senior officers who orchestrated the failed coup were a close-knit group originating from the Middle Atlas and Rif Berber nobility which had hitherto been closely associated with the French Protectorate. Discontent among the ranks of these senior officers led to increasing politicization:

> The senior officers' discontent arose primarily from a deeply felt sense of status insecurity, for which material rewards prevented them from transforming their command positions into bases of personal power, and the junior officers' progressive advance to operational command posed a direct threat to their own privileged status. The senior officers were powerless to halt the rising tide of corruption among politicians and civil servants, which played into the hands of the leftist opposition and endangered political stability.[34]

Their discontent was further fuelled by the fact that prominent Fassi politicians had accumulated considerable material wealth from the king's patronage network, being given recovered colonial land. Because Berber landowners were restricted to non-irrigated areas, the king's agrarian reform program of 1968-1972 was seen by Berbers to deliberately benefit Fassi interests at the expense of rural clans.[35] As Arab functionaries of Fassi origins replaced traditional Berber power in regional administration, Berbers felt increasingly

alienated from the king's royal patronage network and appalled by the high levels of corruption at the national political level.

Following the coup attempt, King Hassan summarily executed four loyalist generals and the coup leaders, as well as four other rebel generals, five colonels and a major by firing squad near the ocean south of Rabat.[36] In the wake of the decimation of the Berber senior officers involved in the 1971 coup, army morale was low, with officers deeply disaffected and antagonistic towards the palace. This shocked the political clan establishment into a state of *attentisme* which isolated the king more than ever before.[37] The Skhirat rebellion also ended the king's policy of integrating the bureaucratic and military elite into a new ruling class. More fundamentally, it made it clear that the king's traditional system of patronage and institutionalized corruption was not ensuring his army's loyalty and had to be restructured. Yet 13 months later, in August 1972, a group of junior rebel Air Force officers tried to shoot down the king's Boeing 727 airliner with U.S-supplied F-5 aircraft while he was returning home from France in what was to be another abortive coup.[38] Failing to shoot out the airliner's third engine as a result of the king announcing on the radio that the 'tyrant' had been killed, King Hassan miraculously survived unharmed. "The motive for the coup seems to have been a conviction amongst the coup leaders that King Hassan was too weak to rule effectively and that he should therefore be replaced in an army-dominated regime."[39] Defense Minister Oufkir was executed (though officially his death was declared a suicide), and the armed forces were radically reorganized to coup-proof the military establishment. A look at how King Hassan subsequently restructured the palace's relations with the military best explains the remarkable continuity and stability of civil-military relations in the kingdom since the 1970s.

After prison and death sentences were handed down to those suspected of being behind the second plot, the king took over direct command of the military with all important decisions coming to him first, thus launching a draconian process of strong centralization. The post of minister of defense was abolished, no officer could have a rank higher than colonel for a number of years, and all officer movements and transfers were to be monitored by the king.[40] Officers could not hold political positions as Oufkir and other senior officers had. As Kamrava maintains:

> Nonetheless, since the system is a monarchy, domestic public opinion dictates that the king maintain a semblance of civilian control of and dominance within the system. Thus the monarchical state cannot give too many high-profile positions to its loyal officers and replicate the pattern of officers-turned-civilians as represented by most other states in the region. At the same time, the very basis of the regime's legitimacy and its modus operandi mitigate the possibility of creating and relying on an ideological militia. The […] monarchies seek to depoliticize as much of their population as possible rather than to deliberately fan political passions.[41]

In addition, King Hassan began recruiting outside the traditionally rural Berber elements, which the monarchy had mistakenly thought were fiercely royalist, particularly by way of conscription. King Hassan also doubled the army budget between 1974 and 1978, although it could be argued that access to economic patronage was not the best strategy to thwart any coup attempts because the armed forces were already granted economic benefits. After the 1971 and 1972 coup attempts, King Hassan adopted a strategy of distancing the FAR from politics by keeping the military "busy, dependent, and divided."[42] The monarch also tried to affiliate the army with prestigious national causes, by contributing troops to the Saharan war,,the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and the Zaire conflagration.[43] This strategy restored the prestige of senior army elites that had been decimated after the abortive coups, associated them more closely with the king by offering them access to patronage and other personal comforts, and encouraged their loyalty especially through modernization and the acquisition of increasingly sophisticated weaponry.[44] For example, the Western Sahara war doubled the size of the armed forces to 200,000 men and cemented military support of the dynasty; participation in it also made it possible for King Hassan to reintegrate the army within the national community and to occupy and distract it in a way that was judged to be politically less dangerous. Increased militancy in foreign policy more generally created a climate of national unity and monarchical legitimacy, which enabled the king to allow the reemergence of political parties.[45] At the same time, by capitalizing on substantive and symbolic foreign policy measures, he was able to defuse domestic unrest and restructure the armed forces in such a way as to reconsolidate monarchical power.[46]

King Hassan also presented his military with considerable barriers to coup plotting by creating a network of pivotal units, taking control of and centralizing all key

communication and defense systems, and by diversifying and compartmentalizing his intelligence and security services. Doing so made it "more difficult for aspiring factions to build cross-cutting coalitions of supporters, and hence to develop a like-minded group with which to challenge the regime."[47]

The monarchy also restructured and reinvigorated the Ministry of Interior as an instrument of monarchical control. Both *Forces Auxilliaires* (a national guard) and the local police of *Sureté Nationale* enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and have at times been rivals. Under the surveillance of the *Gendarmerie Royale*, the Ministry of Interior offered the king three sources of intelligence that kept the ambitions of each in check.[48]

Continuity rather than rupture has characterized Moroccan civil-military relations since 1999. Though information is difficult to obtain, it appears that senior officers constitute the second circle of the politically relevant elite (PRE) under the young monarch King Muhammad VI.[49] This segment of the elite also includes representatives of Islamic institutions, government ministers in charge of important portfolios, business elites, and leaders of the principal political parties. The king has also not made any significant personnel changes in the composition of the army. Colonel Major Hamidou Laanigri was appointed by the king as director general of the National Intelligence Service (DST), and two other generals were promoted.[50] Because of the deadlock in the Western Sahara conflict, the army as well as the monarchy has been in favor of this status quo.

In general, relations between Muhammad VI and the military appear to be more stable than under his father. One key characteristic of the Muhammad VI era in civil-military relations has been to keep the FAR equipped with modern arms. The Moroccan air force has accrued two cutting-edge arms packages; an upgrade of its Mirage F1 fighter planes, as well as the purchase of French "Rafale" fighters.[51] This process of modernization continues Hassan's practice of keeping the military busy and distracted. Furthermore, Crown Prince Moulay Rachid, the current king's brother, seems to enjoy day-to-day influence over the armed forces, occasionally appearing in military uniform. Patronage networks have been deepened, particularly through the senior officers' abilities to receive considerable wealth through contracts in the fishing industry.[52] As long as the Saharan question remains unresolved, the status quo is likely to persist as it seems to benefit all

political actors. Yet any changes and particularly pressures on the Saharan issue in which Morocco is compelled to make concessions could perhaps disturb the political equilibrium achieved by King Hassan from 1975 onwards and re-politicize an army that has been loyal to its monarchs for the last 30 years. If Morocco were to experience an uprising of a magnitude similar to Tunisia, Egypt or Libya, the armed forces could intervene, in the absence of a serious democratic bargain, and accommodate the thematic grievances of Islamic movements while inserting a dose of nationalist rhetoric. Although the army is currently concerned with preserving its own interests rather than aggrandizing them, it still remains an important political actor and force in its own right whose loyalty is not unshakable.

ALGERIA: A MILITARY-TECHNOCRATIC COALITION

Much has been written about Algeria in the MENA literature on civil-military relations because of the salience of the army as an actor and institution in the Algerian polity. To characterize Algeria as a military regime is reductionist and fails to capture the complexities in the interaction between the military and civilian power, the politics of succession, the elite factionalism, and the collective decisions and maneuvering of bureaucratic politics. In this section I highlight the main features of Algeria's civil-military coalition since 1962 and how it has formed the backbone of the Algerian political system, as well as the civilianization of the system since Bouteflika's ascendance to the presidency in 1999.

Though not a military regime per se, the military is the primary political institution in Algeria and many army officers play leading roles in politics. The Armée Nationale Populaire (ANP), which succeeded the Armée de Libération (ALN), evolved from being a guerilla revolutionary army that fought the French for independence to a professionalized army that played an important role in leadership and state-building. Though on paper the military was, since its inception, supposed to be subordinated to the civilian leadership, the first president of the Algerian Republic Ben Bella was installed with the backing of the military, which reserved for itself a key and central role in the regime.[53] This role was confirmed when the officer corps deposed Ben Bella, dissolved parliament, and proceeded

with a recalibration of the institutions of the state. Since 1965, presidents have been high ranking colonels or of a comparable military rank, and the cabinet has been filled with military men as well as the president's support base.

The military plays a hegemonic role in Algerian politics because "it has the power to make its will felt, or at least to threaten to make its will felt even more directly if its more indirect role is not recognized."[54] As kingmaker in the Algerian polity, the military has often intervened to influence the course of events and has controlled the largest bloc of votes in party organs.[55] Nonetheless, the military has historically been concerned with staying in charge of military affairs rather than political ones. The system can be characterized as a ruling coalition between military and 'apparatchik', subordinated technocrats.

The military's role as guardian of the state and ultimate powerbroker is a function of its historical role in the anti-colonial struggle and subsequent nation-building process. As successor to the ALN, the army was the country's only organized group at the end of Algeria's War of Independence in 1962. It was subsequently the driving force behind state-building and modernization, and was thus able to fill the vacuum left by the French colonial rulers. Zartman notes the military's possession of a certain "revolutionary mystique"[56] that justifies their claim to such a privileged status. This very mystique was invoked to justify imposing law and order in the chaos of the post-independence years. As guardian of the revolution, the army argued that it was the most skilled and organized institution to help stabilize, develop, and manage Algerian society.[57]

When Colonel Boumedienne acceded to power in 1965 via a military coup, he was surrounded by a clique known as the Oujda Group,[58] an association of national decision makers who formed the top members of the military elite. Boumedienne was supported by a group of military officer-technicians who were direct clients of the president. As president, Colonel Boumedienne took steps to develop the revolutionary army into a professional one, particularly in his decision to distance himself from the National Liberation tradition and to construct a more monolithic National People's Army that could be more closely controlled.[59] In the Revolutionary Council, the country's upper executive body, 22 out of 26 members were military officers.[60] Under Boumedienne, the homogenous coalition of

professional military men and technical administrators became more technocratic, which over time enhanced the role of the FLN. "From the mid-seventies on, the military command has been mainly devoted to the custody of the state and of its legitimacy."[61] What ensued was the institutionalization of the revolution, which brought with it a degree of government stability and political consensus. "One device for consensus formation was the maintenance of the initial military nucleus and a total disregard of the rest of the political elite."[62] Internal cohesion as well as control over the economy and administration defined the Boumedienne period, leading scholars to observe an effective and propitious congruence between the military and managerial elites.[63] This congruence was ensured by the cohesion of elites from three state institutions: the party, the army, and the bureaucracy, or public administration.

The question of political succession in Algeria, despite elite factionalism and rivalry present in the country, has been remarkably stable and fluid. When Boumedienne became ill in 1978, a power struggle ensued. A group of members of the Council of the Revolution, with the army behind it, confirmed the ascendancy of the army and its role as kingmaker. The army thus chose Chadli Benjedid, former commander of the Oran military district, as successor - the highest ranking officer to the State presidency with "impeccable revolutionary credentials."[64] The peaceful succession from Boumedienne to Chadli was in large part a result of Boumedienne's effective institutional arrangement of a powerful, interconnected technocratic configuration that was composed of three elements: mobilization, management, and military, all working collectively.[65] Benjedid consolidated his power between 1981 and 1983, but contrary to the centralized leadership of Boumedienne, he restored the principle of collective leadership with its own system of hierarchy, above and outside the established institutions of government.[66] The success of this institutionalized system indicates military dominance in the political system, but not monopoly. What is meant by dominance is that no governmental change can occur against the army's will, or without its involvement, as the routine of succession is managed in such a way that the military always puts their man in office.

Entrenched economic interests and key sources of patronage have provided the Algerian military establishment with significant domestic clout.

> Because of the growth of their armies and the diversification of their requirements the military has recently turned to economic procurement, entering as a major partner in the industrial world, international and domestic services, and commercial networks.[67]

The army owns and manages a number of industries and suppliers, which allows it to control the small private sector. It was during the modest period of economic liberalization under Benjedid in the early 1980s that Algeria's military was able to enrich itself. A Central Bank regulation allowed members of the military elite to become intermediaries in managing foreign exchange transactions, thus becoming "pseudo-private actors, importing through their own companies, taking commissions on imports, or facilitating access by private companies to import contracts."[68] Chadli's reforms, representing the intersection of *étatisme* and the economic opening of *infitah*, gave commanders a decisive advantage over other elites. In addition to streams guaranteed from clients within the state sector, the emphasis placed on private enterprise gave the officer corps access to a whole new network of revenue. Retired officers often became *parrains* ('godfathers') to commercial businesses that sprang up, obtained licenses, and had access to goods and materials that were still under state control in exchange for profits. But Algeria does not have a corporate military economy such as in Syria, Egypt, or Iran. Robert Springborg underlines that:

> The military-economic networks appear to be yet more prolific, subterranean, and extensive, with Algerian officers preferring the murky world of deals and side payments to the more institutionalized form that an 'officer economy' represents.[69]

The military establishment has thus benefited from the circulation of rents and the commercial private sector, natural by-products of the distortions of Benjedid's economic liberalization.

Many scholars of Algerian politics like Entelis, Zartman, Hermassi, or Quandt have identified a number of features of Algerian civil-military relations that guarantee the ascendant role of the army. Stephen Cook, however, in his book *Ruling Without Governing*, lays out a different framework for understanding the role of the military in the Algerian polity. Though his conclusions about Egyptian civil-military relations have been seriously discredited with the fall of the Mubarak regime in February 2011, his observations about Algeria deserve some mention. In his book, Cook argues:

> Finally, the officers of the military *enclave* sought to avoid – with the exception of their representative at the presidency – the day-to-day governance of the country. This was not merely a matter of preference, as the officer corps devoted its energies to developing a modern, professional fighting force, but a matter of survival. Exposure to the vicissitudes of politics, the Algerian commanders believed, would unnecessarily jeopardize their coherence – a crucial component of their power. As long as the public face of the government was not specifically that of the military, opposition would be directed toward other political actors, notably the FLN. The benefit of Algeria's political façade is thus obvious: the officers need not govern, though they retain their position as society's undisputed power brokers.[70]

Reminiscent of how monarchies in the MENA have maintained their hold on power, the Algerian military establishment has consequently emerged as arbiter among competing factions, vanguard of the revolution and the state, and ultimate powerbroker. This role has been enabled by their historic struggle for independence, revolutionary mystique, monopoly of coercion, direct interventions in succession struggles, entrenchment in economic interests, as well as decision to avoid the day-to-day of governance politics. This allows the army to obfuscate the real locus of power, further ensuring its political survival. The army-backed ouster of Benjedid in January 1992 amidst the bloody civil war and its designation of Mohamed Boudiaf in 1992, Liamine Zeroual as president in 1994, or even Bouteflika in 1999 underline this feature. The civil war that began in 1992 "confirmed the ascendancy of the military in Algerian political life and the weakness of all civilian forms of politics, both on the pro-government side and among those opposed to the regime."[71] Under Bouteflika this was about to change.

With the accession of Abdelaziz Bouteflika to the presidency in 1999, Algeria's civil-military relations underwent a restructuring characterized by the restoration of executive power to the presidency and the neutralization of the army as ultimate kingmaker. The late 1990s were particularly important because it was in this period that the presidency emerged as a power center somewhat separate from the army, causing much inter-elite conflict and signifying a new strategy of the army vis-à-vis Algerian politics.[72] Undoubtedly, at the time of Bouteflika's election in 1999, the core elite - *le pouvoir* - was comprised of generals.[73] When Bouteflika consolidated his presidential power however, he made subtle alterations to the political power structure by slightly fracturing the traditional

link between political power and the military. Bouteflika believed that the army should be under the president's authority and that it had unrightfully given itself extra-constitutional powers. He attempted to neutralize military involvement in politics in a remarkable political maneuver that brought about a gradual trajectory of institutionalization and demilitarization of the Algerian political power structure. Unlike past presidents, Bouteflicka appointed personal and political allies in top ministerial posts and other regional institutions, and at the same time shifted the army high command in a way that would guarantee its loyalty to the president.[74]

Bouteflika's neutralization of the military as the locus of strategic decision making was a function of his diplomatic mastery and prominence on the international stage, which he was able to convert into valuable political capital domestically. International pressure regarding revelations about the egregious violence committed by the army during the civil war gave Bouteflika the ability to bargain with the army commanders: basically, he would shield their reputation in exchange for a modicum of withdrawal from the political stage, by reshuffling the high command and pushing generals behind the 1992 coup into retirement. The foreign policy front was the key mechanism by which Bouteflika changed the internal balance between civilian and military power.[75]

Bouteflika made use of his ex-foreign minister credentials by being very visible diplomatically in Africa and in the West. Among a slew of partnerships and initiatives, Bouteflika's position as acting president of the OAU allowed him to help negotiate a ceasefire and peace treaty in the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1999-2000.[76] The other targets of Bouteflika's diplomacy were France and the United States. In June 2000, he was the second Algerian head of state to make a state visit to France in nearly 40 years, "manifestly projecting a new leadership capable of getting the country back on its feet"[77] in his acknowledgment of the army's tarnished reputation. Termed the 'Bouteflika effect' by French media, this acknowledgment had a positive effect on French-Algerian relations.[78] Vis-à-vis the United States, Bouteflika was elevated to a viable anti-terrorist partner after the events of September 11, 2001 and his cooperation with the Bush administration proved instrumental to his diplomatic efforts. Bouteflika essentially argued that Algeria had also been a victim of international terrorism, appealing to the American

administration for specialized equipment and upgraded materiel for the armed forces such as night-vision equipment and other high-tech items.[79] This "was of course music to the ears of the generals: in rehabilitating the international reputation of the military establishment, Bouteflika added political capital to his own account."[80] The army found itself in a difficult position to challenge the diplomatic gains of the president. His ability to be reelected in April 2004 – the first Algerian president to complete his first term and get a second since Benjedid in 1983 – was a clear testament to the restoration of the presidency as a key component in the government and not just a nominal ceremonial figurehead.

The final step in this process of consolidating presidential authority over the military establishment was in reclaiming control over the FLN. Bouteflika recovered the historically dominant role of the FLN party, which enabled it to "supplant the informal coterie of army commanders"[81] and effectively become an extension of the regime. In 1989, with the advent of political pluralism in Algeria, the FLN's single-party monopoly was ended and left in disarray. The FLN's remarkable victory in the 2002 elections, in which it won 35 percent of the vote and 199 out of 389 seats in the new assembly, at least partly due to putting forward many younger and women candidates, represented a personal victory for Bouteflika.

From 1962 to the 2000s, two features have defined Algerian civil-military relations: the first is the domination and hegemony of the military as the real locus of power, maintaining a patent presence in the political process via an alliance with the (subordinated) technocratic civilian wing. The second is the divergence since 1999, a period characterized by Bouteflika's diplomatic mastery which relegated the military establishment to a lesser role in the power distribution. This gradual civilianization of Algerian political life, in the context of Bouteflika's illness since 2009, raises interesting questions about the succession and the extent to which civilian power will retain the executive sway it has gained since the 2000s. Though the military is now less prominent than it was before 2000, it still plays an integral role in the Algerian political system.

TUNISIA: MARGINALIZATION AND TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE

Since Tunisia gained independence in 1956, civil-military relations have been quite unique when compared to its Moroccan, Algerian or Libyan neighbors, for many reasons. In

this section on Tunisia, two key features will be discussed: 1) the military establishment's marginalization by and subordination to civilian rule under Habib Bourguiba and continued by Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and 2) the army's midwife role in the 2011 Arab Spring's political transition to civilian life, which was a logical consequence of the Destourian strategies to keep the army weak.

Throughout the first decade of independence, the Tunisian armed forces were a neglected government agency, a result of the pre-protectorate period and the later French legacy, but also an implication of Bourguiba's institutionalization of a powerful one-party rule. In terms of the French legacy, native Tunisians saw military service as debasing and military rule as illegitimate. Even under Destourian rule, to be in the military was not looked upon favorably and the principle of civilian leadership has always been the linchpin of Bourguibism. The elite that ruled Tunisia after independence emerged from the national resistance movement dominated by the Neo-Destour. Most of the elites were socialized in the eastern coastal provinces, and received a secular Francophone education.[82] These elites were quick to exclude military and religious elites from political decision making. Because the Tunisian population was essentially homogenous, there was no need for military umpirage as in Lebanon's confessional system.[83] Refusing to be mired in Arab theatres of war, Bourguiba relied mainly on the international community[84] for matters of external defense. Contrary to in Morocco, which set up the army as a political instrument even though the monarchy was cautious not to politicize it, the Neo-Destour party in Tunisia dispensed with the need for a strong army, for fear that using the army as a political instrument could politicize it in undesirable ways. After Tunisian army officers were implicated in an attempt on Bourguiba's life in 1962, Bourguiba clearly outlined in 1963 his vision of civilian primacy in state-building:

> Officers must also realize that these tasks [of state-building] are matters for the political authority and for it alone. It can only perform them if it knows that the State's existence is secure...It is easier to get rid of a man than to replace him.[85]

The Socialist Destour party sought to impose a civilian management on the army and the security forces. Despite his reliance on diplomacy for external defense, Bourguiba slowly expanded the military after 1962, as a result of disputes with Algeria. Nonetheless, it was

clear that Bourguiba was adamant about keeping his army weak and subordinated to civilian authority.

In the work of Lewis B. Ware, it is contended that that the military establishment in Tunisia:

> Is a non-praetorian, highly professional body of officers and men which, as an armed force, never mounted a coup or fomented revolution against the state, never involved itself directly in the Arab-Israeli crisis, has never been the instrument of national emancipation except as the adjunctive arm of civilian policy, and has always answered to the authority of the state through the intermediary of a civilian minister of defense.[86]

As King Hassan did in the 1970s, Bourguiba banned any member of the military from joining any political movement, including the Neo-Destour. The Tunisian military was thus invested solely in the defense of national integrity. As guarantor of the survival of Tunisian nationalism, it was unquestionably subservient to the resolutely non-militaristic civic values of Bourguibism.

Bourguiba tried to ensure the loyalty of his armed forces by limiting their size and the quantity of armaments, moves that sought to dissuade them from organizing any form of independent intervention in the affairs of the state. In the first decade of independence, Tunisia's investment in weaponry was the lowest rate of expenditure in the Middle East, never reaching as much as 2 per cent of the country's estimated GNP.[87] In Tunisia, the military establishment has been effectively isolated from power and subjected to civilian primacy on all but a few occasions, such as in 1978 and 1984, when the government ordered the formal intervention of the Tunisian army to restore order during severe civil disturbances.[88] Another exception was when military colonels were ordered to command national security forces and direct communications at the end of the 1977 disturbances, though they were nonetheless subordinated to the Interior Minister and were happy to return to their barracks after unrest had abated.[89] During times of student and worker unrest in the 1970s, the security forces were occasionally asked to intervene, further confirming the quasi-impossibility of the military exercising power on its own. The security forces were Bourguiba's best instrument of military loyalty. From the 1970s onward, the president created a variety of paramilitary internal security agencies that fielded heavy weaponry and

additional intelligence agencies that were tasked with monitoring one another, policing their populations.[90] The excessive behavior of these forces in early 2011 was a source of revulsion among the Tunisian population.

Though he was an army man, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali continued the Bourguibist practice of civilian primacy over the military, except that he marked a departure from Bourguiba in effectively making Tunisia into a police state. He joined the army at age 15 and was appointed director of military security in 1964, then promoted to director-general of national security in 1977.[91] Ben Ali was the only professional military member of an elite composed mainly of civilian politicians, university graduates, and lawyers. His support base was found in the Interior Ministry and the security apparatus, hence he did not inherit the institutional support that Bourguiba enjoyed. Composed of various competing secret services, the security apparatus (*mukhabarat*) employed 150,000 to 200,000 people, "virtually becoming a state within the state."[92] Ben Ali's Tunisia was thus a police state where the 50,000-man military establishment found itself supplanted by a much larger, better funded, and more politically influential network of security agencies under the aegis of the Interior Ministry.[93] Thus not only did Ben Ali continue Bourguiba's practices of politically sidelining the military, he actively counterbalanced it by countenancing the growing power of the security apparatuses, which would have significant ramifications during the popular mobilization of December 2010 and January 2011.

In December 2010, street demonstrations galvanized by the self-immolation of a young fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, led to severe civil unrest and protests demanding the downfall of the Ben Ali regime and his party, the RCD. Police and security forces responded harshly to the demonstrators in an attempt to quell the unrest. President Ben Ali used a gang of pro-government thugs and unleashed his elite Presidential Guard against the protesters, which only exacerbated the Tunisian population's distaste for the country's paramilitary forces. Ben Ali also ordered the army chief of staff General Rachid Ammar to support the security units by deploying troops, but Ammar refused, effectively dealing the final blow to the Ben Ali regime and forcing the president into exile. The army's decision not to shoot protestors and to fire on Tunisian security and intelligence units instead is a consequence of the actions of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. The Tunisian army, having been

marginalized since 1956, was never invested in the regime like in Algeria or Egypt, nor did it have any stake in the regime's survival. Indeed, it was comparatively disadvantaged relative to the detested security forces, was not a beneficiary of any significant source of patronage or foreign assistance, and had few economic interests tied to the regime. As a result of having been kept at a distance from the political sphere since 1962 and under the oversight of the paramilitary National Guard since 1968 (a civilian force), a schism between the army and the civilian authority had developed. Ware noted the antagonism that emerged as a result between the army and the police force, well before the Arab Spring when he wrote his piece in 1985:

> The military has resented having to assume a police function which belongs to other organs of security under civilian control. And it is the bureaucrats of the Interior Ministry whom the soldiers hold responsible for dereliction of duty. Hence, a certain distrust between armed forces and Interior is beginning to make its appearance in the context of an uneasy feeling that the civilians cannot cope with the problems of social disorder. At the same time, the military does not believe it is receiving either added benefits or recognition for the new burden the civilians have laid on its shoulders.[94]

In the words of Badra Gaaloul, "It is apparent that Ben Ali's strategy of marginalizing the military had the unintended consequence of facilitating the transition from his rule."[95] Moreover as a result of Bourguiba's strategies of keeping the military out of politics, the army has been reluctant to let go of its apolitical, nationalist, institutional, and professional role. Its reluctance to take over the reins of power after the downfall of Ben Ali further attests to its focus on reestablishing the *status quo ante* rather than taking on a more active and hegemonic role.[96] The de-legitimization of secret police, anti-riot forces, and other coercive agencies during the unrest of 2010-2011 kept the relatively autonomous army intact and suitable for playing the midwife role of political transition.

Tunisian civil-military relations highlight the case of a weak, unsupported, apolitical, sidelined military establishment eclipsed by the growth of paramilitary institutions and subordinated to civilian authority. These factors largely explain why Tunisia's army refused to shoot on protesters and precipitated the exile of Ben Ali to Saudi Arabia, "allowing state bureaucrats and jurists [to] take the lead."[97]

LIBYA: PRIMORDIALIZATION AND FRAGMENTATION OF THE MILITARY

Until this past year, very little had been written about civil-military relations in Libya. The literature on Libyan politics has suffered as a result of Qadhafi's personalistic and opaque style of rule, especially regarding his relationship to his armed forces. This section will bring attention to the main elements of Qadhafi's relationship to the Libyan military establishment, namely his deep distrust of it despite coming to power in a bloodless military coup in 1969, and how that contributed to the defection of a large part of his forces during an armed civil war that only ended with the liberation of Tripoli in August 2011. More particularly, Qadhafi's attempts to coup-proof his army throughout his 40 years of dictatorial rule, and the implications of those attempts during the 2011 Libyan Civil War, will form the bulk of the analysis.

Muammar Qadhafi was a remarkably young captain when in 1969 he and other junior 'Free Officers' staged a bloodless coup deposing the unpopular, pro-Western Sanussi monarchy. Though the Free Officers had a network in the army, they were a minority in the officer corps.[98] During the phase of seizure, expansion, and consolidation of power, the vacuum of political power in Libya gave ample opportunity for the new officer-elite to monopolize the system of political power. The new elite's first task was to consolidate its power over the coercive apparatus and the army. This task was facilitated by the fact that other higher-ranking officers were sympathetic to and cooperative with Qadhafi's forces, since they were also planning a coup. Qadhafi then proceeded to purge nearly all middle-rank and senior officers (about 430 individuals), and placed Free Officers into the vacant commanding positions.[99] Though for a short period Qadhafi appointed some high ranking officers like Colonel Musa Ahmad as Interior Minister or Colonel Adan Hawaz as Defense Minister in the first cabinet, when they exhibited signs of seeking more independent positions, Qadhafi ruthlessly purged them and launched a process of eliminating all high ranking officers of the upper class as well as the educated middle class from the officer corps.[100] Qadhafi's purge of older officers and promotion of young junior officers resulted in a generational shift, a particularly salient factor in his control of the army. Qadhafi also purged any elements seen to be loyal to the monarchy as well as those suspected of any form of opposition to the regime.

Despite coming from a military background and seizing power through a coup himself, Qadhafi excluded both the army and the bureaucracy from any visible political role, except for top unit commanders who as part of the first core of elite acted as informal mediators between clients and decision makers.[101] Nonetheless, Qadhafi made serious attempts to remain close to his army base. He held on to the post of Defense Minister in order to exercise direct control over promotions and dismissals in the army. "Significantly, he had evidently allowed no political officer to turn the army into a personal 'fiefdom' comparable to that of Amer in Egypt."[102] Moreover, Qadhafi marginalized those who played a key role in the 1969 coup by keeping them outside of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). In Libya, unlike in Egypt, the army did not form a powerful political-administrative sphere of recruitment, and officers were not given any roles in the civil bureaucracy or any ministerial ranks.[103] Nevertheless, though not institutionalized, some officers that were part of Qadhafi's core elite still retained some informal power and were a key constituency for that elite.

Qadhafi's strategy for coup-proofing his army – which presented several challenges to his rule over the years – was mainly to create parallel military structures as countervailing forces to the military elite. In the early years of the revolution, he first sought to mobilize the Libyan population by creating a "people's militia" comprised of part-time public employees, workers and farmers.[104] Largely used for guard duty at strategic locations, the "people's militia" was dispatched to Uganda to bolster Idi Amin's regime in the 1970s. As a way of counterbalancing the professional military force, in the early 1980s Qadhafi mobilized female students and trained them in factories, high schools, and universities which essentially became military barracks.[105] Qadhafi deliberately fostered antagonism between the army and people's militia, granting the revolutionary press free rein in publicizing open attacks in 1983 that besmirched the reputation of the formal army.[106] The "people's militias" underscored the distinction between 'professionals' and 'loyalists', and were used by Qadhafi as a certification process for 'loyalist' officers to persuade Qadhafi of their support.[107] These loyalists dominated the military command structure and controlled key military installations. Comparatively, the professional officers enjoyed much less influence and many of them were demobilized. Kamrava remarks that

Qadhafi "[gave] far more priority to the revolutionary credentials and loyalty of his officers as opposed to their rank or qualifications."[108]

Another strategy Qadhafi used to eliminate the possibility of a coup was to rely on military advisors from abroad, particularly from East Germany, Syria, and Cuba.[109] Some estimates assert that up to 3,500 foreign advisors were relied upon to counterbalance any possible coup attempts by Libyan units[110] Qadhafi even went so far as to rely on foreign soldiers in order to prevent any coups, for example by granting permission in the 1980s for Syrian pilots to fly in the Libyan air force. These expatriate units were essentially used to hold key intelligence and security roles, and they actively complemented the loyalists in the Libyan army, representing a counterweight to both the loyalists and the professionals. This form of *compartmentalization* of the military was a salient feature of Qadhafi's military modus operandi. Through it, dissension in one unit could be effectively contained before it permeated into another part of the military establishment, ensuring the localization of any form of coup attempt. Secondly, Qadhafi's strategy consisted of increasingly relying on acquiring 'smart' biological and chemical weapons, which were well-suited to coup-proof his forces since "they represent a maximal threat of mass destruction with minimal requirements in human resources."[111] Finally, tribalism colored an increasing number of Qadhafi's decisions vis-à-vis the military establishment. Since the 1980s, Qadhafi sought to ensure the loyalty of his army by appointing officers based on their tribal origin. To form the security organizations, Qadhafi preferred to recruit members of all six tribes of the Qadhadhfa tribal community and frequently suppressed any dissident tribal groups inside Libya.[112]

Since the 1990s, military unrest undermined the effectiveness of Qadhafi's fragmentation of the military with regards to army loyalty. In October 1993, a military plot devised by an army colonel to ambush Qadhafi in Bani Walid failed, leading to the arrest of 1,500 people and the execution of hundreds of others.[113] Additionally, since the mid-1980s a considerable number of soldiers and officers were unpaid or had wages that were in arrears, while the army was forced to accept cuts in arms spending as a result of budget reductions from the restructuring of the economy.[114] Another element that threatened the loyalty of Qadhafi's army was military unrest following the defeat of the Libyan army by

French-backed Chadian forces in 1987. The forced withdrawal of Libyan troops from the Aouzou Strip in 1994 coupled with the International Criminal Court's ruling in favor of Chad led to the further disaffection of the officer corps and subsequent abortive coups from different tribes and militant Islamists.

Ultimately, the disaffection of the military establishment and the contagion effects of the Arab Spring that started in Tunisia and spread to Egypt took the Libyan regime by surprise. Protests that began in Benghazi on February 15, 2011 and faced violence by the security forces and loyalist elements within the army quickly escalated into an armed rebellion by soldiers that had defected, volunteers, and a cross-section of Libyan society. In March, a NATO coalition led by Britain, France, and the United States enforced a UN mandated no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians, giving rebels close air-support that ultimately lead to the liberation of Tripoli in August. This in turn caused the dismemberment of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the capture and execution of Qadhafi by rebel groups south of Sirte in October 2011. The implosion of the army and the armed civil war that ensued were a direct result of Qadhafi's strategy of fragmenting the army to coup-proof it.

Qadhafi was well aware that his army could not be trusted. Rather than initially deploying the regular, more professional army, he first unleashed his paramilitary organizations and security units commanded by his relatives. Almost all of the units near Benghazi and Tobruk in eastern Libya defected, while desertion was common for large segments of units in Kufra, Misrata, the Western Mountains, and Zaqiya.[115] Qadhafi's decision to import mercenaries from sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and Latin America – as a continuation of his past practice of relying on foreign fighters – also underscored his distrust of the military; moreover the tribal element discussed above helps us to understand why some segments of the Libyan forces were persuaded by the coercion and bribery of the Qadhafi regime. Those tribes that fell out of love with the regime and that as a result defected and deserted were not drawn by Qadhafi's desperate efforts to lure them back by dispensing patronage.

Surely the context of the Arab Spring precipitated the implosion of the Libyan armed forces at that particular time. Yet coup risk or army defection must be understood as

also arising from structural, background causes that increased the likelihood of implosion, "rather than immediate, triggering causes that precipitate specific coups."[116] With or without the permeable regional forces of the Arab Spring, Qadhafi would have most likely faced significant challenges from the military establishment sooner or later.

CONCLUSION

This paper has sketched out a variegated picture of civil-military relations in North Africa, one that is complex and affected by a number of interlocking factors and variables such as, but not limited to: ethnic and tribal coloring of the officer corps (Morocco, Libya); the depoliticization of the army in Morocco and Tunisia, and to a lesser degree in Libya; the role of the army during the colonial and post-colonial period in Algeria; the effect of purging in Morocco and Libya; in nearly all of the cases explored the proliferation of paramilitary institutions; the allocation of patronage and economic procurements of militaries; the idiosyncrasies and convictions of particular leaders like King Hassan, Bouteflika, Bourguiba, and Qadhafi (whose particularist actions played key roles in managing the civil-military balance); and the role of foreign policy. The interaction of these factors with one another is conditioned by the historical contingencies and specificities of the country and regime in question, including factors such as: the status of North African civil-military relations, particularly the relation King Muhammad VI has with his military, that of an aging Bouteflika with the generals, and at present the new role of the military in the Arab Spring of 2010-2011 for Tunisia and Libya.

Looking forward, a few observations can be made. For the Moroccan monarchy, the Saharan issue, which has kept the army distracted from politics and constitutes a pillar of legitimacy for the regime, will be critical for the military. If the monarchy compromises the sacrifices of the army in the disputed territory by succumbing to international pressure or not showing resolve with the Polisario, the army could potentially seek a more political role. If as a result of economic hardship the army is not adequately provided for by the palace, disaffection could spread among the officer corps. What is clear then is that the military in Morocco has been remarkably loyal, but nonetheless remains an important actor in the

Moroccan polity, whose loyalty has always been looked at cynically by the Moroccan population, and indeed is often the subject of deep skepticism.

In Algeria, it was argued that Bouteflika's recent foreign policy successes helped him sever some of the traditional links between the military and the presidency, restoring some executive power to the civilian presidency. This does not mean that the army's leverage has waned, nor that its influence has diminished. The military in Algeria is the most decisive actor in the country and two events could redress the balance in favor of the army: 1) a succession struggle after the possible exit of Bouteflika from the political stage, and 2) the prospect of an uprising of the same magnitude as those that arguably led to regime change in Tunisia or Egypt. At the time of writing, the chances of this happening seem slim. In Algeria, a transition from any of the above scenarios will surely be managed and dictated by the military, as in Egypt. Tunisia is the most likely to entrench the principle of civilian primacy that was initiated by Bourguiba, with a highly professional officer corps that has happily remained in its barracks. Libya is the most uncertain, and the situation could go either way, though recent developments have suggested a bleaker medium-term given the proliferation of small arms and military cleavages that have emerged.

One factor that will be important to look at is the role of paramilitary and parallel agencies, what Droz-Vincent calls "tentacular" apparatuses.[117] This was and still is a form of coup-proofing for the North African regimes, but its use seems to have backfired in Tunisia and Libya, often after growing antagonism disrupts the balance between the two and is reflected in the population. More work remains to be done in this area, as the literature on security sectors in the MENA has been scanty. Oren Barak and Assaf David note:

> The lack of adequate attention to the Arab Security Sector and its complex political social roles in the Arab States", and that "recent theoretical and comparative advances in the study of civil-military relations have not been paralleled in the study of the Arab Security Sector.[118]

How the security services interact with the military or with other state institutions like the party and bureaucracy, their functions, as well as their relations to the president or King are all pertinent questions because of the sector's importance in Arab politics.

This paper has demonstrated the need for a renewed focus on civil-military relations in general and the importance and relevance of North Africa in particular in this regard. As we have seen, the army's role in Arab politics has frequently been decisive, and will likely continue to be so. Paying more attention to the region's civil-military relations will illuminate the academic community's understanding of this critical area and in turn allow it to better understand the Middle East and North Africa's political direction for decades to come.

Notes

[1]For more on explanatory factors of authoritarianism persistence in the Middle East and North Africa, see Brynen, Korany, and Noble (1995); Hinnebusch (2006); Heydemann (2007); Posusney and Angrist (2005).

[2]Eliezer Be'eri, "The Waning of the Military Coup in Arab Politics," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18:1 (1982): 69.

[3]Eliezer Be'eri, *Army Officers in Arab Politics and Society* (New York: Praeger, 1970).

[4]See Philippe Droz-Vincent, "A Return of Armies to the Forefront of Arab Politics?," *Istituto Affari Internazionali* 11:21 (2011): 2-10.

[5]Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 278-9.

[6]Morris Janowitz*, The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 10-11.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]This paper will incorporate these institutions into its analysis since they were often created and used by governments to counterbalance traditional military institutions.

[9]See Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002) for a trenchant critique of Samuel Huntington's thesis about the link between professionalization and non-intervention in civilian affairs. Finer does not find that professionalization leads to subordination, since in some cases military professionalization has in fact been a motive for intervention.

[10]Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 263.

[11]*Ibid.*, 257.

[12]Elizabeth Picard, "Arab Military in Politics: from Revolutionary Plot to Authoritarian State," in *The Arab State,* ed. Giacomo Luciani, (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 191.

[13]*Ibid.*, 194.

[14]Phillipe Droz-Vincent, "A Return of Armies," 2.

[15] F. Gregory Gause III, "The Middle East Academic Community and the Winter of Arab Discontent: Why Did We Miss It?," in *Seismic Shift: Understanding Change in the Middle East* (Washington: Stimson Center, 2011), 14.

[16]Zoltan Barany, "The Role of the Military," in Comparing the Arab Revolts*,* ed. Marc F. Plattner, Lucan Way, John Carey and Andrew Reynolds, Zoltan Barany, Stéphane Lacroix, *Journal of Democracy* 22:4 (2011): 28.

[17]Risa Brooks, *Political-military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9-10.

[18]J.C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension* (Boulder: Westview, 1969), 341.

[19] I. William Zartman, *Morocco: Problems of New Power* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), 64.

[20]*Ibid.*, 98.

[21]*Ibid.*, 99.

[22]*Ibid.*, 102.

[23]*Ibid.*, 107.

[24]Marcel Teitler et al., *Elites, Pouvoir et Légitimité au Maghreb* (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1973), 153.

[25]John Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful: Moroccan Political Elite: a Study in Segmented Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 287.

[26]*Ibid.*, 169.

[27]Brooks, *Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes*, 19.

[28]Zartman, *Morocco: Problems of New Power*, 68. It was estimated in 1960 that Berbers constituted over 80 per cent of the troops.

[29] Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension*, 342.

[30]I. William Zartman, *Political Elites in Arab North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt* (New York: Longman, 1982), 61.

[31]Michael Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 245.

[32]Frank H. Braun, "Morocco: Anatomy of a Palace Revolution that Failed," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9:1 (1978): 64.

[33]*Ibid.*, 65.

[34]*Ibid.*

[35]Stephen O. Hughes, *Morocco Under King Hassan* (New York: Ithaca Press, 2001), 165.

[36]Braun, "Morocco*,*" 63.

[37]Hughes, 167. This air force rebellion was the work of junior officers with different backgrounds.

According to Hughes, many of them had done flying training in the United States, which led some people to believe they had seen democracy at work in America and found the Moroccan system wanting. The masterminds behind the plot were Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Amokrane (34 years old) and General Mohammed Oufkir, minister of defense and chief of staff of the armed forces, second only to the king.

[38]George Joffe, "Morocco: Monarchy, Legitimacy and Succession," *Third World Quarterly* 10:1 (1988): 212-13.

[39] Richard B. Parker, *North Africa: Regional Tensions and Strategic Concerns* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 24.

[40] Mehran Kamrava, "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* 115:1 (2000): 90.

[41]Saloua Zerhouni, "Morocco: Reconciling Continuity and Change" in *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change* ed. Volker Perthes (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 70.

[42]John P. Entelis, *Comparative Politics of North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), 55-7. 1500 elite units were sent to assist President Mobutu to put down an attack by secessionist Katanga forces stationed in neighboring Angola.

[43]*Ibid.*

[44]Zartman argues that the increased influence of the army in 1971 and 1972 was a result of political *immobilisme* and the decline of the party system, causing a disequilibrium in the political system that the Saharan venture helped rectify.

[45]Entelis, *Comparative Politics of North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia*, 57.

[46] Brooks, 43.

[47] Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful,* 281.

[48]Perthes, *Arab Elites,* 69.

[49]*Ibid.*, 70.

[50]David S. Sorenson, "Civil-Military Relations in North Africa," *Middle East Policy Council* (2007), 108.

[51]*Ibid.*, 109.

[52]Agreements initialed at the 1956 Soumman Conference, the 1962 Tripoli Program, the 1963 constitution and the 1964 Charter of Algiers all emphasized the principle of civilian superiority.

[53] Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing: the Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 33.

[54] I. William Zartman, "The Military in the Politics of Succession: Algeria," in *The Military in African Politics* ed. John W. Harbeson (New York: Praeger, 1987), 22.

[55]*Ibid.*

[56]John Entelis, "Algeria: Technocratic Rule, Military Power," in *Political Elites in Arab North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt* eds. I. William Zartman, et al. (New York: Longman,

1982), 97.

[57]Entelis, *Algeria: Technocratic Rule,* 97.

[58]A group of Algerian military officers who were formed in the Moroccan town of Oujda during the war of independence.

[59]Picard, *Arab Military in Politics,*193. This decision was also a result of the Algerian army's difficulties in confronting the Moroccan troops during the October 1963 Sand War.

[60]*Ibid.*, 197.

[61]*Ibid.*

[62] Elbaki Hermassi, *Leadership and National Development in North Africa: A Comparative Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972),167.

[63]*Ibid.*

[64]Entelis, 109.

[65]*Ibid.*, 93.

[66]Zartman, *The Military in the Politics of Succession,* 28.

[67]Picard, 211.

[68]Cook, *Ruling but not Governing,* 20.

[69] Robert Springborg, "Economic Involvement of Militaries," in "Roundtable: Rethinking the Study of Middle East Militaries," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43:3 (2011): 397-98.

[70]*Ibid.*, 42.

[71]Hugh Roberts, "Demilitarizing Algeria," *Carnegie Papers* 86 (2007), 1.

[72]Isabelle Werenfels, "Algeria: System Continuity Through Elite Change," in *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change* ed. Volker Perthes (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 2004), 176.

[73]The prime decision makers of the late 1990s had been head of the army's general command since 1993: Mohamed Lamari, the head of army intelligence since 1990, Mohamed "Tewfik" Mediene, the president's advisor for defense issues and unofficial spokesman of the generals, Mohamed Touati, and two retired generals, Larbi Belkheir and Khaled Nezzar, a former minister of defense.

[74]Roberts, *Demilitarizing Algeria,* 2.

[75]Robert Mortimer, "State and Army in Algeria: The 'Bouteflika effect'," *The Journal of North African Studies* 11:2 (2006): 159.

[76]*Ibid.*, 162.

[77]*Ibid.*, 163.

[78]*Ibid.*

[79]*Ibid.*

[80]*Ibid.*

[81]*Ibid.*, 5.

[82]Steffen Erdle, "Tunisia: Economic Transformation and Political Restoration," in *Arab Elites: Negotiating the Politics of Change* ed. Volker Perthes (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 208.

[83]Hurewitz, 398.

[84]Bourguiba sought to cultivate the partnership of Western powers like the United States.

[85]Hurewitz, 413.

[86]Lewis B. Ware, "The Role of the Tunisian Military in the Post-Bourguiba Era," *Middle East Journal* 39:1 (1985): 37.

[87]Hurewitz, 415.

[88]Ware, "The Role of the Tunisian Military," 27.

[89]Zartman (ed.) 1982, 162-63.

[90]Yazid Sayigh, "Agencies of Coercion: Armies and Internal Security Forces," in "Roundtable: Rethinking the Study of Middle East Militaries," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43:3 (2011): 403.

[91]Erdle, *Tunisia,* 234.

[92]*Ibid.*, 214.

[93]Barany, "The Role of the Military," 31.

[94]Ware, 39.

[95]Badra Gaaloul, "Back to the Barracks: The Tunisian Army Post-Revolution," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (November 2011).

[96]Ware, 42.

[97]Droz-Vincent, 8.

[98]Zartman 1982, 204. Estimates suggest that the Free Officers were perhaps 60-170 out of the 600-man officer corps.

[99]*Ibid.*

[100]*Ibid.*, 205.

[101]*Ibid.*, 196.

[102]*Ibid.*, 210.

[103]*Ibid.*, 186.

[104]Dirk J. Vandewalle, *Qadhafi's Libya, 1969-1994* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), 171.

[105]*Ibid.*

[106]*Ibid.*, 174.

[107]*Ibid.*, 173.

[108]Kamrava, "Military Professionalization," 83.

[109]*Ibid.*, 172.

[110]*Ibid.*

[111]*Ibid.*

[112] Dirk J. Vandewalle, *Libya since 1969: Qadhafi's Revolution Revisited* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[113]Yahia H. Zoubir, *North Africa in Transition: State, Society, and Economic Transformation in the 1990s* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1999), 79-80.

[114]Ronald Bruce St. John, *Libya: Continuity and Change* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 73; Zoubir, *North Africa in Transition,* 80. The decline in oil earnings in the mid-1980s was the principal reason for this reduction in arms purchases. More than half of Libya's estimated 2,210 battle tanks were out of commission at one point, and over 50 percent of its 417 aircraft were in storage. The sanctions prevented Libya from purchasing spare parts for its aging weapons system, thus endangering the whole military infrastructure. It was reported that as recently as November 1995, ten tons of spare parts for Libya's combat aircraft,including its MiG fighters, were seized by the Italian police.

[115]Barany, 34.

[116]Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer, "Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47:5 (2003): 596.

[117]Droz-Vincent, 3.

[118] Oren Barak and Assaf David, "The Arab Security Sector: A New Research Agenda for a Neglected Topic," *Armed Forces and Society* 36:5 (2010), 804.

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Sectarian Dynamics in Post-2003 Iraq: The Effect of the U.S. Occupation

Rachel Mulbry

Much has been made of Iraq's descent into sectarian civil war in the aftermath of the 2003 US invasion. The US invasion and occupation of Iraq[1] changed the country's power structure and social dynamics in a way that served to overemphasize the political relevance of sectarianism and encourage Iraqis to redefine their communal identities based on sect. I am not suggesting that the Americans were the only possessors of agency from 2003 onwards, but they did play an important role in creating the framework within which many individuals and groups competed over "cultural ownership" of Iraq.[2] It is essential to recognize the history of sectarianism in Iraq in order to contextualize the more recent US approach to post-invasion governance. With history as a backdrop, it will then be possible to examine the ways in which sectarianism was made manifest at both the national and local levels in post-2003 Iraq.

Establishing a sound definition of sectarianism is necessary in order to examine the history and current state of Iraqi sectarianism in depth. On the most basic level, 'sectarianism' is defined as "adherence or excessive attachment to, or undue favoring of, a particular 'denomination.'"[3] Expanding on this basic definition in order to apply the term more directly to political and social relations, sectarian groups have several important characteristics: they are "characterized by a high degree of tension with mainstream society, employing a rhetoric of difference, antagonism, and separation... [they] attempt to strongly demarcate [themselves] off from the mainstream of society."[4] While sectarianism is

manifest in a wide variety of interactions, defining and describing 'sectarianism' as a concept sets a foundation for deeper analysis of the Iraqi case.

SECTARIANISM THROUGHOUT IRAQI HISTORY

The history of sectarian dynamics in Iraq is complex – not surprising given the country's diversity and many political upheavals – and sets the stage for post-2003 trends. Within the context of this paper, focusing on a few main modern historical periods is reductionist but unavoidable. Acknowledging the limits of such a short summary, there are nevertheless several eras especially relevant to the history of Iraqi sectarianism: Ottoman rule from the 17th to the 19th century, the Great Iraqi Revolt of 1920, and the 1991 uprising against Saddam Hussein's regime. The common element linking these three historical periods to each other (as well as to the US occupation) is the presence of foreign interveners in and/or influence over Iraqi domestic affairs. This is relevant to a discussion of sectarianism in Iraq because "the only major instances of sectarian violence in modern and early modern Iraq have been caused, at least indirectly, by regional/foreign…dynamics."[5]

For the Ottomans, Iraq served as an important buffer state between the rest of their mainly Sunni empire and the neighboring Shi'a Safavid Empire. As a result, Ottoman governance strategies in Iraq had an unavoidably sectarian tint that served to deepen the political Sunni-Shi'a divide. While this rift did not necessarily extend to the social sphere, Ottoman rule between 1638 and 1916 meant political exclusion for Iraqi Shi'as whose confessional identity intrinsically connected them with the Safavids and their successor dynasties.[6] Political marginalization undermined communal relations, but never to the point that confessional identity surpassed regional identity in importance. In contrast to other Ottoman territories, sectarian movements advocating secession never once gained traction in Iraq during the 400 years of Ottoman dominance. The universality of 'Iraq' as a regional identifier and source of unity was constant throughout the political changes that defined Ottoman rule.[7] Iraq passed out of Ottoman hands following the First World War, but 300 years of foreign rule had left its mark: while Iraq was unified geographically and possessed a national identity, it was rife with sectarian tensions exacerbated by the centuries of discrimination against and marginalization of Shi'a religious communities.[8]

British colonialism arrived in Iraq under the guise of a mandate, but the Iraqi people were not fooled; the Great Iraqi Revolt of 1920 was a clear response to foreign dominance that united diverse religious and ethnic groups. The discourse at the time was one of unity and cooperation. During Ramadan in 1920, religious Sunnis and Shi'as broke with tradition and held combined services in major mosques where "patriotic speeches were made and poems recited appealing to Arab nationalism, honor, and Islam." [9] This general atmosphere was conveyed through popular media, with a special role played by the poets of the time, who used their art to consciously subordinate sectarian interests to a greater national identity.[10] While this period of unprecedented cooperation did not continue once the British violently repressed the revolt, it demonstrated "that it was not preordained that Iraq should be plagued by ethnic and confessional cleavages, and that Sunnis and Shi'is should remain mutually hostile and unable to cooperate in nation building."[11] However, the events of 1920, which became firmly cemented in the national mythology, did not prevent the later reemergence of powerful and disruptive sectarian-driven conflicts.

The changes in sectarian relations during Saddam Hussein's systematic repression of all those who opposed his three-decade rule undeniably shaped the domestic circumstances existing at the time of the 2003 US invasion. The 1991 uprising in many ways represents the core issues surrounding Iraqi sectarianism during the last decades of the Ba'ath regime.[12] In March of 1991, following the First Gulf War, Iraqi soldiers retreating from the front began revolting against the regime with the support of civilians in the South. The participants were mainly Shi'a, but their grievances were generally against the injustices and hardship imposed by the regime, and contrary to widespread Sunni belief, did not reflect a collective desire to unify with Iran.[13] However, in the context of sectarian relations, the events of 1991 were important not so much for the reality of what occurred as for the discourse and beliefs surrounding them. The revolt was constructed as a Shi'a uprising, and embraced as a "chosen trauma and chosen glory" by Iraqi Shi'as who were proud of the sacrifices they made fighting Saddam's tyranny. By contrast, the failure of Sunnis to participate in the movement came to symbolize Sunni support for the regime.[14] Viewed from the other side of the sectarian divide, the revolt was nothing more than an Iran-sponsored uprising seeking to undermine national identity.[15] For many Shi'as, this was just

another example of the mutual Sunni-state support that existed even though Iraq was not technically a Sunni state.[16]

Saddam's Ba'ath regime oppressed all possible sources of opposition, regardless of sect or ethnicity, creating a general atmosphere of fear.[17] While this oppression was especially pervasive in Shi'a communities, which were systematically marginalized and excluded, it was not a uniquely Shi'a experience. Sectarian tension permeated discourse, but was not reflected in physical violence, nor did it threaten the integrity of Iraqi national identity.[18] Sectarian identities did not take precedence over other collective identifiers until the US invasion and the implementation of accompanying policies. Under the US occupation, Iraq was 'primordialized' such that sectarian identity was viewed as *the* source of communal division and fragmentation, manifest at both national and local scales.[19]

SECTARIANISM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Changes in sectarian relations at the national level were most obviously influenced by the US presence; policy as dictated by the US-created Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) enshrined sectarianism into the political structure through the formation of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), the inclusion/exclusion of explicitly sectarian groups in formal political processes, and the strategic military alliances made by the US Army. Many of these policies were concocted jointly by US officials and select Iraqi exiles – many of whom had not lived in the country for decades – with specific formula for power-sharing in mind.[20] The trends that emerged post-invasion at the national level are grounded in large part within this political framework and often trickled down to smaller scales, shaping inter-sectarian relations at a local level.

The IGC was created in July of 2003 and was composed of representatives of the main Iraqi demographic groups: the Sunnis, Shi'as, Kurds, Turkmen, and Christians. Choosing representatives based on their sect and/or ethnicity was key to introducing an "overt sectarianism" into the highest echelons of the political structure.[21] The number of spots allotted to each faction was assigned rather arbitrarily, and influenced greatly by the Group of Seven – the main opposition parties who had opposed Saddam's rule from abroad – who sought to protect their power by working to exclude others from representation on

the council.[22] This in itself marks an important step towards a dangerous sectarian calculus. By ignoring "the subtle distinction between the outcome of a popular vote and formal, external sectarian engineering of Iraq's first post-war governing structure," Iraqi and American politicians increased the likelihood of armed sectarian conflict.[23] As Andreas Wimmer's 2009 study on the connection between ethnicity[24] and armed conflict reveals, the probability of ethnically-driven armed conflict increases as political decision-making bodies become more ethnically fragmented and exclusionary.[25] Once sectarian interests become entrenched in the political structure, as they did in the case of the formation of the IGC, politicians are reduced to using the discourse of sectarianism to garner support.[26]

The same sectarian mentality that characterized the IGC gained further traction once the sphere of Iraqi political autonomy expanded to include national elections. At the most basic level, the US approach to Iraqi electoral politics assumed that Sunnis were generally Ba'ath sympathizers and Shi'a identified closely with Shi'a Islamist parties.[27] While the votes for national and municipal representatives were cast in relatively free elections, the options facing voters left almost no space for the selection of non-sectarian representatives, and unsurprisingly resulted in voting along sectarian lines.[28] The widespread feeling of Sunni political marginalization, exacerbated by the sectarian dimension of de-Ba'athification, gave credence to the perception that the US-backed political structure intentionally excluded Sunnis. Iran's financial involvement in funding the campaigns of Shi'a candidates further alienated Sunnis from the formal political process.[29] Combined, these factors fueled the boycott of the 2005 elections by many Sunni parties, which resulted in the political domination of the same – mainly Shi'a and Kurdish – political parties that had been favored by the Americans from the start.[30] Ultimately, the success of sectarian political parties at exploiting communal divisions in order to gain political power further cemented the belief that Iraqis were best represented by politicians of their own sect, and that power-sharing in the upper echelons of government was necessarily rigid.[31]

Sectarianism, once engrained in the national political processes, would have created tension even during peacetime; the added military dimension, which likewise reflected sectarian divisions, exacerbated violent inter-sect conflict. The Iraqi army was disbanded following the 2003 US invasion and reconstituted under the direction of US officials with

special attention paid to its ethnic and sectarian composition.[32] The Iraqi police force was composed mainly of former members of the SCIRI militia who had been trained in Iran and the army was – at least according to popular Sunni belief – almost entirely Shi'a.[33] The use of Shi'a and Kurdish troops during the siege of Fallujah did nothing to counteract this picture.[34] Once news spread of Shi'a-dominated forces carrying out attacks against Sunni insurgent groups, the concept of the US-trained and funded Shi'a army quickly entered the mainstream consciousness and filtered down into the propaganda of Sunni militias. One Sunni militant anthem contained the verse: "We taught America's army a lesson/We defeated the Mahdi Army, every filthy Shi'a."[35] Rhetoric such as this clearly demonstrates the perceived connection between the US armed forces and Shi'a militias such as the Mahdi Army. A captain in the Iraqi National Police, alias Captain Emad, described a routine firefight between his unit and a Sunni insurgent group. He noted that during the fighting the insurgents would shout out insults at the soldiers, calling them "Shiite dogs."[36] While these insults were clearly designed to provoke the Iraqi armed forces, they reveal the extent to which a sectarian mentality pervaded perceptions of even the supposedly neutral institution of the military, lending credibility to allegations that sectarian police and army units "favor their kinsmen and intimidate everyone else."[37]

The actions taken by IGC members and Iraqi politicians fit cleanly within an overarching national discourse that took place both in national media and behind the closed doors of top officials and militia leaders. The sectarian mentality that resulted from the dynamics of top-level power brokers was in large part enabled by the structures and discourses created by US officials. While it would be completely wrong to say that the US policymakers somehow created sectarianism, they did facilitate – inadvertently or not – an overt sectarianism that had direct consequences for the locally-lived experiences of Iraqis.

SECTARIANISM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

For many Iraqis watching with great trepidation the events unfolding on the national stage, sectarian relations seemed like something that would only affect the politically-involved, leaving everyone else to go about the business of trying to survive in a country torn apart by multiple wars and a decade of harsh sanctions. But just like the neoliberal

economic programs forced on Iraq by US officials, the 'trickle-down' effect meant that what happened to those at the top of the power hierarchy would shape the lives of those at the bottom. On a very local level, "when members of a community feel their identity is threatened they will increasingly act in accordance with that identity's points of reference rather than their own individualistic ones or wider forms of identification - such as national identity."[38] This was true for ordinary Iraqis like Maysoon Mahdi, a mother of three and former government worker fired by the Ba'ath regime for political dissidence, who described her family's position before the wave of sectarian violence in 2007-2008:

> We were not involved in political parties or militias or anything like that, so we thought the violence would not touch us...As long as we weren't involved in these political troubles, we figured we could remain safe.[39]

Unfortunately, not even those who identified as apolitical were exempt from the hardship and tragedy that accompanied the division of communities along sectarian lines. Before the US invasion, Iraq was characterized by a high degree of mixed-sect families and communities.[40] This is not to say that sectarian tensions did not exist before – the previously-described history demonstrates the ebb and flow of the relevance of sectarian identity to communal relations – but the unprecedented violence beginning three years after the initial US invasion broke community bonds and destroyed for many Iraqis the possibility of living cohesively in mixed areas. This can be seen in the experiences of many Iraqis; their compelling testimonies speak to several important causes and repercussions of sectarianism, among them the role of anti-US foreign fighters in shaping sectarian ideology, the leadership of sectarian militias in local governance and the discourse of victimization used by both Sunnis and Shi'as. These three factors in turn have significant localized impacts on migration patterns, employment opportunities, as well as the social dynamics between neighbors and within families.

When the US invasion transitioned into a long-term occupation, Iraq was held up by many Islamist radicals as another example of Western attacks on the Muslim umma.[41] Answering the call for global jihad, many volunteers entered Iraq to fight against the American-led occupying forces.[42] These volunteer fighters were almost all Sunni and they imbued the conflict with their Salafi rhetoric, splitting apart local non-sectarian resistance to

the occupation and replacing it with an exclusivist Sunni movement. Luay Ali Hussein, a blacksmith and former resistance fighter from Fallujah, described the transformation of the resistance movement once foreign volunteers arrived and began to take leadership positions:

> It was these foreign fighters who began to start with the sectarianism. I never had any troubles being a Shi'ite in Fallujah during all my years there. Neither did other Shi'ites. And in the early days of the resistance Iraqi Shi'ites and Sunnis were working together just fine. But as the foreigners began to take over, Shi'ites like me were pushed to the side. We began to feel ignored and eventually threatened by these outsiders.[43]

While all the actors involved were participating in the resistance of their own volition, US policy created the framework within which this sort of radical Islamist, anti-US rhetoric resonated with Sunnis in a way that expressly excluded Shi'as.[44]

On a community level, both Sunni and Shi'a militias exercised a high degree of control over local governance. This was due in large part to the unmet need for security following the invasion, and the aforementioned sectarian politics associated with the Iraqi armed forces.[45] Shi'a militias such as the Mahdi Army and Badr Brigade, in addition to Sunni militias, stepped in to govern communities in the absence of state structures.[46] Both Sunni and Shi'a militias actively – and often violently – discouraged inter-sect interactions and encouraged families of the non-dominant sect to leave, or risk being killed. Social dynamics under these conditions deteriorated to the point where even daily activities became dangerous.[47] Rasim Hassan Haikel, a Shi'a employed by the government to distribute food rations, continued to collect rations for the Sunni families who were forced to flee his mainly Shi'a neighborhood due to violence. He would then travel at great personal risk to their Sunni neighborhoods to give them their rations. When the Mahdi Army demanded he stop aiding his former neighbors because they were Sunni, he became very upset and questioned, "How could [the Mahdi Army] do that to people who have lived for centuries alongside my family?"[48] Haikel's experience reveals the aggressive position militias took against inter-sect relations, breaking apart the bonds that had previously allowed for a high level of community cohesion.

Accompanying the armed sectarian conflict that systematically destroyed communities, especially during the civil war from 2006-2007, was a discourse of

victimization whereby Sunni and Shi'a groups cast themselves in the role of the historically oppressed. This rhetoric sought to legitimize the violence perpetrated by sectarian militias by categorizing it as self-defense.[49] This language of the victim made its way into various media including poetry. The Shi'a poet Na'il al-Mudhaffar wrote in a 2008 poem that "the pit of division was dug by the Americans/And I knew it and didn't fall [into it]/But he [the Sunni] dragged me in."[50] By naming the Sunnis as the instigators of sectarian violence, al-Mudhaffar absolves his fellow Shi'a of responsibility. The discourse of victimhood was spread by word of mouth, and shaped the way communities and individuals conceptualized the violence that surrounded them. It led many Iraqis to condone the sectarian violence as a necessary evil, without which members of their sect would be annihilated.[51]

As has been shown above, the sectarian framework established by US officials in conjunction with select Iraqis created the rationale for the influx of foreign Islamist fighters and the far-reaching control of local branches of sectarian militias, and provided a context within which the discourse of victimization had frame resonance. These three factors together created a volatile blend with very concrete repercussions for migration patterns, employment opportunities and family dynamics.

The sectarian violence perpetrated by sectarian militias against each other and against the occupation forces created a tangled web of bloodshed that made it almost impossible for Sunni families living in Shi'a areas and Shi'as living in Sunni areas to go about their daily activities without the constant fear of being attacked because of their religious identity.[52] Predictably, this led to the mass flight of families from neighborhoods where they belonged to the minority sect. Most of these internally displaced families sought refuge with family members living in a safer area, or fled Iraq altogether.[53] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 1.6 million Iraqis have been internally displaced since the 2003 invasion and 1.8 million Iraqis have emigrated.[54] While it is hard to know how many of these people left their homes due to sectarian violence, it is safe to assume that a great number left to escape the threat of persecution, because "one's sectarian identity became a death warrant in certain areas."[55] The narratives of ordinary Iraqis confirm this. Ibrahim Ismael Khalil, an air conditioner repairman living in Baghdad, recounts, "After the killing of my brothers, being a Sunni in a Shi'ite area,

neighbors who meant well started coming to me and advising me. They told me there was no point in staying. They told me I should move for the safety of my family."[56] Each story like Khalil's adds clarity to the popular understanding of why, how and where people migrated. Most of these experiences point to the specter of sectarian violence that hung over the heads of many families, leaving them no choice but to flee their homes, friends, social support networks and jobs behind.

Violent expressions of sectarianism not only destroyed the social fabric of many neighborhoods, but also had a negative impact on employment, both in preventing people from getting new jobs and in keeping their previous positions. The IGC, preoccupied with power dynamics, failed to address the issue of widespread unemployment.[57] This lack of government support, when coupled with sectarian violence targeting the middle class,[58] exacerbated the local 'brain drain.'[59] Many working-age Iraqis were forced into the informal sector of the economy after leaving their previous job to escape sectarian violence.[60]

Local dynamics, when replicated in many neighborhoods, communities and cities, become national trends, thus creating a system in which the local and national are inextricably intertwined. While US policy set the tone at the top of the national power hierarchy and enabled the resonance of sectarian framing, Iraqis acting on the local level likewise contributed to the national mythology and participated in the struggle over symbols of national identity.[61]

CONCLUSION: FUTURE PROSPECTS

The very local and personal traumas born of sectarian conflict will take time to heal, especially when sectarianism has been institutionalized at the highest levels of government. However, as US policy has been modified to reflect the changed political environment and Iraqis have slowly recovered much of their lost sovereignty, the prominence of sect as a universal identifier has somewhat receded. This is not just a national phenomenon; individual communities that had been hotbeds of sectarian violence are now taking concrete measures to reconcile neighbors and isolate those extremist fighters who instigated violence.[62] Turning once again to poetry to communicate popular sentiments, it seems

fitting to end with a line from a Sadrist[63] poem written in 2007/2008 and addressed to Iraqi Sunnis:

> Let us forget the past and live in peace; I bring with me candles and trays
> You and me, together we are the Tigris and the Euphrates
> We meet and exchange kisses.[64]

Notes

[1] The US was not the only country to be involved in military operations in Iraq, but the US was at the forefront of policy-making as the leader of the 'Coalition of the Willing'. Given this power structure, I will focus on US policies and decisions.

[2]Haddad, Fanar. *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* [in English]. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

[3]*Oxford English Dictionary.* 2 ed. 1989.

[4]Cole, Juan. "The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq." In, *The Middle East Journal* 54, no. 4 (2003). http://www.jstor.org/action/showArticleImage?image=images%2Fpages%2Fdtc.14.tif.gif&suffix=4329939.

[5]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 11.

[6]Metz, Helen Chapin, ed. *Iraq: A Country Study*, Gpo for the Library of Congress. Washington, 1988.

[7]Visser, Reidar. "Other People's Maps." In, *The Wilson Quarterly (1976-)* 31, no. 1 (2007): 64-68. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40262177.

[8]Metz, *Iraq: A Country Study*.

[9]Yaphe, Judith S. "Iraq: Are We There Yet?" In, *Current History* 107, no. 713 (2008): 403-09. http://search.proquest.com.proxy2.library.mcgill.ca/docview/200737202/fulltext?accountid=12339.

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[10]Davis, Eric. *Memories of State : Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* [in English]. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

[11]Ibid. 48.

[12]Haddad *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 47.

[13]Cleveland, William L., and Martin P. Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East* [in English]. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2009.

[14]Haddad *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 85.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid, p. 47.

[17]S Ramadani, R Zangana. "Resistance and Sectarianism in Iraq." In, *International Socialism* no. 109 (2006). http://www.isj.org.uk/index.php4?id=159&issue=109.

[18]Khafaji, Isam al. "A Few Days After: State and Society in a Post-Saddam Iraq." In *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*, edited by Toby Dodge; Steven Simon. Adelphi Papers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[19]Dodge, Toby. "Iraqi Transitions: From Regime Change to State Collapse." In, *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 4/5 (2005): 705-21. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993716.

[20]Alkadiri, Raad, Chris Toensing. "The Iraqi Governing Council's Sectarian Hue." In, *Middle East Report* (2003). http://www.mafhoum.com/press5/158S23.htm.

[21]Dodge, "Iraqi Transitions: From Regime Change to State Collapse," p. 715.

[22]Alkadiri,"The Iraqi Governing Council's Sectarian Hue."

[23]Ibid.

[24] While the study mainly focuses on the role of ethnicity in conflicts, many of the conclusions can also be applied to situations where sect plays an important role as a communal identifier.

[25]Wimmer, Andreas, Lars-Erik Cederman, Brian Min. "Ethnic Politics and Armed Conflict: A Configurational Analysis of a New Global Data Set." In, *American Sociological Review* 74, (2009): 316-37. http://asr.sagepub.com/content/74/2/316.full.pdf.

[26]Dodge, "Iraqi Transitions: From Regime Change to State Collapse," p. 719.

[27]Khafaji, "A Few Days After: State and Society in a Post-Saddam Iraq," p. 79.

[28]Marr, Phebe. "One Iraq or Many: What Has Happened to Iraqi Identity." In *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present,* edited by Achim Rohde Amatzia Baram, Ronen Zeidel New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2010. http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doifinder/10.1057/9780230115491.

[29]Yaphe, "Iraq: Are We There Yet?"

[30]These are the Iraqi National Congress, SCIRI, the Shiite al-Dawa Party, the Iraqi National Accord headed by Iyad Allawi, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Alkadiri and Toensing, 2003). And Yaphe, "Iraq: Are We There Yet?"

[31] In practice, this somewhat resembled Lebanon's political structure, in that certain communal groups claimed 'ownership' over certain positions. In Iraq, a Shi'ite was prime minister, a Kurd was president, a Sunni was the speaker of the National Assembly, and the deputies to these positions were chosen from one of the other blocs and Yaphe, "Iraq: Are We There Yet?"

[32]Ramadani, "Resistance and Sectarianism in Iraq."

[33]Yaphe, "Iraq: Are We There Yet?"

[34]Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

[35]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 193.

[36]Kukis, Mark, ed. *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

[37]Yaphe, "Iraq: Are We There Yet?"

[38]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 199.

[39]Kukis, *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009,* p. 149.

[40]Marr, "One Iraq or Many: What Has Happened to Iraqi Identity," p. 33.

[41]Cole, "The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq," p. 565.

[42]Barak, Oren. "Dilemmas of Security in Iraq." In, *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007): 455-75. doi:10.1177/0967010607084996, http://sdi.sagepub.com/content/38/4/455.abstract.

[43]Kukis, *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009,* p. 69.

[44]Barak, "Dilemmas of Security in Iraq," p. 465.

[45]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 193.

[46]Cole, "The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq," p. 565.

[47]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 185.

[48] Kukis, *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009,* p. 93.

[49]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 197.

[50]Ibid, p. 201.

[51]Ibid, p. 198.

[52]Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* p. 298.

[53]Ibid, p. 308.

[54]Sassoon, Joseph. "Management of Iraq's Economy Pre and Post the 2003 War: An Assessment." In *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present,* edited by Achim Rohde Amatzia Baram, Ronen Zeidel New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doifinder/10.1057/9780230115491.

[55]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 193.

[56]Kukis, *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009,* p. 100.

[57]Alkadiri,"The Iraqi Governing Council's Sectarian Hue."

[58]Riverbend. *Baghdad Burning*. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2005.

———. "Summer of Goodbyes...": Blogspot, 2006. http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com/.

[59] In the Iraqi context, 'brain drain' refers to the skills shortage that exists because of high rates of emigration. This is especially detrimental when it involves highly educated professionals such as doctors and engineers (Sassoon, 2010: 201) and Sassoon, "Management of Iraq's Economy Pre and Post the 2003 War: An Assessment," p. 201.

[60]Ibid, p. 203 and Kukis, *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009,* p. 154.

[61]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 3.

[62]Ibid, p. 203.

[63] This refers to the poet's support of Shi'a cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

[64]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity,* p. 204.

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Negotiating Faith and Government in the Post-Soviet Islamic Republics: Azerbaijan as a Case Study

Hannah O'Rear

It is widely believed that the fall of the Soviet Union was one of the most momentous events of the 20th century, one that changed world politics irrevocably, most significantly for the newly independent republics which emerged from decades of repressive rule. An important practice of the former Soviet Union was its widespread imposition of cultural and religious policies on local populations in efforts to limit the likelihood of uprising and insubordination as well as to maintain the integrity of the Union. In the Central Asian Islamic Republics, this included specifically religious policies that sought to undermine the influence of religious institutions and gradually secularize the population as a method of promoting greater coherence with the rest of the non-Muslim Soviet Union, as well as weakening the political oppositional power of religious institutions.[1] Given this legacy of Soviet repression of Islam, it bears asking how these societies have conceived of Islam since the fall of the Soviet Union, particularly as it pertains to their systems of government and the place of religion in society. The present paper will consider this issue by focusing upon the discrepancies in success enjoyed by different Islamic social movements in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, using Social Movement Theory to analyze how Soviet religious policies have affected particular movements' abilities to frame their messages to broader Azerbaijani society. It will be demonstrated that Soviet secularization efforts effectively privatized religion and secularized the public political sphere and in so doing, contributed to the success of subsequent Wahhabist movements. Soviet attempts at secularization also contributed significantly to the failure of the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA) to bring

political Islam back into Azerbaijani politics. The paper will conclude with a summary of the ruling government's responses to these movements, in an effort to further elucidate the relationship between the post-Soviet Azerbaijani political climate and concurrently developing Islamic social movements.

SOVIET RELIGIOUS POLICIES IN AZERBAIJAN

The effects of Soviet rule on state-religious institution relations since 1991 cannot be understood without further examination of some of the Soviet Union's most crucial policies with respect to religious institutions in Azerbaijan. Many authors have noted that early Soviet religious policies there tended to regard Islam as a natural ally of Soviet anti-Western aims[2] and that "in return for the acceptance of, and cooperation with, Soviet power, Azerbaijanis were given the recognition of national identity and full rights to their own language and culture, a notion that tacitly included Islam as one of its components."[3] In this early stage of Soviet rule there was an acceptance of the idea that Islam comprised one of the foundational elements of Azerbaijani identity, and that this fact was not necessarily out of line with Soviet interests despite the significant religious and ideological differences between atheist Moscow and the Muslim local populations of Azerbaijan. Moreover during this period, Soviet religious policies were generally limited to what could be characterized as part of general modernization efforts rather than targeted religious repression, and included the "expropriation of *awqaf* (religious endowments)" as well as the dismantling of Islamic institutions that directly interfered with a completely secular government such as religious schools and courts.[4]

It was not until Stalin began to consolidate power towards the end of the 1920s that Islamic institutions within Central Asia came under heavy fire.[5] One of the most significant policies of this era was the closing down of mosques across all Muslim republics under Soviet control. A number of figures demonstrate the radical effects of this policy, with one source noting that "in 1917, there were some 20,000 mosques in Central Asia, but by 1929, fewer than 4,000 were functioning, and by 1935 there were only 60 registered mosques in Uzbekistan."[6] Other sources note that in Azerbaijan, there were 1,400 mosques in 1928 but by 1933 the number had been reduced to 17.[7] This shows a significant change in Soviet

policy, from a stance that had once regarded Islam and Islamic institutions as allies in opposing Western and American influence in the region, to one that regarded Islam as a scourge to be eliminated. Indeed, as Anar Valiyev notes:

> …the majority of the clergy was arrested, killed, or isolated from the community. At best, they were turned into agents of the Soviet system... there were, however, those who continued to act as independent representatives of Islam in Azerbaijan and maintained the continuity of piety and tradition.[8]

Tadeusz Swietochowski further notes that "Islamic clerics...were rendered harmless either by terrorization or by acquiring a reputation as police informers. This circumstance kept the faithful from attending prayers in the few mosques that had not been closed."[9] As such, it becomes apparent that Soviet repression was not limited to simply closing down mosques and limiting access to places of worship, but that it also included widespread intimidation and violence. Yet despite this, Islam retained a significant place in the life of Azerbaijanis, and even became more important as a result of a religious awakening that swept Azerbaijan in the late 1970s. This religious awakening was characterized by a growth in clandestine prayer houses and led to the reopening of hundreds of mosques as well as an increase in religiosity in primarily Shi'ite areas.[10] For all the efforts of Soviet rulers, many Azerbaijanis remained connected to their Islamic identity and continued to practice their religion in private, and later in public as well. Given that Soviet rule in Azerbaijan meant a significant weakening of the influence - political and otherwise - of the clergy and Islamic institutions, and the fact that the country remains majority-Muslim, the question is, to what extent has Islam played a role in post-Soviet Azerbaijani politics despite the significant repression it endured under the control of the Soviet Union? Furthermore, what factors can explain the extent and form of political Islam in Azerbaijan?

ISLAM IN POST-SOVIET AZERBAIJAN

Due to the prevalence of underground Islamic communities and a resurgence of mosque-building during *perestroika* (Russian term for Soviet 'restructuring' as a result of decisions made in Moscow), the re-emergence of Islamic movements became even more pronounced after the collapse of the USSR and Azerbaijan's independence. As Raoul

Motika notes, "the phenomenon of a 'religious renaissance' taking place in parallel with a 'national rebirth' or 'birth' is a fact which cannot be ignored."[11] For many Azerbaijani Muslims who had been practicing underground during Soviet rule, independence brought in its wake a newfound freedom to openly and publicly practice Islam. After independence, there was an explosion in the building of foreign-funded mosques and *madrasas,* as well as the emergence of a functioning Islamic university.[12] Turkey and Iran both saw an independent Azerbaijan as an opportunity to extend their influence in the region, something that had been largely kept at bay by the Soviet Union during the preceding decades. As a result, both countries spent a great deal of money and human resources on rebuilding Islamic institutions favorable to their interests, including efforts aimed at fostering a rise in Pan-Turkic ideology by Turkey during the 1990s, and Iranian efforts to promote its own flavor of Shi'ism.[13] This rivalry both supported the revival of Islam in Azerbaijan and influenced the ideologies of various Islamist groups that gained support as a result. The religious revival within Azerbaijan can further be explained by the high degree of social and political upheaval experienced as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as by the legacy of secular authoritarianism.[14] These conditions also hold true for the other former Soviet Islamic Republics, and as such, Azerbaijan provides a useful case study for exploring the expansion of Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Islamic revivalism in Azerbaijan has taken a number of observable forms, including but not limited to, a significant rise in women beginning to wear the *hijab*, increased attendance and political influence of the Juma and Abu Bakr mosques in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, and the rise of Islamist groups such as the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan.[15] These various manifestations of Islamic religiosity - defined by Farideh Heyat as "using religion as an idiom, manifested in frequent references to Allah and retaining strong religious sentiments" as opposed to religiousness, which alternatively means "retaining religious knowledge"[16] - have had varying degrees of influence in Azerbaijani society and politics. The distinction between 'religiosity' and 'religiousness' is important in understanding the character of Islamic revivalism in Azerbaijan. As mentioned earlier, Soviet religious policies in Azerbaijan had a significant effect on religious institutions in the

country and have contributed considerably since the fall of the Soviet Union to the rise in religiosity, but not religiousness. Heyat notes that the official state atheism of the Soviet Union, partly manifested by its closing of religious schools, had the effect of driving Islam into the private sphere where it was vulnerable to the influence of folk religion and reinterpretation. This is to be contrasted with Islam in the public sphere, where religious interpretation was fairly stable due to established institutions and respected religious scholars.[17] Heyat further underlines this trend with the specific result of Azerbaijani religious leaders being isolated from Shi'a authority in Iraq and Iran, leading to a blending of beliefs and practices from different communities and a blurring of the lines between Shi'ite and Sunni in Azerbaijan during Soviet rule. As such, Islamic revivalism within the context of Azerbaijan was not driven by theological institutions or even particularly by a renewed interest in the classical Islamic sciences; rather it was characterized by a revival of public and popular religious practice in conjunction with social goals.[18] In other words, Soviet policies and the decline of entrenched Soviet religious institutions witnessed a revival of religiosity as opposed to a revival of religiousness.

The relative influence of various aspects of religious revivalism in Azerbaijan has been affected by the degree to which a particular movement can tailor its purpose to the rise in popular religiosity. In terms of Social Movement Theory, this can be understood as a movement's ability to engage in 'cultural framing'. By this is meant a movement's "ideas and how [it] adapt[s] those ideas to [its] local context," along with "whether Islamist activists strategically use local networks as mechanisms through which to convey their message, give it legitimacy, and draw in a target population."[19] In her analysis of the varying degrees of success of three Islamist movements in Central Asia and the Caucasus (including the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan), where success is defined as the ability to attract followers and sustain the movement despite repression, Kathleen Collins makes a compelling case for the modern form of Social Movement Theory as an analytical paradigm for Islamist politics in the region. She states that "culturalist approaches have been widely discredited as essentialist in their view of Islam"[20] and are focused on cultural grievances that are specific to the Arab world such as "the Crusades, twentieth century colonization of Muslim lands [and] the establishment of Israel." However, these issues do not apply in any

meaningful way to non-Arab Central Asians or Azerbaijanis.[21] She then addresses the shortcomings of a purely political or political economy-based approach, stating that "there is no clear demonstrated relationship between state repression and mobilization" and that "the political economy/state-centric approaches do not explain why people seeking to challenge the state join particular Islamist movements or Islamist movements instead of democratic ones. Collins poses the following question: "if some movements share a similar political-economic context, why are some more successful than others?"[22] Her article is particularly perceptive in discussing the varying levels of influence of Islamic revivalist movements in Azerbaijan since it highlights the critical importance of cultural framing as a determinant of success when all other factors are controlled for. Collins argues that the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA) failed to attract a significant following and survive state repression because it failed to properly engage in cultural framing, instead emphasizing its exclusively Shi'a identification, praising the Islamic Republic of Iran as a model of the Islamic state and focusing narrowly on pro-Iranian policies[23] and pro-Iranian regions such as Lenkoran and Nardaran.[24] Public opinion polls have demonstrated that all of these stances are diametrically opposed to the desires of general Azerbaijani society, which has a low sectarian distinction between Shi'ite and Sunni, prefers a secular state system and distrusts Iran due to Iran's support of Armenia in the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.[25] These stances also betray an inability to engage in cultural framing due to the prevalence of popular religiosity versus religiousness. The IPA focused on a historically and theologically based religiousness, expressed through its aim of establishing an institutionalized Islamic government. The IPA failed to address popular religiosity as well as the public's preference for a revival in public religious expression and identification, rather than a collectively preferred return to more traditional and institution-based Islam.

Underscoring this explanation for the failure of the IPA is the relative success of Wahhabist/Salafist movements in Azerbaijan, as demonstrated by the dramatic increase in veiling and attendance at the Juma and Abu Bakr mosques in the capital city.[26] These movements have placed emphasis on "the need for individuals to start with cleansing and purifying their inner selves and gaining piety before they can effect social change and deal with inequalities"[27] and have eschewed political influence in the style of a modern political

party as well as the overthrow of the secular state in favor of an Islamic one.[28] The Abu Bakr mosque in Baku has been noted for attracting as many as 10,000 men to its weekly Friday prayer services,[29] which is representative both of growing Wahhabist influence in the capital city as well as in the predominately Sunni northern provinces.[30] Some have attributed the popularity of Wahhabist ideology to widespread poverty and lack of democratic reform,[31] and while these are understandable factors in the growth of any oppositional movement in a semi-autocratic system, they do not explain why Wahhabism has succeeded where the IPA has failed (as mentioned above). Returning to Social Movement Theory and cultural framing as an analytical paradigm can help illuminate why Wahhabism in particular has become increasingly popular in Azerbaijan. As has been noted earlier in this paper, Soviet state atheism significantly contributed to the privatization of religion in Azerbaijan, driving Islam in Azerbaijan from the public and institutional sphere to underground prayer houses and personal religious expression. Furthermore, entrenched state secularism for the better part of a century has resulted in the view among both the government and the main opposition forces that the state should be a "secular, liberal, democratic republic where citizenship is the basis for membership in the national community."[32] These two factors taken together show that, in general, Azerbaijani society values 1) personal piety and a revival of religiosity as preferable to a strongly institutionalized and powerful religious establishment and 2) a secular nation-state that neither controls religious institutions nor is controlled by them. Thus it can be seen that the lingering influence of the period of Soviet control coupled with the social and political upheavals of the collapse of the Soviet Union have significantly contributed to the success of Wahhabist movements in Azerbaijan which, despite their institutionalized role in the Saudi state, tend to emphasize personal piety and religiosity over the explicitly political aims of other strains of Islamist thought in Azerbaijan.

Wahhabist movements have also been aided by the blurring of sectarian lines between Sunni and Shi'ites. While Shi'ites make up the majority of Azeris, sectarian identification is low, aiding Sunni movements like Wahhabism in their ability to appeal to the average Azeri. This is largely due to Soviet policies that effectively put an end to the institutions that enforced sectarian identity (specifically, separate mosques), resulting in

private, underground prayer meetings that functioned outside of the norms of typical institutions that are divided according to sectarian boundaries. As such, most Azeris simply identify as Muslim and there is "very little Shia-Sunni tension, as well as a resistance to reifying sectarian differences."[33] This has given Wahhabist groups a comparative advantage over the IPA which very strongly identified with an exclusively Shi'ite identity[34] to the exclusion of other crucial segments of Azerbaijani society.

As a result, there has been a growth in the numbers of newly veiled women who see veiling as "a public expression of their new identity as socially responsible, pious individuals."[35] Heyat further notes that "this is no return to old traditions of veiling and confinement of women to home environment, but a voluntary act of self-assertion in adopting a form of dress that signals respectability (through an image of modesty and chastity) while leading an active public life."[36] As shown in other parts of Heyat's article, the large increase in veiling in Azerbaijan is a new innovation after generations under Soviet rule during which the practice was not observed.[37] It therefore takes on ideological significance as part of the larger trend towards personal religiosity and the Wahhabist movement's emphasis on personal piety.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Given the significant rise in Islamic social movements in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, the secular authoritarian government has implemented a number of strategies to deal with perceived religious threats to its power including co-optation, monitoring and registering of religious groups and arresting so-called radicals. The government has attempted to show its support for Muslims in the country by building its own mosques and encouraging official religious leaders, including Shaykh-ul-Islam Hajji Allahshukur Pashazade, the top cleric and a close ally of both President Heyder Aliyev and his son, who succeeded him.[38] Furthermore, the President swears fidelity to the constitution and the Koran while the Spiritual Department gives its approval to government actions as tools of legitimizing secular authoritarian rule in spite of rising religiosity. Secondly, while religious organizations are required to register with the state and are overseen by the Committee for Work with Religious Formations, their government-approved status can be revoked – as

was the case with the IPA – and unregistered organizations and their members are subject to being shut down or arrested.[39] [40] [41] As a result, both the Juma and Abu Bakr mosques in Baku have organized large demonstrations against government religious repression, monitoring, and interference.[42] A further consequence of these demonstrations has been government monitoring of the mosques and repression of their activities, despite the leadership asserting their moderate stance.[43] Ironically, this has somewhat politicized these groups since while they are generally a-political in terms of their ideology, they have been encouraged to demonstrate against government policies due to state repression. Additionally, there have been reports that individuals who appear more outwardly religious have been targeted by police for questioning and surveillance, with one man alleging that the police arrested him without reasonable cause numerous times, and forcibly shaved his beard.[44] The government has typically explained this behavior by stating that these are justifiable counter-terrorism measures, however a number of critics have asserted that this is merely an attempt to cover up human rights abuses.[45] Whether the surveillance, arrests or harassment of Wahabbis are in fact responses to a legitimate threat of terrorism or serious infractions on religious freedom is difficult to tell. However it remains fairly clear that while the Azerbaijani state has coopted some religious symbols and institutions, it remains openly hostile to both Wahhabist groups and individuals. Whether this will further politicize the popular Wahhabist movement within the country remains to be seen.

CONCLUSION

Soviet religious policies have had a significant effect on the influences and forms of Islamic social movements in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Because of the widespread closing of religious institutions and externally imposed state atheism, Islam was pushed underground, personalized and de-institutionalized. However, religious sentiments prevailed and reemerged during the end of the period of Soviet rule as an aspect of national and religious revivalism. While popular religious sentiment has grown to be a significant aspect of Azerbaijani society, decades of secularism has resulted in the vast majority of the population favoring secular government, even if they favor a more Islamic society. This, in

addition to low sectarian identification, has led to the decline and ultimate failure of the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan, and moreover underlines the party's failure to engage in adequate cultural framing. While the IPA largely failed, Wahhabist/Salafist movements, including institutions such as the Juma and Abu Bakr mosques in Baku, have been successful at attracting large numbers of attendees to prayers and demonstrations as well as encouraging a reemergence of veiling among educated, urban young women. The success of these movements and the relative failure of overtly political Islamist groups can largely be attributed to their ability to frame their message in a way that appeals to the largely personal Islamic religiosity in the country, particularly in the context of post-Soviet social and political uncertainty. The response of the secular authoritarian government, which largely consists of holdovers from the Soviet era, has been to co-opt, monitor and repress religious movements it finds challenging. This has led to more rather than less vocal political opposition to the practices of the government. As such, the biggest determinant in the relative successes or failures of Islamic social movements in Azerbaijan, as measured by their abilities to attract and maintain wide and large-scale support in society, is the ability of the movements to frame their message to the cultural legacies of Soviet religious policies.

Notes

[1]Tadeusz Swietochowski, "Azerbaijan: The Hidden Faces of Islam." *World Policy Journal* 19 (2002): 69-76.

[2]Tadeusz, "Azerbaijan: The Hidden Faces of Islam." and Anar Valiyev, "Azerbaijan: Islam in a Post-Soviet Republic," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9 (2005): 1-13.

[3] Tadeusz, 71. and Valiyev, "Azerbaijan: Islam in a Post-Soviet Republic," 4.

[4] Ibid.

[5]Ibid. and Ahmed Rashid, "The Fires of Faith in Central Asia," *World Policy Journal* 18 (2001): 45-55.

[6]Rashid, "The Fires of Faith in Central Asia," 46-47.

[7]Valiyev, 4. and Swietochowski, 71.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Swietochowski, 71.

[10]Ibid., 73.

[11]Raoul Motika, "Islam in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 46 (2001): 112.

[12] Ibid.

[13]Swietochowski, Tadeusz. "Azerbaijan: The Hidden Faces of Islam." pg. 73.

[14]Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." *World Politics* 60, no. 1 (2007): pg. 65.

[15] Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." pg. 92 and Heyat, Farideh. "New Veiling in Azerbaijan: Gender and Globalized Islam." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 4 (2008): 361-76.

[16]Heyat, Farideh. "New Veiling in Azerbaijan: Gender and Globalized Islam." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 4 (2008): pg. 363.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid pg. 362.

[19]Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." pg. 71.

[20] Ibid, pg. 69.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Cornell, Svante E. *Azerbaijan since Independence*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2011.

[24]Ibid, pg. 91.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." pg. 92; and, Heyat, Farideh. "New Veiling in Azerbaijan: Gender and Globalized Islam." pg. 365.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." pg. 92.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Antelava, Natalia. BBC News, "Azeri Poverty Fuels Rise of Islam." Last modified November 6, 2005. Accessed November 22, 2011. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4411524.stm.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Cornell, Svante E. *Azerbaijan since Independence*. pg. 164.

[33] Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." pg. 91.

[34] Ibid, pg. 90.

[35]Heyat, Farideh. "New Veiling in Azerbaijan: Gender and Globalized Islam." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 4 (2008): 365.

[36] Ibid, pg. 366.

[37]Swietochowski, Tadeusz. "Azerbaijan: The Hidden Faces of Islam." pg. 72.

[38]Valiyev, Anar. "Azerbaijan: Islam in a Post-Soviet Republic." pg. 5; and, Cornell, Svante E. *Azerbaijan since Independence*. pg. 165.

[39]Fuller, Liz. Radio Free Europe, "Azerbaijan: Does Wahhabism Pose a Threat?." Last modified August 7, 2005. Accessed November 22, 2011. http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1060479.html.

[40] Reuters, . AlertNet, "Azerbaijan sentences 7 Islamists from Banned Party." Last modified October 7, 2011. Accessed November 22, 2011.

[41]Collins, Kathleen. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus." pg. 92.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Shahin and Ismailova Abbasov, Khadija, "Watching for Wahhabis: The Religious Factor in Azerbaijans Parliamentary Election Campaign," eurasianet.org, http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav081805a.shtml.

[44]Shahla Sultanova, "Azerbaijan: Sunni Groups Viewed with Suspicion," *Caucasus Reporting Service*, April 8, 2011 2011.

[45]Ibid.

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