Habitus, Charisma, and Hysteresis in the United Arab Republic: A Bourdieu-inspired Interpretation

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A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts, Political Science

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Abstract

This thesis synthesizes different elements of Bourdieu's writings on practice, politics, and charisma to provide a new interpretation of Egypt and Syria's three-year merger into a unified state, the United Arab Republic (UAR). It begins with a theoretical chapter that explores ideas of the state as a symbolic actor, charisma as a process of representation, and the subjectivites of constituencies. The existing literature on the topic is then reviewed and critiqued to show the benefit of adopting a practice-theoretical frame as an alternative to those emphasizing logics of consequence or appropriateness. A "sobjectivist" case study then presents a fine-grained study of the UAR. It focuses specifically on the importance of Nasser's charismatic representations, the influence of habitus and history on social action, and the hysteresis effects in which habitus-informed actions prove dissonant with subjective predispositions. The result yields deeper general understandings of practice theory, charisma, and symbolic politics in international relations, and makes a more particular contribution to knowledge on the historical specificity of the UAR.

Ce mémoire synthétise différents éléments des écrits de Bourdieu sur la pratique, la politique et le charisme afin de fournir une nouvelle interprétation de la fusion de l'Égypte et la Syrie en un État unifié, la République Arabe Unie (RAU). Il s'ouvre sur un chapitre théorique qui explore l'idée de l'État comme acteur symbolique, du charisme comme processus de représentation et des dispositions subjectives des entités collectives. La littérature existant sur le sujet est ensuite passée en revue et critiquée afin de montrer l'avantage d'une théorie de la pratique sur celles mettant l'accent sur la « logique des conséquences » ou de « l'à propos ». Une étude de cas « sobjective » présente ensuite une étude détaillée de la RAU. Elle se concentre en particulier sur l'importance des représentations charismatiques de Nasser, l'influence de l'habitus et de l'histoire sur l'action sociale et sur les effets d'hystérèsis dans lesquels des actions formées par l'habitus contredisent des prédispositions subjectives. Le résultat apporte une compréhension plus approfondie de la théorie de la pratique, du charisme et de la politique symbolique en relations internationales, et contribue plus particulièrement au savoir sur le cas historique de la RAU.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Vincent Pouliot, whose feedback, supervision, and support on this project were as helpful as his own research has been inspirational. This research benefitted immensely from the comments of Khalid Medani and Fernando Nunez-Mietz on the original proposal, while Rex Brynen's examination of the final draft was invaluable. The political science department at McGill University, from non-academic staff to undergraduate student and everyone in between, has influenced this project in both tangible and intangible ways during my years at McGill. Specific thanks go to students, fellows, visitors and professors around the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies and the Interuniversity Consortium for Arab and Middle East Studies.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1958, the governments of Egypt and Syria came to an agreement to join in a single state to be called the United Arab Republic (UAR). While an era of decolonization saw more and more newly independent states established across the developing world, the UAR bucked the trend in voluntarily bringing two territorially non-contiguous states together as one as a single state. Without a doubt, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser was the new state's supreme leader and Egypt (the "Southern region") was *primus inter pares* vis a vis the Syrian "Northern region", but the historical record shows that unification was initially a Syrian prerogative pursued by a varied coalition of elites which represented a relatively broad consensus of Syrian society. It was also Syrians that broke up the UAR just three years later. In those three years, unification went from being the realization of a collective "dream" and a cause for nearly universal celebration to a source of unending grievance, a dream deferred and destitute, undone by rivalry, resentments, and recriminations before finally collapsing quickly and relatively quietly in a bloodless coup.

Pan-Arabism had a long history as a salient political ideology and rhetorical strategy in the region. As a result, there is a long historical trend of Arab states ostensibly working towards "unification" in various ways. Malik Mufti identified 17 such proposed unity schemes among Arab states.[1] As the only one of these unity scheme to come to meaningful fruition, the UAR is an anomaly of international politics and the region. How did two states, the fundamental units of International Relations, come to see their future

[1] Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Cornell University Press, 1996); Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton University Press, 2009); Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

as one? How did two different groups of elites come to view unification, necessarily on unequal footing, as desirable? This thesis investigates the UAR from beginning to end, looking to ground an illuminative explanation in both theory and empirics; draw on elements of political science, sociology, and historiography; and balance the Syrian and Egyptian experiences with the UAR. The result is rather eclectic, an interpretative and narrative account that draws primarily on Bourdieu's concepts of practice, habitus, and charisma to help explain the UAR from beginning to end using a notion of practice as a unifying social logic able to account for both the formation and dissolution of the UAR.

A Logic of Practice

This practice emphasis is necessary because most other treatments emphasize either a logic of consequence or appropriateness in accounting for actors' decisions and behaviors in the UAR.[2] Those assuming a logic of consequence view the course of events as "driven by expectations of consequences," and "imagine that human actors choose among alternatives by evaluating their likely consequences for personal or collective objectives, conscious that other actors are doing likewise."[3] The emphasis on costs and benefits assumes that most actors possess endogenous interests, total self-awareness (and awareness of the intentions of others), and a forward-thinking strategic rationale for behaviors. The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, attributes action not to the comparatively atomistic pursuit of parochial interests but to the social contexts of roles, rules, and norms and their impact in shaping identities, values, and interests. Actors act in accordance with expectations-- not of the anticipated benefits of a given course of action,

[2] For an in-depth explanation of the logics of consequence and appropriateness, see: James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders,"International Organization 52, no. 04 (1998): 943–969
[3] Ibid., 949

but of what is expected of *the actors* by peers, constituents, and accords with their understandings of themselves.

These logics, long dominant in the discipline of political science, each have trouble accounting for the entirety of the UAR. Both fall prey to a bias towards representational and reflexive knowledge, in that they assume actors are constantly pursuing pre-meditated objectives.[4] In the case of the UAR, there is little evidence to suggest that union went the way either party had intended at its start or that it even took form along the lines that its architects had originally intended. As a result, Mufti's explanation of union, predicated on a consequential logic, describes the union as "simply a mistake."[5] But while the outcome hardly satisfied any of its parties three years earlier, why had it been entered into at all, much less widely celebrated at the time? Similarly, those seeking to apply the logic of appropriateness encounter issues in attempting to explain the UAR. Norms and identities can produce contradictory expectations-- as acknowledged by Michael Barnett in his account of the event, which emphasizes that both parties felt pressured into unionism by the norms of "Arabism".[6] But this pressure came in part from performances and practices that were only more prominent and pervasive after unification and even secession.[7] If the norms of Arabism hadn't changed, why did union collapse after three years of only seeming to get stronger?

Both logics applied to the UAR result in the kind of intellectualist fallacy, in which the bias created by observation by a social scientist removed situationally,

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[4] Vincent Pouliot, "The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities," *International Organization* 62, no. 02 (2008): 261-262
[5] Mufti 1996, 96
[6] Barnett 1998, 130-131
[7] Ibid., 138-139; James P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002): 182-183

spatially, and temporally from the event, and imposes a logic foreign to that driving action in the minds of actors in the situation itself. Pouliot, paraphrasing Bourdieu, explains "A practice is logical up to the point where to be logical ceases to be practical."[8] Both Mufti and Barnett's takes embody the problem in describing the formation of the union as a "mistake" and "entrapment," respectively. In viewing the event in light of the outcome, they separate the contemporaneous from the context and are thus left explaining an ostensibly "positive" action in "negative" terms. Both Mufti's explanation of a Syrian strategy of "defensive unionism" and Barnett's of a cynically "performative Arabism" view the UAR as a mistake in light of knowledge of its outcome, rather than attempting to reconstruct how it appeared to decision-makers in practice. The question then is what logic drove the relevant actors during the event?

Practice theory allows for researchers to come at events outside of the logics of consequence and appropriateness. Whereas these logics and the bias towards representational knowledge lead researchers "to focus on what agents think about (reflexive and conscious knowledge) at the expense of what they think from (the background know-how that informs practice in an inarticulate fashion)," practice theory aims to uncover the non-reflective motivations of an actor and avoid the reductionism of ex post facto intellectualization that comes with attributing behavior to either utility maximization or compliance to norms.[9]

Practice "theory" is best conceived of as a collection of interrelated but different philosophies drawing on the works as diverse as Karl Marx, John Dewey, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Charles Taylor and

[8] Vincent Pouliot, "'Sobjectivism': Toward a Constructivist Methodology," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2007): 365
[9] Pouliot 2008, 260

more.[10] The various emphases of these thinkers on "practice" can be aggregated to a focus on "practices" as the prime unit of social analysis. Adler and Pouliot define practice as a "socially meaningful pattern of action which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world."[11] Reckwitz, like Adler and Pouliot, defines practice as "a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge."[12] With this ontological focus, practice theory invites theorists to "conceive of the social as bundles of ideas and matter that are linguistically, materially, and intersubjectively mediated in the form of practices. Culture, in other words, is not only in people's minds, discourse, and interactions; it is also in the very performance of practices."[13]

Practices, and by extension elements of culture, are guided by a logic of practicality, one distinct from the logics of appropriateness or consequence. For Bourdieu, this logic is informed by the interaction of an agent's habitus (an unarticulated disposition shaped by historical experience) and their field (the positioning of actors and distribution of capital and resources across the social environment in which they are operating) resulting in a "practical sense" in which action is guided by appearing

[10] Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, "International Practices: Introduction and Framework." in International Practices , eds. Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12; Andreas Reckwitz, "Toward a Theory of Social Practices A Development in Culturalist Theorizing," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 244
[11] Adler and Pouliot 2011, 6
[12] Reckwitz 2002, 249
[13] Adler and Pouliot 2011, 13

"*sensible*, that is, informed by common sense."[14] The question of the UAR then becomes one of not what did its constituents expect from unification (which leads to the conclusion of it being a 'mistake' or 'entrapment'), but how did unification seem (and then cease to seem) *sensible* to those who brought it into being? And what changed?

Habitus, Charisma, and Hysteresis in the United Arab Republic

One suitable interpretation is put forth in the case study in Chapter 4. Unification in the UAR came about as the result of a momentary congruence in practices between both Nasser, who had begun embracing a charismatic and performative role as a regional leader, and Syrian elites, who saw unification as making practical sense based on a history of competitive factionalism, a weak identification with the Syrian "state" identity, and ideological imperatives. This correspondence in habitus (a concept which will be discussed further in Chapter 2) also extends from Syrian elites to the Syrian masses, for whom Nasser's charismatic performances and the symbolic capital these practices afforded him enabled his performances to mobilize and constitute a new collectivity in the United Arab Republic.

Nasser's charisma is the critical variable in the formation of the UAR. Without Nasser's symbolic capital, accrued through the mid-1950s in his charismatic performances and rhetorical practices which spoke into existence a new Arab vision, unification would not have resonated so profoundly with the Syrian population or its elites. Understanding charisma (also discussed in Chapter 2) is then crucial to understanding the UAR. I put forth a Bourdieuian understanding in which charisma is not intrinsic but rather the result of a dialectical process of representation between leader and

[14] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford University Press, 1990). 69

led. Nasser spoke the UAR into existence as a recognized representative of the Arab leader, a position he fortified for himself through a number of performative strategies illustrated in the case study. Of crucial importance are the symbols of politics and the state. Again borrowing from Bourdieu, I put forth a notion of the state as not just a site of concentration of legitimate material violence but also *symbolic* violence. The state thus must instantiate itself not only in the material but in the ideal, creating for itself an ability to shape the subjective experiences of its constituents and instantiate itself as "natural".

Nasser's charismatic performances appealed directly to these mass subjectivities, which initially allowed the state of the UAR to come forth as an objective structure. But the same habitus that led Nasser to union led him to perceive a need to impose a number of conditions on the Syrian "region" of the UAR, such as the abolition of party politics, the implementation of an Egyptian-style agricultural reform law, and a concerted drive towards economic centralization and state bureaucratization. Where these policies seemed sensible and practical to Nasser based on a habitus informed by his historical experience, they were alienating and distinctly out of phase with the habitus of both Syrian elites and masses. The resultant phenomenon, which Bourdieu calls hysteresis (Chapter 2), is rooted in the mismatch of the historically-informed habitus and the changed or unexpected conditions of an unanticipated or unfamiliar present. The alienation of Syrians from the UAR on account of this hysteresis created a dissonant and even contradictory relationship between the objective and subjective experiences of the state. The stronger and more centralized the state became in the lives of Syrians, the more it seemed incapable of what Bourdieu calls the "production of belief"- the recognition of the state and its practices of constitution, aggregation, and mobilization as legitimate and

natural. The state of the UAR, in becoming more and more of a "state" in the objective, material sense with policies like centralization and agricultural reform, corresponded less and less with the subjective dispositions of Syrians as shaped by their collective habitus.

The second chapter develops many of the theoretical concepts I use in explaining the UAR, including habitus, hysteresis, and charisma. My usage of each of these concepts is heavily indebted to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, whose work is cited extensively throughout. In addition, I explore Bourdieu's notion of the state as a site of concentration for symbolic power, in addition to its more commonly cited material capabilities. The state's legitimacy and ability to constitute and mobilize groups depends on the concentration of these symbolic practices, which in their correspondence with the collective dispositions of their constituents allows the state to instantiate itself as a naturalized structure. The third chapter prefaces the case study, serving both as a methodological note and literature review. These are related, as the epistemic assumptions of Pouliot's "sobjectivist" methodology as laid out in this chapter also frame the analysis and critique of the extant work on the topic. Lastly, and most illustratively, an exhaustive case study of the UAR aims to uncover the meaningful influences on the habitus of Nasser and Syrian elites; how these, in conjunction with the conditions of the field, led to a practical sense which made unification seem sensible but also inspired the perceptions and behaviors that would spell its undoing; illustrate the importance and workings of charisma; and give a historical account capable of illustrating the combinations of these processes at work.

Chapter 2: State Power in Practice

In this chapter, I go further into various components of practice theory and the state. I draw extensively on the work of Bourdieu and interpretations of this deep and varied body of work by a number of IR theorists, as well as political scientist Lisa Wedeen's notion of "semiotic practices"[1] as a proposed research program for investigating culture in political science. Specifically, I look at how the state can be conceptualized and analyzed as practices of producing and reproducing cultural and symbolic capital and violence. Practices of state, I argue, constitute groups and collectivities (states and nationalities), allow for delegation and representation (leaders and governments) and institutionalization-- the "imposition and inculcation of the durable principles of vision and division that conform to its own structure" which, to Bourdieu, enable the state to serve as "the site, *par excellence*, of the concentration and exercise of symbolic power."[2] The state exists as a social structure whose specificity, in the words of Rebecca Adler-Nissen, is based on "not the accumulation of legitimate physical violence (as Weber would have it) but the monopolization of legitimate symbolic violence."[3]

Charisma may be for some leaders a strategic aspect of their approach to symbolic politics and mobilization. I address this notion through a dialectic between the Weberian and Bourdieusian understanding of the concept, aiming to deepen its utility as a concept from its rather underdeveloped use in much political science literature, and studies of Nasser in particular. I start by investigating Max Weber's notion of charismatic authority

[1] Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *The American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 713–28.
[2] Pierre Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," trans. Loic J. D. Wacquant and Samar Farage, *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 1994): 9
[3] Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "On a Field Trip with Bourdieu," *International Political Sociology* 5, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 327

and the recent excavations of these writings by Andreas Kalyvas.[4] Bringing in Bourdieu's sense of charisma as a reflection of social processes of representation and politics as a necessarily symbolic struggle helps Kalyvas bring nuance to the Weberian notion; a Bourdieuian conceptualization of charisma allows for an understanding in which a "charismatic" leader is not merely a delegate of a group but brings the group into existence through their challenge to the symbolic order.[5]

Charisma, it will be shown, can be crucial to understanding the politics of struggle over symbolic capital and power, with the state as the location of such struggles. Charisma also plays a role in the conception of practice as "performance", as pointed out by Friedrich Kratochwil in his chapter in Adler and Pouliot's text on international practices. Nasser's charisma, in the case of the UAR, can help to explain the attempt at a "charismatic breakthrough rather than an established practice"[6] of Egyptian and Syrian politics. In the words of an American diplomat at the time, "Nasser's name, which brought Syria and Egypt together, is still valid currency here."[7] In aspiring for a synthesis of different insights on performance, power, and charisma—this chapter aims to develop the base for a more theoretical understanding of the role charisma played in the UAR.

Implicated in borrowing the "performance"-based understanding of practice of Adler and Pouliot is the notion of recognition by an "audience". With sovereignty

[4] Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building* (University of Chicago Press, 1968); Andreas Kalyvas, "Charismatic Politics and the Symbolic Foundations of Power in Max Weber," *New German Critique*, no. 85 (January 1, 2002): 67–103; Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[5] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Mystery of the Ministry: From Particular Wills to the General Will," *Constellations* 11, no. 1 (2004): 37–43, Loïc J. D Wacquant and Pierre Bourdieu, *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of Ministry* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005). Williams 2013, 131-147
[6] Friedrich Kratochwil, "Making Sense of 'International Practices'" in *International Practices (Cambridge Studies in International Relations)* Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, eds., (Cambridge University Press, 2011) 40
[7] Diplomatic cable, "Reams to State, February 26, 1959" quoted in James P. Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002). 136

practices and the state, these audiences are both internal and external. Externally, competent sovereignty performances are recognized by other states and institutions and result in reciprocated "international" sovereignty practices such as recognition, diplomacy and varying degrees of non-interference. As or more important though are the "internal" audiences for whom sovereign practices are also performed: the population for whom the state as structure becomes the embodiment and arbiter of symbolic and cultural capital, capable of "the production of belief: the recognition of certain principles of vision and di-vision as legitimate."[8]

As part of the "practical" logic of social action, both elites and masses possess habitus. The "practical sense" helping to guide a given actor's social actions is pre-conditioned by this habitus, while the effectiveness of certain strategies of mobilization or constitution, particularly when dependent on utilizing cultural or symbolic referents, depends in part on the subjective, habitus-informed dispositions of the mass audience. The legitimacy of these appeals then stems from its resonance with its audience, its correspondence with habitus, or what Ted Hopf calls "the taken-for-granted ideas of publics about social life" or James Scott, borrowing from Aristotle, calls *mētis*.[9] Sovereignty in practice both confirms and conforms to this kind of practical knowledge, imposing itself through interventions, both explicit and implicit, on the social reality of its constituencies.

[8] Michael C Williams, "Culture: Elements toward an understanding of charisma in international relations." in Rebecca Adler-Nissen, ed., *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking Key Concepts in IR (The New International Relations)* (Routledge, 2013). 135

[9] Ted Hopf, "Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics," *International Organization* 67, no. 02 (2013): 317–54; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* (Yale University Press, 1999). Specifically see Chapter 9

This chapter develops a theoretical framework in which these concepts and notions influence and correlate with one another. The state is a site of the concentration of symbolic power, with the subjectivity-shaping power of symbols and representation crucial to the ability to influence the subjectivities of its constituents that is a crucial, if underappreciated aspect of the state's power. Charisma is one particular strategy of symbolic political performance, one that draws its effectiveness from the leader acting and speaking in representation of the group which, rather than having delegated power to the representative, sees itself constituted through charismatic representation. Mobilization and constitution (evidence of the state's symbolic capabilities), however, is dependent on a bond between leader and led in which outcomes depend on the correspondence between the proposed vision of the charismatic leader and the practical, lived experience of their constituency.

An Explanation of Habitus

Before going on, the notion of habitus is crucial to a Bourdieu-inspired theory of practice. It is the basis of a precedential logic impacting the dispositions of both collectives and individuals. Shaped by history, it is the historical experience through which opportunities and openings for social action are perceived and interpreted.[10] Without tending too far towards the language of scientification that Bourdieu would likely attribute to the intellectualist fallacy, habitus can, in a limited way, be thought of in conventional political science terminology as both a condition and influence on the independent variables underpinning social action.

[10] Bourdieu 1990, Chapter 3

All social actors possess a habitus. As Bourdieu explains in his idiosyncratic style, habitus are "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them."[11] Both leader and led possess habitus, with these perceptions shaped by an agent's embedded experience in institutions and collectives —"the habitus is what enables the institution to attain full realization: it is through the capacity for incorporation, which exploits the body's readiness to take seriously the performative magic of the social that king, the banker or the priest are hereditary monarchy, financial capitalism, or the Church made flesh"—and these are in constant dialectic with one another.[12] It is this historically-informed habitus of actors, in interaction with the field (the positions and distributions of capital), that underpins the social logic of "practical sense" that shapes the actors perceptions and actions within a given situation.

This in turn forces practice theory's focus towards the event as perceived by the "practitioner" rather than the analyst. Because of this shift, actions that may seem "irrational" or "inappropriate" under a logic of consequence/logic of appropriateness conception may have been perfectly "practical" given an actor's interpretation of a given situation "in practice". In contrast to conventional "rationality" or norms, habitus "ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness'

[11] Ibid., 53
[12] Ibid., 57

of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms."[13]

The habitus then is integral to understanding social action. How has an agent's history—background, experiences, interactions with institutional factors—shaped their sense of "practical" behavior in circumstances which themselves are perceived through the lens of habitus? In Chapter 4, it will be shown that Nasser's habitus had an immense role in shaping his approach to unification, and that the habitus of the Syrian partners, both elites and masses, shaped by alternate experiences and historical circumstances, led them to perceive the UAR differently.

Sovereign Practices, Symbolic Power, and the State as Field

Thinking of the state also brings to mind concepts like sovereignty, authority, control, and legitimacy. Perhaps the most popular understanding of the state is that proposed by Max Weber, who classified the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory." [14] [italics in original] But this understanding leaves out understanding of the state's significant symbolic dimensions.

At its core, the state is a structure resulting from practices. It is constituted through practices of boundary setting, inclusion and exclusion, and categorization.[15] Barkin and Cronin juxtapose territorial and population-centric bases for the constitution

[13] Ibid., 54
[14] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" in Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Routledge, 2009). 78
[15] See R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, "The Social Construction of State Sovereignty," in *State Sovereignty as Social Construct.* Thomas J Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, eds., (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

of the sovereign, with practices drawing on symbols of legitimation in different ways.[16] There exists a tension between what Barkin and Cronin call "states, defined in terms of territories over which authorities exercise legitimate control, and nations, defined in terms of 'communities of sentiment' that form the political basis upon which state authority rests."[17] Rather than embrace this dualism (which, to their credit, Barkin and Cronin identify as ideals) between state and nation, I view the two as complementary- when sovereign practice sets/defends/modifies borders, it also makes citizens and constitutes groups.

Further, in an attempt to separate sovereignty from an almost tautological relationship to legitimacy and authority, I argue it is through sovereignty that the state produces and reproduces authority and legitimacy, producing through practice its symbolic capital to adjudicate the boundaries and properties of both territory and groups. "One of the major powers of the state," writes Bourdieu, "is to produce and impose… categories of thought that we spontaneously apply to all things of the social world—including the state itself."[18] In this understanding, sovereignty is not dependent on recognition of a prior legitimacy but rather the result of a state, in performing sovereign practices, being able to substantiate its own existence as legitimate not through a reflexive recognition of "legitimate" qualities of the leadership but rather shaping the objective and subjective experiences in the lived lives of subjects and forming groups of shared identification, whether based on more territorial or national claims.

[16] J. Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin, "The State and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations," *International Organization* 48, no. 01 (1994): 107–30
[17] Ibid., 111
[18] Bourdieu 1994, 1

For this, the state is a site of concentration of not only material capital and physical violence but of symbolic and cultural capital and symbolic violence. For Bourdieu:

> The state is an X (to be determined) which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical and *symbolic* violence over a definite territory and over the totality of the corresponding population. If the state is able to exert symbolic violence, it is because it incarnates itself simultaneously in objectivity, in the form of specific organizational structures and mechanisms, and in subjectivity in the form of mental structures and categories of perception and thought. By realizing itself in social structures and in the mental structures adapted to them, the instituted institution makes us forget that it issues out of a long series of acts of *institution* (in the active sense) and hence has all the appearances of the *natural*.[19] [italics in original]

These "acts of institution" are part and parcel of the "objective" practices of sovereignty, those that institutionalize what Robert Latham calls "social sovereignty": "the structures of relations that set the terms for… the bodies of practices and agency in a given area of social life."[20] These are sovereign practices like codification of bodies of law, delineation of borders, and the arbitration of questions of citizenship and political representation. Practiced structures such as these enhance the state's position as a kind of "metafield", simultaneously repository and referee of the various usages of power and capital.[21]

But these bodies of practices function in concert with those symbolic aspects of the state which reflect the ability (or necessity) of the state to shape the subjectivities of its constituents. To capture this aspect of the state, it is necessary to investigate what Wedeen calls the "semiotic practices" of the state and its constituencies that constitute political culture. For her, "studying semiotic practices generates explanations of how political identifications are formed, instances of groupness crystallized, and alternative

[19] Ibid., 4
[20] Robert Latham, "Social Sovereignty," *Theory, Culture & Society* 17, no. 4 (August 1, 2000): 2-3
[21] Bourdieu 1989, 22; Bourdieu 1994, 4; Adler-Nissen 2011, 327-328

possibilities of belonging foreclosed."[22] Practices of sovereignty are, for internal audiences of their performance, often processes of these identifications and groupness. Borrowing from RBJ Walker, it can be helpful to think of practices of sovereignty "as a discourse that constantly works to express and resolve all contradictions arising from a specifically modern account of who 'we' are… as both principle and practice, as an expression of political identity in space and time."[23]

The state is the highest locus of this subjective, constitutive power. But this depends on *recognition* of that power, which is by no means given. Bourdieu explains in a passage worth quoting at length:

> We can examine under what conditions a symbolic power can become a *power of constitution*, by taking the term, with Dewey, both in its philosophical sense and in its political sense: that is a power to preserve or to transform the objective principles of union and separation…
>
> Symbolic power, whose form par excellence is the power to make groups (groups that are already established and have to be consecrated or groups that have yet to be constituted…) rests on two conditions. Firstly, as any form of performative discourse, symbolic power has to be based on the possession of symbolic capital. The power to impose upon other minds a vision, old or new, of social divisions depends on the social authority acquired in previous struggles. Symbolic capital is a credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition…
>
> Secondly, symbolic efficacy depends on the degree to which the vision proposed is founded in reality. Obviously the construction of groups cannot be a construction *ex nihilo*. It has all the more chance of succeeding the more it is founded in reality, that is, as I indicated, in the objective affinities between the agents who have to be brought together.[24]

In presenting a dual nature of symbolic power, Bourdieu sees the state wielding power along both objective and subjective lines. Successful sovereignty, resulting in the institution of the state as "natural" in the minds of its collective constitutents, depends on

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[22] Ibid., 726
[23] R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). 163-164
[24] Bourdieu 1989, 22-23

both a process of recognition (the intersubjective acknowledgement of symbolic capital) and correlation with the more "objective" reality of the lived experience of agents in their interactions with state structures.

Crucial as well to a Bourdieuian concept of social action and the state is the notion of fields. Fields are "structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analyzed independently of the characteristics of their occupants."[25] Michael Williams describes the Bourdieuian field through the analogy of a game, a social space constituted by rules, knowledge, and stakes, shaped by the positions of the "players" and determined by the distribution of capital both among them and "in play", so to speak.[26]

Bourdieu writes, "The construction of the state continues apace with the construction of a *field of power*, defined as the space in which the holders of capital (of different species) struggle *in particular* for power over the state, i.e., over the statist capital granting power over the different species of capital and their reproduction."[27] In the case of the UAR, a passage by James Jankowski channeling Sami Zubaida emphasizes the concept of the field as the site of symbolic contestation:

> Sami Zubaida has emphasized the centrality of the modern political field, that 'complex of political models, vocabularies, organizations and techniques which have established and animated what I call a *political field* of organization, mobilization, agitation and struggle,' for understanding Middle Eastern politics. It is the political field that defines the parameters within which political behavior takes place. Given the growing coercive power and expanding social functions of the state apparatus in the modern Middle East, the nation-state has become the main determinant of the political field: 'the *conception* of the nation becomes the field and the model in terms of which to think of… other commitments and loyalties.[28]

[25] Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (SAGE Publications, 1993). 72
[26] Williams 2007, 27
[27] Bourdieu 1994, 4-5
[28] Jankowski 2002, 180

Sovereignty practices then are practices overlapping and attuned to the fields of power and politics, practices of attaining and deploying the symbolic power of the state necessary in constitution and mobilization. But how do the practices of sovereignty, those (re)producing the symbolic capital of the state, produce what Wedeen calls "observable political effects"? [29] How and why do constituent audiences recognize and produce these meanings?

Charisma and Group Constitution

Building from a Bourdieuian conception of the state as a political unit defined by its monopoly on symbolic capital, Wedeen's notion of semiotic practice in shaping the observable effects of "culture" in group formation, I want now to turn my attention to a concept with a somewhat checkered past in political science research: charisma. Wedeen's research uses the study of semiotic practices primarily to explain compliance to the later Syrian regime of Bashir al-Assad, explicitly positioning her explanation against reductionist understandings of "charisma" and "legitimacy" often used by political scientists attempting to understand culture as a variable or causal mechanism.[30]

But charismatic politics are, at their heart, symbolic politics. As will be shown in Chapter Four, Nasser's charismatic performances are critical to bringing the UAR into being as the mobilization of the two populations of Syria and Egypt into a single state was made possible by his embrace of performances of pan-Arab rhetorical practices and performances. So to avoid the conceptual trap identified by Wedeen, I feel it necessary to

[29] Wedeen 2002, 714
[30] Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (University of Chicago Press, 1999). For the critique of "charisma" and "legitimacy" as usually used, see: Wedeen 2002, 724

develop a conceptualization of charisma capable of functioning differently than is usually found in political science analysis.

Many studies of Nasser emphasize his personal charisma as an integral aspect of his leadership, but many have difficulty operationalizing the concept.[31] Most of these borrow the conception of charisma from Weber, who put forth charisma as one of his typography of three forms of authority, alongside traditional and rational-legal. Both traditional and rational-legal authority, according to Weber, derives from an agent's position (extrinsic to the agent) in either traditional or bureaucratized institutions.[32] Charismatic authority, for Weber, is different in that it is *intrinsic* to the charismatic agents, "holders of special gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody."[33] This supposedly intrinsic nature of charisma, combined with Weber's reluctance to theorize a charismatic politics (he used the concept mainly to analyze religious and pre-Westphalian social orders) and his assertion that "charismatic domination is the very opposite of bureaucratic domination"[34], often lead political scientists to consider charisma an archaic and ultimately irrational form of authority.[35]

Michael C. Williams's chapter in a collection of essays on applying Bourdieu in International Relations provides a solid basis for a post-Weberian, Bourdieu-inspired

[31] For examples, see: R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics* (SUNY Press, 1971); Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (Yale University Press, 1985); Elie Podeh, *The Decline of Arab Unity: The Rise and Fall of the United Arab Republic* (Sussex Academic Press, 1999). Adeed Dawisha, "Requiem for Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Quarterly*, January 1, 2003, available at: http://www.meforum.org/518/requiem-for-arab-nationalism.
[32] Willner 1985, 4; Weber 1968, 18
[33] Weber 1968, 19
[34] Ibid., 20; Bureaucratic authority is often somewhat conflated with notions of 'rationality', see for example, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2004). 20-22
[35] Williams 2013, 137

notion of charisma. He bases his insights first on the readings of Weber's charismatic politics developed by political theorist Andreas Kalyvas.[36] Kalyvas re-emphasizes the symbolic aspects of domination and legitimacy in Weber's earlier writings, noting that:

> Politics is also a struggle among competing groups for the influence and control of culture, the radical transformation of subjective orientations and attitudes, the dissemination of a new worldview, the generation of values and meanings upon which legitimate political authority rests, and the (re-)founding of political authority and the juridical system. [Weber] labeled this charismatic dimension of politics with the awkward term of metanoia, that is, the power of charisma to 'effect a subjective or internal reorientation… It may then result in a radical alteration of the central attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the different problems of the world.'[37]

Kalyvas then seeks to "recover" a charismatic politics from Weber's writings, one that "following Pierre Bourdieu, [he] call[s] this struggle symbolic because it seeks to influence the perception of reality and 'to produce and impose the legitimate vision of the world.'"[38]

This conception of charisma fits neatly then with the role of symbolic politics in constitution and the collective meaning-making necessary for the state pointed to by Bourdieu and Wedeen. Ever conscious of the specifically symbolic nature of politics and the state, Williams writes that for Bourdieu:

> Charisma… highlights the symbolic dimensions that mark the specificity of politics from crudely materialist views. However, [Bourdieu] views most understandings of charisma (including Weber's) as having fallen prey to 'political fetishism'—to the belief that charismatic politics reflect the particular attributes and intrinsic, almost ineffable, attraction of an individual. Instead, he proposes charismatic politics actually reflect a social process of representation.[39]

Charisma then is not intrinsic to a leader, but rather reflects a relational and constitutive process in which leader and led both constitute one another in performance of symbolic or semiotic practices.

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[36] Kalyvas 2002; Kalyvas 2009
[37] Kalyvas 2002, 72-73
[38] Ibid., 76
[39] Williams 2013, 139

> Recognition is at the root of the capital and symbolic power that the mandated agent, as symbol exerting a symbolic action of reinforcement of the symbol (like the flag and all the emblems of the group), holds over the group of which he is the embodied substitute, the incarnation. This symbolic capital is thus inevitably concentrated in his person, which, in and through its recognized existence (as delegate, representative, president, minister, or secretary-general), tears the group from the non-existence of a mere aggregate.[40]

Returning then to the notion that through bodies embody institutions through habitus ("the priest… is the church made flesh"), a charismatic leader can become the state or the nation-- with all of its attendant symbolic power and capabilities of constitution-- made flesh, and speak into social existence a group where one had not previously existed.

For Bourdieu, the constitution of a new group through symbolic politics requires two correlative dimensions. The first is the "labor of enunciation", in which the principles of the existing symbolic order are challenged and replaced with new principles of categorization, action, and unification. The challenge to orthodox practice and classification both articulates a new order and represents the principles of cohesion binding the newly constituted group.[41] Such a heterodox challenge

> Exploits the possibility of changing the social world by changing the representation of this world which contributes to its reality or, more precisely, by counterposing a *paradoxical pre-vision*, a utopia, a project or programme, to the ordinary vision which apprehends the social world as a natural world: the *performative* utterance, the political pre-vision, is in itself a pre-diction which aims to bring about what it utters. It contributes practically to the reality of what it announces by the fact of uttering it… of making it conceivable and above all credible and thus creating the collective representation and will which contribute to its production. (italics in original)[42]

As will be discussed below, the success of efforts towards mobilization depends on concordance with the habitus or common sense of the group to which it appeals, and

[40] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Mystery of the Ministry: From Particular Wills to the General Will." Loïc J. D Wacquant and Pierre Bourdieu, *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of Ministry* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005): 61

[41] Williams 2013, 141-142; Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Harvard University Press, 1991). 127-130

[42] Bourdieu 1991, 128

charismatic performance is no different. The performative utterances of charismatic mobilization enunciate the potentialities of mobilization or political action through appealing to dormant or non-reflective sources of identity and habitus. Bourdieu writes that this labor of enunciation is:

> Necessary in order to externalize the inwardness, to name the unnamed and to give the beginnings of objectification to pre-verbal and pre-reflexive dispositions and ineffable and unobservable experiences, through words which by their nature make them common and communicable, therefore meaningful and socially sanctioned.[43]

But these processes depend on symbolic action. As Williams explains:

> For Bourdieu, charisma is a particular form of political capital. Unlike institutional political capital, which derives from a recognized position within organizations that themselves possess political capital (e.g. a legitimated government), charisma captures (amongst other things) 'the prophetic action of giving meaning, which founds and legitimates itself, retrospectively by the confirmation that its own success confers on the language of crisis and on the initial accumulation of the power of mobilization which its success has brought about.'[44]

Through symbolic action, charismatic leaders gain and cement their relational, representative status and represent the group into "objective" being through externalizing the heretofore internal and subjective. Bourdieu writes:

> The political labor of representation (not only in words or theories but also in demonstrations, ceremonies, or any other form of symbolization of divisions or opposition) gives the objectivity of public discourse and exemplary practice a way of seeing or of experiencing the social world that was previously relegated to the state of a practical disposition of a tacit and often confused experience (unease, rebelliousness, etc.). It thus enables agents to discover within themselves common properties that lie beyond the diversity of particular situations which isolate, divide, and demobilize, and to construct their social identity on the basis of characteristics or experiences that seemed totally dissimilar…[45]

For Bourdieu, this is different than the more conventional notion of political authority resulting from a process of delegation in which the group delegates the speaker. Rather

[43] Bourdieu 1991, 129
[44] Williams 2013, 142, quoting Bourdieu 1991, 194
[45] Bourdieu 1991, 130

"it is because the representative exists, because he represents (symbolic action), that the group that is represented and symbolized exists and that it in return gives existence to its representative as the representative of the group."[46]

Rather than an intrinsic characteristic, a charismatic leader is one whose performances reflect the "practical mastery" or competence of an actor in enunciating and representing in their performances a mastery of the symbolic practices and discourses of the collective they are attempting to influence. This "charisma" is really then a recognition of "competence" in the performances of symbolic politics and the ability to wield it authoritatively without coercion.[47] Friedrich Kratochwil writes:

> Practice (as 'performance') comes close to transcending our conventional understanding. In this context, one could mention Flyvbjerg's virtuous performances of masters in the field or Bourdieu's Kabyle clansman. For instance, the latter teaches his fellows a lesson by not using the usual strategies of redressing a wrong. In his refusal he provides a new example for honor and its defense. But here we encounter perhaps a charismatic breakthrough rather than an established practice. After all, the charismatic leader is—contrary to Weber suggests—not a simple non-conformist but appeals to his group on the basis of widely shared practices which are now transcended or given new meaning. Only by keeping the social bond with his followers can the non-conformist leader remain charismatic, instead of becoming a law-breaker.[48]

Charismatic performances depend on the recognition and manipulation of "symbolic capital"-- the first of Bourdieu's two components necessary for the exercise of symbolic power noted above—and can allow for *new* practices and performances, including the constitution of new collectives. It is this element of charismatic performance that best characterizes Nasser's role in the UAR. The ties that bound the UAR, the "valid currency" of "Nasser's name" identified by the American diplomat, were dependent on Nasser keeping his social bond with his followers, maintaining the symbolic performance

[46] Bourdieu 1991, 204
[47] Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot, "Power in Practice: Negotiating the International Intervention in Libya," *European Journal of International Relations* (forthcoming 2014). 5
[48] Kratochwil 2011, 40

through which the mobilization of two states into one would resonate with the habitus or common sense of the mobilized groups, both enunciated and represented by Nasser.

Performance and Audience: Habitus, Common Sense, Mētis, and Hysteresis

Adler and Pouliot's define practice as a "socially meaningful pattern of action which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world."[49] Crucial to this understanding of practice then is the emphasis on performance, and implicit in performance is audience. Practices attain the relevance recognized as "socially meaningful" through their performative nature, with meaning reliant on resonance with the "observer" of the practices. How does charisma resonate? How do symbols become representative for a charismatic leader?

If charisma is representative, it is necessary to consider those for whom practices are performed. I choose to use the word audience to describe these observers, but this use is not without potential problems. Most important is avoiding a strict sense of demarcation between actor/agent and audience/observer. The audience in the case of sovereign practices is subject to a kind of "complementarity" akin to that in quantum mechanics, echoing Niels Bohr's dictum that "in the drama of human existence, we are both spectators and actors."[50]

In Bourdieu's discussion of the requisites for successful use of symbolic power quoted above, there are implied potential roles for an audience. First, Bourdieu speaks of the importance of symbolic capital being "granted", implying the audience's role in

[49] Adler and Pouliot 2011, 6
[50] Niels Bohr, "Discussion with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics," in J. Kalckar, *Foundations of Quantum Physics II (1933-1958)* (Elsevier, 1996).

constituting the possession of symbolic capital through recognition. Secondly, the audience is "both spectator and actor" in that the same audience implicated in the recognition of symbolic capital also constitutes the "agents who have to be brought together" and possess "objective affinities" with which a practice's correspondence affects the level of "competence" pointed to in Adler and Pouliot's conception of practice.

But habitus, belonging to *all* social actors can also affect the outcomes of social action because performance/action/practice is relational to an audience which also interprets the meaning of the social action through the perceptive lens of habitus. The audiences of sovereign practices, those performances of meaning-making and group constitution that underpin the "authority" of the state and its attendant power over constructions of structures, schema, and groups, have their habitus shaped by the history and experience with the state and its structures and symbols. Sovereign practices required to constitute the state are privy like any political mobilization to Bourdieu's observation that "undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habitus of the mobilizing agents (prophet, leader, etc) and the dispositions of those who recognize themselves in their practices or words, and above all, without the inclination towards grouping that springs from the spontaneous orchestration of dispositions."[51]

In a recent *International Organization* article on "common sense" constructivism in IR, Ted Hopf focuses on the importance of correspondence between policy and mass dispositions.[52] Drawing on Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, Hopf argues that

[51] Ibid., 59
[52] Hopf 2013

both constructivism and IR's prior attempts at appropriating Gramscian theory have ignored the role of "the masses" and "mass quotidian common sense" as facets of society and their role in identity construction. Looking at contemporary Russian elite projects aimed at refashioning post-Soviet Russia into a neoliberal component of the world's economic "core", Hopf finds that many of the discourses (themselves semiotic practices) of such projects fail to resonate with a population "infused with a neo-Soviet identity for Russia that makes it a less-than perfect fit with the democratic neoliberal project."[53] The process affects "the state" through both "elites" and "masses" as a kind of dialectic.

> It is clear that Russian political elites recognize Russian common sense as a constraint on their ideological project. It is also evident that Russian elites realize that their political institutions, the bureaucracies and agencies they have created to enact and implement the laws and regulations of their ideological project, often fail to do so. Otherwise they would not feel the need to create additional institutions to oversee the implementation of policies by the very bureaucracies explicitly charged with carrying out those policies. This implies that state officials themselves share mass commonsensical resistance to the project.[54]

Also to be considered is the notion of *mētis* that James Scott put forth in his book *Seeing Like a State.*[55] This study investigates the widespread failures of ambitious state planning (potentially a different kind of sovereign practice than those investigated here, though some similarities will be noted in the case study, particularly over agrarian reform) due to failing to take localized, practical knowledge into account. Reading both Scott and Hopf, what is evident a mismatch between the habitus of leaders and policymakers (Russian neo-liberals for Hopf and 'high modernist' state elites and bureaucrats for Scott) and the dispositions, habitus, 'common sense' or *mētis* of the audiences of the practice.

In light of these examples of policy being hindered by the practical logic of collectives, it becomes clear that habitus is not solely an influence on singular actors but

[53] Ibid., 332
[54] Ibid., 349
[55] Scott 1999, Chapter 9

can also serve as a conditional constraint on their actions when intended for collectives. When a level correspondence between the intended action and the habitus/common sense/*mētis* of the masses is not met, the mismatch between policy intervention (and, likely, the habitus of those pursuing the intervention) and the habitus of its audience or the objective conditions of social life can result in interpretations and practices seeming out-of-phase in a given situation. Bourdieu uses the term hysteresis (from the Greek *hysterein*: to be behind)[56] to describe this mismatch and its result of social actions seeming maladjusted or misfit from their intended purpose. As actors' habitus is shaped by their history, molded by prior experiences and institutional impetus, they may be inappropriate for situations wrought by the dynamic changes possible in social life. Hysteresis occurs:

> when the sense of the probable future is belied and when dispositions ill-adjusted to the objective chances because of a hysteresis effect… are negatively sanctioned because the environment they actually encounter is too different from the one to which they are objectively adjusted… In fact the persistence of the effects of primary conditioning, in the form of the habitus, accounts equally well for cases in which dispositions function out of phase and practices are objectively ill-adapted… because they are objectively adjusted to conditions that no longer obtain… Durable dispositions that can outlive the economic and social conditions in which they were produced, can be the source of misadaptation as well as adaptation, revolt as well as resignation.[57]

Mobilization and the effective exercise of symbolic power are thus not givens- given the dynamism of the social world, a habitus perfectly suited at one juncture may be a hindrance preventing adaptation at a different moment. Indeed, the case of the UAR will show that a habitus shaped by one history and set of conditions leads to action which provokes a hysteresis effect of resistance and dissonance in a different context.

[56] Pouliot 2010, 48
[57] Bourdieu 1990, 62

The closely-related concepts of habitus, common sense, and *mētis* shed light on the processes at work in the social senses both shaping and shaped by performances of sovereignty for audiences. For Bourdieu, who emphasizes the state's symbolic power, it is the "imposition and inculcation of the durable principles of vision and di-vision that conform to [the state's] own structure" through which groups can be constituted and agents mobilized. But these principles of vision must also correspond to "a minimum of concordance" between mobilizer and mobilized, and will depend upon "the degree to which it is founded in reality… that is… the objective affinities of those have to be brought together."[58] As we see also in the work of Hopf and Scott, such a minimum of concordance of habitus, common sense, or *mētis* is indeed necessary for the "socially meaningful" and "competent" performance of practice in terms of the symbolic power of sovereign practice. However, this coherence can be lacking and the habitus attuned and conditioned by one historic specificity may either misfit a new application or actually hinder adaptation to changing material or social conditions or circumstances. In such cases, the misapplication of now non-contextual practical knowledge to changed fields and conditions will result in a hysteresis effect resulting from the misfit of social dispositions to the conditions at hand.

Symbolic Politics, Representation, and Mobilization

This chapter attempts to synthesize a number of theoretical insights from a disparate body of social theory and political science that nonetheless seem to be speaking in similar terms. First, the state is a site of the exercise of symbolic power, in addition to physical and material power. This power is often evident when manifested as a "power of

[58] Bourdieu 1994, 9; Bourdieu 1990, 59; Bourdieu 1989, 23

constitution," or the ability to make and form groups, units, and entities. In doing so, the state becomes the site of contestation over such symbolic power, a structured "field" that interacts with the habitus of agents, both leaders and led. This habitus is the embodiment of history in agents, the subjective dispositions that shape perception and actions. Charismatic performance is one effective strategy that can indicate an agent's practical mastery over the symbolic performances that enable this kind of constitutive meaning-making. Charisma reflects relational dynamics rather than an innate or intrinsic characteristic of a leader, and enhances a leaders ability to speak new groups into existence and accrue the symbolic capital that enables a charismatic leader to enunciate and represent their vision and have it resonate with the collectives they seek to mobilize. Lastly, the state and the performances or semiotic practices (including charismatic) necessary for its symbolic power are contingent on correlation with both objective conditions and the habitus/common sense/*mētis* of the collectives being mobilized. This implies both a correspondence with lived experience and the granting and recognition of the social capital of those seeking to exercise symbolic power.

As I will show over the next two chapters, the formation and dissolution of the UAR provides a unique case in which to study the interaction of charismatic leadership, practices, and the state as a site of symbolic politics. Practice theory can open the range of social logic beyond those offered by existing explanations, allowing a more nuanced understanding of the event that can still be unified by a single logic of social action. The development of theories of charismatic politics done separately by Bourdieu, Kalyvas, and Williams can help explain both the appeal of union to Syrians and Nasser's rhetorical and symbolic practices and performances that enabled and strengthened that appeal and

played a crucial role in forming the union. But with practice theory and habitus comes the potential for hysteresis, which becomes a constant hindrance to the UAR through formation, duration, and dissolution.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Literature Review

The union of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic in February 1958 is, to my knowledge, the only example of two territorially non-contiguous states voluntarily and mutually organizing themselves together as a single sovereign state without evidence of significant coercion or domination along the more overtly hierarchic lines of imperialism or colonialism. In this it is largely distinct from the focus of the vast majority of IR literature on sovereignty and its aberrations, which seem to focus more on the hierarchical relations of the parties involved in one manner or another. For Stephen Krasner, this comes from Westphalian sovereignty being "violated through both intervention, which can occur through coercion and imposition, and invitations, which can be included in both conventions and contracts."[1] David Lake's expansion of this line of inquiry in his "new sovereignty" research uses "deviations" from a "traditional" understanding sovereignty to make a case for in-depth study of hierarchy in IR, using sovereignty's empirical variability as leverage in his critique of IR's well-entrenched anarchy problematique.[2]

While the story is assuredly complex and it would be a mistake to assume that partners were on truly egalitarian footing, the fact remains that both parties assented to an arrangement that in essence abrogated their existence as independent entities in favor of continuing as a unitary state on ostensibly equal terms. The proclamation announcing the formation of the state made this abundantly clear: "The participants declare their total agreement, complete faith and deeply rooted confidence in the necessity of uniting Egypt

[1] Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton University Press, 1999). 224
[2] David A. Lake, "The New Sovereignty in International Relations1," *International Studies Review* 5, no. 3 (2003): 311-315

and Syria into one state to be named 'the United Arab Republic.'"[3] As this chapter will show, the relatively few explanations for the union's formation from the vantage points of both history and political science have significant difficulty with the complicated considerations of causality and culpability.

This chapter aims to show through addressing other accounts that the formation of the union is not solely attributable to conventional political analyses emphasizing logics of consequence and appropriateness. There are, of course, elements of both highlighted in different accounts of the topic in the existing literature, which will be discussed below. Some research, starting from assuming a logic of consequence, argue Syrian Ba'thists and military officers who initially pushed for unification had legitimate concerns about the power of Syrian communists and hoped to strengthen their own hand relative to other domestic actors. Similarly there is some argument to be made for a logic of appropriateness-derived explanation for unification, such as that offered by Michael Barnett in *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order.*[4] As will be further addressed more in-depth below, Barnett essentially views the UAR as the outcome of concessions by both Syrian leaders and Nasser to the demands of the symbolic performances of the norms of "Arab" politics.

With its considerations of symbolic power, Barnett's explanation is likely the closest to that presented here, with one crucial exception, to be discussed below. Both of these explanations lend considerable insight to elements of the unification. However, as will be explained in further depth below, explanations emphasizing solely the logics of

[3] "Proclamation of the United Arab Republic - Proclamation Donnant Naisance a La Republique Arabe Unie" (NATO Political Committee, February 20, 1958), available at: http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/3/4/3490/AC_119-WP_58_12_BIL.pdf.
[4] Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

consequence and appropriateness miss some elements crucial to the process and outcomes of unification.

This chapter also allows for the argument I present to augment the explanatory capability of these extant accounts. The UAR came about in part a result of Nasser's charismatic leadership strategy, which symbolically spoke the UAR into possibility and then actuality through its resonance with the audiences for whom it was performed. This explanation should better account for the formation of the UAR than those that emphasize too much elites and leaders as sovereign practice performers and not often enough the role of the audiences of such performances, the populations and groups produced and reproduced through practices.

Using a "sobjectivist" methodology inspired by Vincent Pouliot and discussed below, the case study attempts to recover the meaning of semiotic practices for social actors as they lived it, using induction, interpretation and history to identify and trace that which would make possible the establishment of the UAR as new performance of sovereign practices. Before reviewing the extant literature, some further discussion of this "sobjectivist" methodology is merited.

A "Sobjectevist" Methodology

The concepts developed and synthesized in the previous chapter are outside much of the mainstream of political science research. Notions of symbolic power and capital are difficult or impossible to quantify, and the concept of charisma is a notoriously tricky one, even if transcending a Weberian "intrinsic" understanding of the concept. But

Wedeen's brief outline for investigating culture points towards the process necessary for any research aiming to recover culture.

> The words 'semiotic practices' are shorthand for this approach… First, culture as semiotic practices refers to what languages and symbols *do*—how they are inscribed in concrete actions and how they operate to produce observable political effects… Second, culture as semiotic practices is also a lens. It offers a view of political phenomena by focusing attention on how and why actors invest them with meaning.

I borrow liberally from Vincent Pouliot's "sobjectivist" methodology for constructivist research in political science.[5] Named for its reflection of an understanding that "constructivist inquiries need to develop not only objectified, but also subjective knowledge about social and international life,"[6] Pouliot's notion of a sobjectivist methodology provides an ontological and epistemic basis of a post-foundational approach to social science.

First, research aims at uncovering the subjective meanings of practices and actions. This is an inductive process, aiming to represent social practices and their meanings as they exist or existed for the agent rather than the analyst. Then I seek to objectify said meanings by situating them in their intersubjective context. This is necessarily interpretive, as interpreting "meaning" in the sense used by Wedeen or Bourdieu (in referring to the "labor of representation"), necessarily refers to the intersubjective recognition of a practice, act, or performance. Lastly, it "sets meanings in motion" by introducing time and history, situating practices and social actions within a historical narrative. A descriptive and explanatory understanding of a case "is concerned with the genesis of its object of study, that is, with the historical processes that make

[5] See Chapter 3 in Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO-Russian Diplomacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) or Vincent Pouliot, "'Sobjectivism': Toward a Constructivist Methodology," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2007): 359–84

[6] Ibid., 359

possible the constitution of specific social contexts. As no social realities are natural, they are all the result of social and political processes that are rooted in history."[7] The research herein is thus inductive, interpretive, and historical.[8]

Studying the UAR from the perspective of practice presents what I feel is a very suitable case for using a historical sobjectivist approach. Given the obvious limitations to research on a series of events which occurred over half a century ago, the uncovering of subjective meanings and interpreting their meaning and situating and tracing their changes over time is exclusively based on textual accounts of the union. In this, I come closest to a method of "historical ethnography" such as that used by Diane Vaughan in her reconstruction of the organizational culture at NASA leading up to the 1986 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger. In this approach, textual sources are used in an "attempt to reconstruct structure and culture from archival documents and interviews to see how people in a different time and place made sense of things."[9]

That being said, an ideal historical ethnography would have access to an abundance of primary source material- memoranda, internal documents, etc. through which I could reconstruct the social world as the actors themselves saw it in something akin to "real time". I have neither the resources nor language skills to partake in such a detailed analysis, even were the archival materials accessible, which they are not. Instead, the case presented here is based primarily on relatively recent secondary works which have thoroughly excavated the available documentary evidence from Egyptian, Syrian, and international sources. While undoubtedly a weakness of the case study, I believe that

[7] Ibid., 367
[8] Pouliot identifies these elements of research as crucial to the "sobjectivist" method
[9] Diane Vaughan, "Bourdieu and Organizations: The Empirical Challenge," *Theory and Society* 37, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 71

the analysis presented within provides value not only in illustrating and novel appreciations of causality in the specific case (which I believe it does) but also in synthesizing insights from across the range of previously existing work on the topic and smoothing out differences between them.

The Existing Literature

A sobjectivist approach begins with induction. I began from a seemingly simple question: *how can IR theory explain a near-total yet mutual exchange of sovereignty between two independent states?* I started by working my way back from secondary historical accounts, middle-range IR theoretical work and more area studies-type literature in an attempt to discern both the landscape of historical narratives of the events and existing attempts to accommodate these events in IR theoretical frames. I was disappointed to learn that treatments or mention of the UAR are almost entirely absent from the "first-order" theorizing on sovereignty and its reevaluation over the past few decades.[10]

The case is admittedly anomalous, as shown by both the unification project's short lifespan and relative neglect in the literature. However, it plays a tertiary role in many definitive works on regional politics and international relations. This includes

[10] For examples of IR's evolution of conceptions of sovereignty, see: Krasner, 1999; Lake, 2003; Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, "The Social Construction of State Sovereignty," in *State Sovereignty as Social Construct.* Thomas J Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, eds., (Cambridge University Press, 1996); Friedrich Kratochwil, "Of Systems, Boundaries, and Territoriality: An Inquiry into the Formation of the State System," World Politics 39, no. 01 (1986): 27–52; Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton University Press, 1996); Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2009); Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2010); John Gerard Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis," *World Politics* 35, no. 2 (January, 1983): 261–285

Malcolm Kerr's seminal *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd-al Nasir and his Rivals, 1958-1970*. The UAR years, 1958-1961, supply the setting for his opening chapter, providing an exposition chapter to introduce his protagonist and his attempts to attain regional hegemony throughout the next decade.[11] Malik Mufti's *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* fits the Egyptian-Syrian UAR into a broader theoretical frame designed to account for 17 different voluntary unity schemes undertaken by various Arab states.[12] Barnett's *Dialogues*, an ambitious and valuable attempt to explain the political order of the modern Middle East through consistent struggles over the symbolic components of an "Arab" identity-based politics, dedicates some attention to the UAR, but this account is fit into a chapter spanning 1957-1967.[13] While obviously a necessary choice for these authors, who aimed for an explanation of the entire Arab state order and its changes over decades, the depth of investigation into the specifics of the union is kept mostly to the surface level.

In contrast to the political science literature, there are a few historical accounts specifically focused on the union, most noteworthy being Elie Podeh's *The Decline of Arab Unity: The Rise and Fall of the United Arab Republic* and James Jankowski's *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*.[14] Both books draw on an extensive array of historical sourcework, including available archival material, largely from external diplomatic and intelligence actors such as the United States and Canadian diplomatic corps and Israeli intelligence assessments, and memoirs, press, and journals

[11] Kerr 1971, See Chapter 1
[12] Mufti 1996
[13] Barnett 1998, 129-139
[14] Elie Podeh, *The Decline of Arab Unity: The Rise and Fall of the United Arab Republic* (Sussex Academic Press, 1999); Jankowski 2002

from the Arab side as archival access remains unavailable.[15] Other sources less explicitly focused on the UAR are particularly helpful as well, including Eberhardt Kienle's article, "Arab Unity Schemes Revisited", which performs a discourse analysis of Syrian and Egyptian discourses leading up to unification on national identity to help explain the symbols and rhetoric drawn on that made unification seem viable.[16] Adeed Dawisha's genealogy of modern Arab nationalist political ideology in *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* dedicates a chapter titled "The Apex of Arab Nationalism" to the formation of the UAR (and the near-contemporaneous Iraqi revolution, which will be neglected by this work).[17]

I am interested in filling in gaps and synthesizing the different insights of historical and theoretically-inclined work. As very little work in political science specifically investigates the UAR as a specific and meaningful case, I use scholarship produced in the historical mode as much of the empirical basis of this work. In addition, I aim to draw on and, where necessary, critique, the theoretical insights to the case. In particular, the works of Barnett and Mufti provide both fuel and foil to the theorization presented here, with Kienle (himself a historically-minded political scientist) and Kerr providing additional detail and points of contention.

The historical works are also open to theoretical critique, as Podeh addresses theoretical frames borrowed from political science just as I borrow from his history. He identifies four "schools" of theory that inform his scholarship, including "neorealism" and "realism" while advocating a multi-causal explanation that focuses on "elites" in both

[15] Podeh 1999, 7-10; Jankowski 2002, 4-10
[16] Eberhard Kienle, "Arab Unity Schemes Revisited: Interest, Identity, and Policy in Syria and Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 1 (February 1, 1995): 53–71
[17] Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton University Press, 2009). See Chapter 8.

Syria and Egypt.[18] Likewise, while Jankowski borrows less explicitly from political science, he nonetheless argues in his conclusion that "considerations of state power, both domestic and international, were the primary factors generating the Arab nationalist policies pursued by the Egyptian regime in the 1950s."[19] In this argument, Jankowski essentially adapts what would be called in IR terms a "neoclassical realist" interpretation to explain the UAR.[20] As such, it is also susceptible to critique from a political science-informed theoretical perspective.

I am sympathetic to Podeh's exhaltation that he "find[s] it difficult to favor a single cause, or school of thought, that supposedly has the decisive explanatory power."[21] Rather than solely argue against the theories proposed by other authors, I aim to show both gaps and commonalities between them and how a Bourdieuian approach can cast the events in a new light, both in conceptualizing the logic of social action as well as the practices of constitution and mobilization, the import of symbolic power and semiotic practices, and the role of charisma and hysteresis in the formation *and* dissolution of the union.

Malik Mufti's Sovereign Creations

Malik Mufti's *Sovereign Creations* is, to my knowledge, the only book-length IR text to focus exclusively on Arab unity schemes as its topic of study. Published in 1996, it attempts to synthesize multiple theoretical insights from both IR and comparative politics in developing a theoretical explanation for 17 different Arab unification efforts.

[18] Podeh 1999, 1-2
[19] Jankowski 2002, 181
[20] The term neoclassical realism was coined in Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 01 (1998): 144–72. Specifically, see 144-154
[21] Podeh 1999, 2

From the IR literature, he draws first on the neorealist "structural" theorizing of Steven Walt.[22] Emphasizing the "balance of threat", Walt's work investigated alliance patterns in the Middle East and found them to be driven largely by external sources of threat. Mufti agrees with this assessment in the long-term, particularly after Israel's military victory over numerous Arab states in 1967.[23] However, before 1967, Mufti finds Steven David's theory of omnibalancing behavior to be more applicable to the logic of unity schemes pre-1967, including the UAR.[24] In omnibalancing, state elites are seen as weak and illegitimate and engage in balancing behavior on account of both domestic and international threats to their rule.

To explain the change in theoretical frames over time, Mufti points to the different assumptions of the state between Walt's and David's theories. Walt wrote from a structural neorealist perspective, assuming that the state is a unitary actor akin to a "black box" in which internal dynamics are of limited explanatory value. David formulated his theory to account for the lower level of institutionalization he and others saw in post-colonial states, with elites less secure, institutional structure less enduring, and elite behavior not necessarily concordant with *raison d'etat*. What accounts for the apparent shifts in explanatory theory for Mufti is "the *evolution* of stateness" (italics in original), or the "development" of autonomy and legitimacy of the weaker state pursuing the union.[25] In many ways, though the word is not used specifically, this notion of "the state as a conceptual variable" as Mufti puts it, can be seen as using a sense of

[22] Stephen M Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
[23] Mufti 1996, 5
[24] Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics* 43, no. 02 (1991): 233–56
[25] Mufti 1996, 9; 12-15

sovereignty as a kind of quantifiable independent variable accounting for the pursuit and outcome of unification schemes.[26]

Mufti's theory is quite problematic when applied to the specific case of the United Arab Republic. Despite noting that the UAR is one of just two of such schemes to go beyond what he calls "the talking stage", the integrity of Mufti's broader theory depends on viewing the Egyptian-Syrian unification as "simply a mistake."[27] This is due to two main issues, both ultimately inescapable given the terms of his theoretical construction. First, both the omnibalancing and "balance of threat" interpretations have a commonality in that they are driven implicitly by the logic of consequence for social action. Elites or their states are threatened and engage in balancing or unification behavior with a regional partner in a way seen to be conventionally "rational" to secure their interests. In unification, Syrian elites found themselves in an increasingly unequal partnership that did not correlate with their expected outcome. This must be seen as necessarily "irrational", as the intended benefits did not materialize while costs were misjudged. This in itself is not problematic, the documentary evidence shows that both parties likely received more than they "bargained" for in recognizing the partnership. So Mufti is right in asserting that events did not correlate to what one would expect from social agents acting in accordance to LOC. Indeed, evidence shows that even Nasser and the majority of his inner circle did not consider union a viable policy option just days before it actually came to fruition.[28]

But the problem is encapsulated in what Bourdieu called "the intellectualist fallacy." Pouliot explains, "Most social scientists have the reflex to take the point of view

[26] Ibid., 9
[27] Ibid., 8; 96
[28] Podeh 1999, 45-46

of an external spectator: not involved in the situation under study, they try to stand back from it in order to grasp the larger picture."[29] In fitting the particular (Egyptian-Syrian union in 1958) into the generalized theoretic frame (17 proposed Arab unification projects), Mufti is bound by his theory to explain the most significant, an event he himself describes as "that crowning manifestation of pan-Arab ideals and an object even today of profound nostalgia in many Arab circles" as "unintended" and "a mistake" in the next sentence.[30] Because his theory can only assume a logic of consequence, a move such as the UAR in which both parties would eventually "take a loss" must logically show the social actions in question to have been made "in error".

Nasser's decision-making process is similarly undertheorized-- Mufti explains the behavior of the stronger party in unification talks as behaving in line with a maximalist logic in which more power is necessarily good power and there "is nothing surprising about a powerful country with expansionist ambitions seeking to unite with vulnerable neighbors."[31] But this cannot truly account for Egypt's behavior- neither Nasser's documented reluctance to accept unification with Syria nor Egypt's decisions to renounce sovereignty claims over Sudan after the Free Officers Revolution. The unfortunate result is that a suitable explanation of the UAR—the only instance to really take root—is then lost in broader theorization intended to account for the otherwise barren nursery of Arab unity projects.

The other significant problem is that Mufti's emphasis on "stateness" reducing elite insecurity is not applicable in the practical experience of the UAR. According to Mufti's theory, the "strength" of the state (and presumably its sovereign practices) is

[29] Pouliot 2007, 365; Bourdieu 1990, 27; Bourdieu 1977, 25-29
[30] Mufti 1996, 96
[31] Ibid., 2

dependent on "autonomy, efficacy, and legitimacy."[32] These refer to coercive and financial resources to insulate elites, ability to deploy state power, and societal consent and support for the regime, respectively.[33] However, in its time as the "Northern UAR" the Syrian state could draw on a much larger base of resources, coercive force, bureaucratic institutionalization, and Nasser's unparalleled "charismatic" legitimacy. If the level of "stateness" is primarily material, then the UAR experience defies Mufti's theory on both conceptions of social logic *and* empirical conditions in which his variables relate to outcomes.

Michael Barnett's Dialogues in Arab Politics

Michael Barnett's *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* also attempts to fit the UAR into a broader study of the region's international relations. Like Mufti, he identifies a dialectic between "stateness" and "pan-Arabism" but attributes this to a normative, logic of appropriateness-driven tension in a "normative structure of Arab politics… comprised of both sovereignty and Arabism" in which these roles and identities were necessarily at odds.[34] This resulted in a "game" of Arab politics in which "Arab states desired the symbolic capital they could amass from their association with Arab nationalism because they could exchange it for capital that they needed for their other objectives."[35] In Barnett's conception, elites are "performers" who "are likely to try to ensure that their performances are consistent with the expectations of their audience"

[32] Ibid., 12
[33] Ibid., 12-13
[34] Barnett 1998, 29
[35] Ibid., 26-27; 36

when manipulating symbols, culture, and what Wedeen would call semiotic practices.[36] The work presented here thus obviously shares much with Barnett's overall approach and broader conceptualizations and in the case of the UAR, Barnett diagnoses the union as an instance of "symbolic entrapment" in which both Nasser and Syrian elites were forced into union by expectations of their "roles".[37] I do not disagree per se with Barnett's general take on the unification. However, I think that Barnett's analysis can be modified and deepened, both theoretically and in regards to the empirical case of the UAR.

First, Barnett, like Mufti, creates a conceptual dichotomy between sovereignty and pan-Arabism. While this conceptualization may work for the broader theoretical frame of Barnett's work, this dualism collapses in the UAR as performances of practices identified with both sovereignty and Arabism become at that moment indistinct. Considering Nasser and Syrian elites as occupying "two roles: agent of a sovereign state and agent of the wider Arab political community" requires resort to a kind of Wendtian "essential state" in which the "sovereign" state exists on some independent level distinct from its practitioners who, in the case of the UAR, attempted new performances of both sovereignty and Arabism in which the two were conceptually undistinguished. Barnett writes that he attempts "to blend *homo economicus* and *homo sociologus* [agents acting under the logics of consequence and appropriateness, respectively]", with the effect being that actions taken under an LOC line up with performances of "sovereignty" while conscious of paying heed to LOA-derived concerns about the normative frames of Arabism.[38] But as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the state is a site of unparalleled symbolic power. Thus practices of sovereignty are also practices in the exercise of

[36] Ibid., 33; 39-45
[37] Ibid., 130-131
[38] Ibid., 8-9

symbolic power, a power most evident in its efficacy in constituting and mobilizing groups and collectives. Constituting a new collective in the UAR is not in opposition to the "role" of sovereignty, but rather a particular iteration of it.

Barnett also leaves the actual union itself relatively unexamined, jumping from its establishment (as a case of "symbolic entrapment") to Syrian secession (attributed to Egypt's domineering and differing notions of Arabism between Nasser and the Ba'thists).[39] What is missing is a sense of the in-between, how union played out in practice and as a result, Barnett does not really explain how the UAR could both form and dissolve under the limits of these social logics. As in Mufti's work, Barnett did not see the LOC at play in the formation of the union. But rather than considering this a mistake ala Mufti, his explanation of "symbolic entrapment" shows that agents were driven by a LOA or hybridization of LOA/LOC in forming the UAR. But what then can account for the *disintegration* of the state? Norms of Arabism and unification underwent no significant change between 1958 and 1961, in fact most studies show that pan-Arabist discourses only *increased* for all parties after the Syrian *infisal* (secessionist) coup.[40] Even the coup itself justified itself in the language of pan-Arabism as "proponents of Syria's renewed independence and sovereignty found themselves in the awkward situation of having to defend their position while professing allegiance to a doctrine that denounced it."[41]

New Insights

[39] Ibid., 137
[40] Ibid., 138-139; Jankowski 2002, 182-183
[41] Itamar Rabinovich, *Syria Under the Ba'th 1963-1966: The Army Party Symbiosis* (Israel Universities Press, 1972), 20

Despite Mufti and Barnett's very different accounts, they share three common issues. First, both Mufti and Barnett are faced with the restrictive theoretical boundaries of depending on the LOC/LOA dichotomy in the context of the UAR. Secondly, they construct a dichotomy between sovereignty (or "stateness" in Mufti's account) and Arabism that proves problematic in the context of the UAR. Finally, they both focus the scope of their inquiry largely to "elites"-- both Nasser and Syrian Ba'thists, military officers, and the most prominent constituencies. This work aims to address all three, to varying degrees.

As explained earlier, a theory of practice brings with it its own logic of social action. This logic is not "at odds" with the LOA or LOC, but rather ontologically prior. It is important to emphasize here that the "logic of practice" does not preclude strategic thinking. On the contrary, practice logic is necessarily strategic. As Scott writes of *mētis,* it:

> represents a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment... War, diplomacy and politics more generally are *mētis*-laden skills. The successful practitioner, in each case, tries to shape the behavior of partners and opponents to his own ends.[42]

Bourdieu "regards the concepts of interest and strategy—sufficiently reformulated—as central to a cogent theory of practice."[43] However, these interests and strategies are necessarily contextual, with Bourdieu attributing their specificity to the field and habitus both shaping and shaped by their pursuit. The break with conventional "interest-driven" analyses comes from two important deviations from conventional political science theorizing of social action. Firstly, and in line with much of constructivist thinking, interests and rationality are not generic, ahistoric, or exogenous. More importantly and

[42] Scott 1999, 313-315
[43] Williams 2007, 34

distinctively, interests and strategies are often unreflective or even, as we see in the case of the UAR, counter-reflective in that a strategy may be attributable more to the interaction of habitus, field, and capital from a kind of innate knowledge allowing for instances in which:

> actors can pursue strategies and advance interests without their being consciously or instrumentally aware of doing so. Rather, this strategic action emerges out of dominant practices naturally, as an expression of an adequate 'feel for the game' through which the orientations of the habitus and the structure of the field yield strategies of practice which play the game to advantage without appearing to do so, and which indeed are more effective since they are not the result of an obvious strategy.[44]

Social action occurs under the game-like condition of the field, with the "practical sense" underwriting action emergent from the interaction of habitus and field. In this, the appraisal of rationality and appropriateness of an agent's actions or performances is not taken from without, but rather situated in the actors' (subjective and objective) context.

On the second commonality in regarding Arabism and sovereignty as opposing concepts, Chapter 2 aims to show that practices of sovereignty and the state are practices of symbolic power, which is in turn a power of constitution. Instead of viewing the UAR as *contra* sovereignty or "stateness", it may instead be viewed as a new performance of sovereignty. Nasser in the UAR is a prime example of a charismatic leader using recognized symbolic capital to attempt a new performance of sovereignty and political authority. As Kratochwil writes, "After all, the charismatic leader is—contrary to Weber suggests—not a simple non-conformist but *appeals to his group on the basis of widely shared practices which are now transcended or given new meaning*." [italics added][45] Sovereignty and its practices, the production of symbolic power and constitution and mobilization of groups was given new meaning in the performance of the UAR. The

[44] Ibid., 37
[45] Kratochwil 2011, 40

state, enacted through practice, was given new meaning as a progressive, anti-imperial structure through which Arab peoples could see themselves attaining a more promising future without humiliation, corrupt client regimes, or economic subordination. This was not a blow to the state or sovereignty, but a new performance of its attendant practices.

The importance and impact of these performances leads to the third weakness of the existing literature. Most accounts of the UAR, and particularly those produced by political scientists, emphasize primarily the roles and actions of the elites in both countries. They emphasize the role of Syria's complex and conflictual political culture, in which the military, business elites, and an ever-shifting balance of political parties maneuvered incessantly to both shore up their own bases and deny them to others. They emphasize Nasser's ambitions and ideological shifts. It is hardly surprising, given both the discipline's ontological focus on the visible exercise of political power through elites and the practical necessities of research in using the surviving documentation, most of which was produced by governments, memoirs, or media which was itself either elite-focused or, in the case of Egypt, elite-produced.[46] But critical to both unification and secession were the role of "the masses"- those groups mobilized and constituted by the semiotic practices and the performances of symbolic politics. When Mufti interviews Afif al-Bizri, the commanding officer of the Syrian army who first flew to Cairo to propose unity to Nasser, this variable seems crucial despite Bizri's attempts to distance himself from union after the fact.

> No one wanted unity. Even Abd al-Nasser didn't want it… So I… waited for the appropriate moment and said: now we will offer unity to Abd al-Nasser. Since they're all saying unity, unity, unity. Nobody would dare to say no, we don't want it. The masses would rise against them. I mean we followed the masses.

[46] See Munir K. Nasser, *Press, Politics, and Power: Egypt's Heikal and Al-Ahram* (Iowa State Pr, 1979).

> The crowds were drunk… who at that hour could dare say we do not want unity? The people would tear their heads off.[47]

Taking into account Bourdieu's assertion that "undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the *habitus* of the mobilizing agents (prophet, leader, etc) and the dispositions of those who recognize themselves in their practices or words, and above all, without the inclination towards grouping that springs from the spontaneous orchestration of dispositions," the role of the masses must be paramount, as expected theoretically and to be demonstrated empirically.[48] Popular pressure for union came from the constituted masses relation to Nasser, who through his accrued symbolic capital and performances had come to charismatically present himself as the representative of the entire Arab nation. The focus on elites then is not misguided, but merely incomplete. Performances must take into account their audience, and a Bourdieuian approach allows for the kind of relational understanding of mobilization and constitution that characterizes the practice of symbolic politics.

The value added in a Bourdieuian approach drawing alternately on concepts of practice and performance, *habitus*, the symbolic effects of politics, and a relational rather than intrinsic notion of charisma can account for some of the explanatory lapses in the political science literature. As this work investigates solely the three-year experience of the UAR rather than fitting it into a broader narrative, I hope to present a deeper understanding of the social logics at play in the union for elites on both sides as well as the populations for whom these performances were played through using a sobjectivist methodology. This will go beyond the restrictions of the logics of consequence and

[47] Mufti 1996, 91
[48] Bourdieu 1990, 59

appropriateness, an ultimately artificial and counterproductive (from an explanatory perspective) notion of sovereignty, and the restrictive focus on solely the actions and perceptions of elites.

Chapter 4: Clashes of Practice and Charisma in the UAR

In this chapter, I will apply the theoretical work of the second and third chapters to the United Arab Republic. I aim to uncover the historical specificities that shaped the habitus of both relevant elites *and* the constituencies for which performances of practices of sovereignty were performed, with a particular focus on Nasser and the Syrian population. Once having done so, the logics of social action that made union a feasible course of action for both elites and the population should be more clearly illustrated in a manner more akin to events as actors saw them in the moment rather than the ex post facto or "intellectualized" appraisals that remove agents and events from their historical context.

Beginning with Nasser and Egypt, I aim to reveal the subjective experiences, influences, and institutions that shaped Nasser's practical sense as a leader. This includes both pre- and post-revolutionary influences on his habitus, identifying patterns of practice and structures of perception that endure to frame both perceptions of the field and its openings for social action and the range of possible recognitions and responses to such opportunities. For Nasser, this was shaped largely by three interactions of habitus and field—his perception and experience of Egypt's colonial history and liberation, his successes with symbolic politics of Arabism in the mid-1950s, and his experiences as a transitional political figure in the Egyptian political field. The "practical sense" Nasser developed as a result of these histories led Nasser to increasingly utilize symbolic politics and charismatic techniques to enhance his authority and mobilize collectives- helping to account for just why unification, even in unequal terms, under Nasser seemed practical at the time.

For the Syrian elites pushing for union, understanding an alternative practical sense-- shaped by a history of near-paralytic factionalism, weaker commitments to a specifically Syrian state or national identity and more commitments to political ideology (particularly on behalf of the Ba'thists) or parochial interests, and a high level of military involvement in the political field—helps account for the behavior leading up to unity. In unification, it was the interplay of Syrian habitus and Nasser's recognized charismatic authority that could make the UAR plausible for both parties despite their significant differences.

And union with Egypt initially fit well with the collective habitus of the Syrian people, for whom the effects of symbolic mobilization and constitution of Nasser's performances had resonated deeply. Nasser's charismatic and symbolic politics depended primarily on the symbolic action of representation, speaking into existence the group he performed for relationally rather than more conventional understandings of representation as an outcome of delegation. In exploring these elements of unification, I complement those works of others which acknowledge the role of "charisma" but deem it largely outside the realm of observation (and a meaningful role as a causal mechanism).

But I also investigate the course and dissolution of the union through evaluating the experience of union in practice. In doing so, I aim to circumvent the confines of logics of consequence and appropriateness (discussed in other accounts and the prior chapter) which prevent effectively theorizing the case from union to secession through a single explanatory social logic. Nasser's charismatic practices, which had been a critical impetus for union, stemmed from the same habitus that would lead to other, more problematic practices that translated poorly when applied to the Syrian field. The

hysteresis effect, of a habitus suited for one set of conditions inspiring practices maladapted a different or changed field, was evident from the UAR's beginning as Nasser's habitus-informed vision for union took precedent and only led to continued and more pronounced misapprehensions for the state's Syrian region.

Egypt and Nasser, Pre-Unification

Egypt's role as a regional power stretches back to the Pharaohs. The Nile River provided a geographical impetus for a relatively stable agrarian society going back for millennia, which combined with centuries as a regional seat of Hellenistic, Caliphate, and Ottoman power to make Egypt arguably the region's most developed, populous, economically and culturally powerful state for hundreds of years. This regional importance became more pronounced with the construction of the Suez Canal in the 1860s, making Egypt a crucial geopolitical chokepoint for European powers with imperial investments in Asia and the Indian and Pacific oceans. In 1882, this strategic import led British and French forces to intervene against burgeoning Islamic and Arab nationalist sentiments that threatened the political and economic stability of the country. After the defeat of Egypt's army at the hands of the British and French, the colonial powers instated indirect rule through a number of client regimes, culminating in transition from being a British protectorate and sultanate to a nominally independent kingdom in 1922, albeit one still heavily influenced and insulated by a large-scale British military occupation.

In July of 1952, a group of nationalist-minded mid-level Egyptian military officers calling themselves the Free Officers staged a coup against the British-backed

King Farouk. Gamal Abdel Nasser*, then a lieutenant colonel venerated for his service in an encircled but unbowed unit in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War took the reins as the nucleus of the group and its subsequent transitional ruling body, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).[1] By the time of unification, Nasser had been recognized both within and outside Egypt (and within and without himself) as a "charismatic" leader of political pan-Arabism. But the recognition of this symbolic capital and the relational charisma capable of the kind of constitutive sovereignty performances that brought the UAR into existence was also contingent largely on Nasser's historical experiences and a habitus developed through both socialization and the "practical sense" he developed in his time a nationalist conspirator, military officer, and political neophyte.

By combining various accounts, I identify three major influences on Nasser's habitus. First, and perhaps most important, was the specifically Egyptian nationalism shaped by his youth and experience as conspirator with the Free Officers against British rule.[2] With this nationalism came an appreciation of charismatic politics and a vision for Egypt in a leadership role of regional redemption. Second, his experience in Palestine and his readings of the region's military history led him to emphasize "pan-Arabism" or "Arab unity" as a strategic necessity for regional anti-colonialism. [3] However, the "strategic" dividends of such an approach was seen to pay dividends with Nasser's most successful "symbolic" and charismatic performances, his star turn at the Bandung

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* I will use this transliteration of Nasser's name, though transliterations of Nasser's name used by other authors will be left as is in direct quotations.

[1] Khālid Muḥyī al-Dīn, *Memories of a Revolution: Egypt 1952* (American University in Cairo Press, 1995); Joel Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement : Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution: Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1991).

[2] Jankowski 2002, 28

[3] Ibid., 33-34

Conference of 1955 and the nationalizing of the Suez Canal.[4] Finally, I argue that in his experiences as a revolutionary leader, Nasser developed a practical sense of political leadership finely attuned to the specificities of ruling Egypt—in political and economic terms—through practices that were largely in line with the objective conditions of the Egyptian political field as it appeared from 1952-1958. All of these influences on Nasser's habitus would come into play in the formation of the UAR, helping to account for how Nasser's decision for unification would make "practical sense" for Nasser in the specific context of social action in which he found himself come January 1958.

Nasser's Charismatic Nationalism

As alluded to earlier, Nasser's nationalist identities (both Egyptian and Arab) have been a topic of considerable debate for academics.[5] Nasser was the son of a postal worker, born into a family that Nasser himself identified with Egypt's pre-Revolution "petite bourgeoisie".[6] Like most politically-minded Egyptians, the main target of Nasser's early antipathy were the colonial British guarantors of the Egyptian monarchy. His adolescence coincided with the rise of the Young Egypt movement, a radical nationalist movement with a paramilitary organization that has led some to identify it as a

[4] While this will be discussed in more detail below, a number of works note the increasing prevalence of "pan-Arab" rhetoric in Nasser's discourses around 1955-56. See Dekmejian 1971, 93-96; Kienle 1995, 63-65; Jankowski 2002, 32-35; Podeh 1999, 27-30

[5] See Chapter 2 in Jankowski 2002; also James Jankowski, "'Nasserism' and Egyptian State Policy, 1952-1958" in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, eds. James P. Jankowski and I. Gershoni, (Columbia University Press, 1997); Marlène Abou-Chdid Nasr, "Analyse Des Champs Sémantiques de La Notion de *umma Arabiyya* (nation Arabe) Dans Le Discours Nassérien (1952-1970)," *Mots* 2, no. 1 (1981): 13–35 (in French)

[6] David Morgan, "Interview with President Gamal Abdel Nasser," *Sunday Times*, June 18 1962, Available at: http://nasser.bibalex.org/Common/pictures01-%20sira3_en.htm.

cohort to the concurrent rise of nationalist-tinged fascist groups in continental Europe.[7] According to his retelling, he unwittingly joined a Young Egypt protest in 1933 and was rewarded with beating and arrest at the hands of police.[8] Nasser claimed later to have found the Young Egypt movement lacking in vision, and mentions additional flirtations with communism and the Muslim Brotherhood but finding each of them lacking in both effectiveness and was turned off by their ideological dogmatism.

As habitus is historical, this period in Nasser's life can account for the some of his later practices. Firstly, the young Nasser found parties and their dogmatic ideologies lacking, coming instead to prefer instead a pragmatic approach to politics favoring direct action over dialectics. Secondly, Nasser seemed particularly drawn to the potentialities of charismatic and symbolic politics. He was inspired by Tawfiq al-Hakim's *Return of the Spirit*-- a novel about the 1919 Egyptian revolt-- which contained a memorable passage in which a character remarks that Egyptians "lack is a man from among them who will manifest all their emotions and beliefs and be for them a symbol of the ultimate," and even attempted to write a similarly nationalist novel.[9] A seventeen-year-old Nasser channeled this passage when he asked a friend in 1935:

> Where is the nationalism which burned in 1919? Where are men prepared to sacrifice their lives for the sacred soil of the homeland? Where are men prepared to give their lives for the independence of the country? *Where is the one who can rebuild the country so that the weak and humiliated Egyptian can stand up again, living free and independent?*[10] (italics added)

[7] For an exploration of the Young Egypt movement, see Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship Versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford University Press, 2010), particularly Chapter 7
[8] Morgan 1962
[9] Tawfiq Al-Hakim, *Return of the Spirit* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012). 187; Jankowski 2002, 28
[10] Cited in Jankowkski 2002, 28

This near obsession with role surfaces again and again in Nasser's rhetoric and performances. In *Philosophy of the Revolution*, a pamphlet published for mass consumption in 1953 to recap the events of the coup and provide some insight into the direction of post-coup politics, he wrote of Egypt:

> History is also charged with great heroic roles which do not find actors to play them on stage. I do not know why I always imagine that in this region there is a role wandering aimlessly about seeking an actor to play it. I do not know why this role, tired of roaming about in this vast region which extends to every place around us, should at last settle down, weary and worn out, on our frontiers beckoning us to move, to dress up for it and to perform it since there is nobody else who can do it.[11]

Nasser's sense of politics was a highly symbolic one and also one uniquely suited to a Bourdieuian sense of charisma akin to that discussed in Chapter 3. For Bourdieu, political action is "that which aims to make or unmake groups—and by the same token, the collective actions they can undertake to transform the social world in accordance with their interests—by producing, reproducing or destroying the representations that make groups visible for themselves and others."[12] The charismatic leader would be one capable of fulfilling al-Hakim's desire for "a man among them who will manifest all their emotions and beliefs and be for them a symbol of the ultimate" and Nasser came to see himself as a man capable of playing just such a role through charismatic politics.

Charismatic politics are primarily those concerned with "gaining representative status, of accruing symbolic capital, and through it the exercise of symbolic power."[13] Power is performative and relational, and Bourdieu highlights one strategy as particularly powerful for the charismatic leader.

> It is in what I would call the oracle effect, thanks to which the spokesperson gives voice to the group in whose name he speaks, thereby speaking with all the

[11] Gamal Abdel Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Smith, Keynes & Marshall, 1959). 61
[12] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Harvard University Press, 1991). 127
[13] Williams 2013, 142

> authority of that elusive, absent phenomenon, that the function of priestly humility can best be seen: it is in abolishing himself completely in favour of God or the People that the priest turns himself into God or the People. It is when I become Nothing—and because I am capable of becoming Nothing, of abolishing myself, or forgetting myself, or sacrificing myself, of dedicating myself, that I become Everything.[14]

Nasser himself quickly took to the strategy, most evident in a famous speech in Alexandria on October 26, 1954. After his speech was interrupted by an assassination attempt that would trigger his crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, Nasser seized the opportunity with a dramatic flair, telling the crowd:

> I am Gamal Abdel Nasser, from you and for you. My blood is from you and for you, and I will live until I die struggling for your cause and working for your sake, for your freedom and your dignity… If Gamal Abdel Nasser should die, I will not die—for all of you are Gamal Abdel Nasser. Egypt's well-being is not linked to Gamal Abdel Nasser but to you and your struggle.[15]

While Nasser spent the first few years after the revolution consolidating his domestic power base,[16] playing the heroic role he had seen "roaming about in this vast region" waiting to be taken up by Egypt soon became an abundant source of symbolic capital for his charisma-based symbolic power.

Nasser's Pan-Arabism

Authors have noted that Nasser's identity as an Egyptian nationalist came first and he grew into the role of pan-Arabist leader more gradually and contingently, contemporaneous with Nasser's expanding international profile.[17] Before coming to power, Nasser showed a rudimentary appreciation of pan-Arabist thought, but it was a

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[14] Bourdieu 1991, 211

[15] Quoted in Margaret Litvin, *Hamlet's Arab Journey: Shakespeare's Prince and Nasser's Ghost* (Princeton University Press, 2011). 40

[16] Kirk J. Beattie, *Egypt During the Nasser Years: Ideology, Politics and Civil Society* (Westview Press, 1994). 66-102

[17] Jankowski 2002, 31-32

minor component of his studies in Egyptian schools. Eberhardt Kienle's readings of primary school curricula from before and after the 1952 Revolution shows the noticeably Egypt-centric emphasis with which Nasser would have experienced, and while he did read some pan-Arab thinkers in military school it appears as though he did not read the thoughts of preeminent modern Arabist theorist Abu Khaldun Sati al-Husri until *after* the Free Officers Coup.[18] Nasser's readings of military history and his experience as a soldier in the multinational Arab effort in the Israeli-Arab War of 1948 did seem to have convinced him of the importance of Arab unity in anti-colonial struggles stretching back to the Crusades, but this was not matched by a significant commitment to the "Arab" cause in his earliest years in power.

By most accounts, this began changing noticeably in 1955 as Nasser and Egypt turned outward. Nasser, with his primarily anti-colonialist ideology, was first rankled by the creation of the Western-backed Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), more commonly known as the Baghdad Pact. Joining Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Arab Iraq (then under Hashemite monarchic rule and led politically by Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, Nasser's prime rival to regional leadership) in a mutual defense and non-interference treaty primarily aimed at preventing Soviet influence in the region, Nasser saw in the Western role in forming the Baghdad Pact the hidden hand of the pernicious colonialism that he had just smacked from Egypt.[19]

[18] Kienle 1995, 61-63; Jankowski 2002, 31; for an overview of al-Husri's Arab nationalist theory, see Dawisha 2003, Chapter 3

[19] Jankowski 2002, 69-70; Elie Podeh, *The Quest for Hegemony in the Arab World: The Struggle Over the Baghdad Pact* (Brill, 1995).

It was in this international context that Nasser began to find his pan-Arab voice and appreciate the power in practicing symbolic politics for a broader audience. Podeh writes of the period:

> Political variables became the most significant variable in the Arab struggle… diplomacy, propaganda, clandestine subversive operations and cultural activities became successful tools in the struggle. The use of these tools, in addition to his charisma, enabled 'Abd al-Nasser to mobilize the masses and assured him a triumph in his struggle over the Baghdad Pact.[20]

It was in this period that Nasser became a master of *international* symbolic politics and his revolutionary challenge to the existing order began crossing Egypt's borders.[21] A particularly successful mobilizing practice came from utilizing "The Voice of the Arabs"—a transnational radio network through which Nasser could appeal directly to peoples across the Arab world to muster support for himself and incite discontent with those of his competitors. Voice of the Arabs broadcast a mix of politics, entertainment, and news programming across the region, along with speeches by Nasser and other sympathetic figures, and its success in mobilizing resistance to the Baghdad Pact "attests to the salience of the transnational and anti-imperialist symbols which Egypt so deftly manipulated."[22] This embrace of symbolic politics coincided with a growing regional appreciation of Nasser's "charisma" or, as it was referred to by Jordan's King Husayn in his memoirs, *mystique*.[23]

For Nasser, the demonstrated success of these transnational symbolic politics also bore witness to the salience of pan-Arabist rhetoric as a potent political symbol and mobilizing factor in Nasser's brand of charismatic politics. As Dawisha writes, "It was

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[20] Podeh 1995, 35
[21] Maridi Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini, and the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 4 (November 1, 1985): 513-514
[22] Ibid., 514
[23] Dawisha 2009, 172

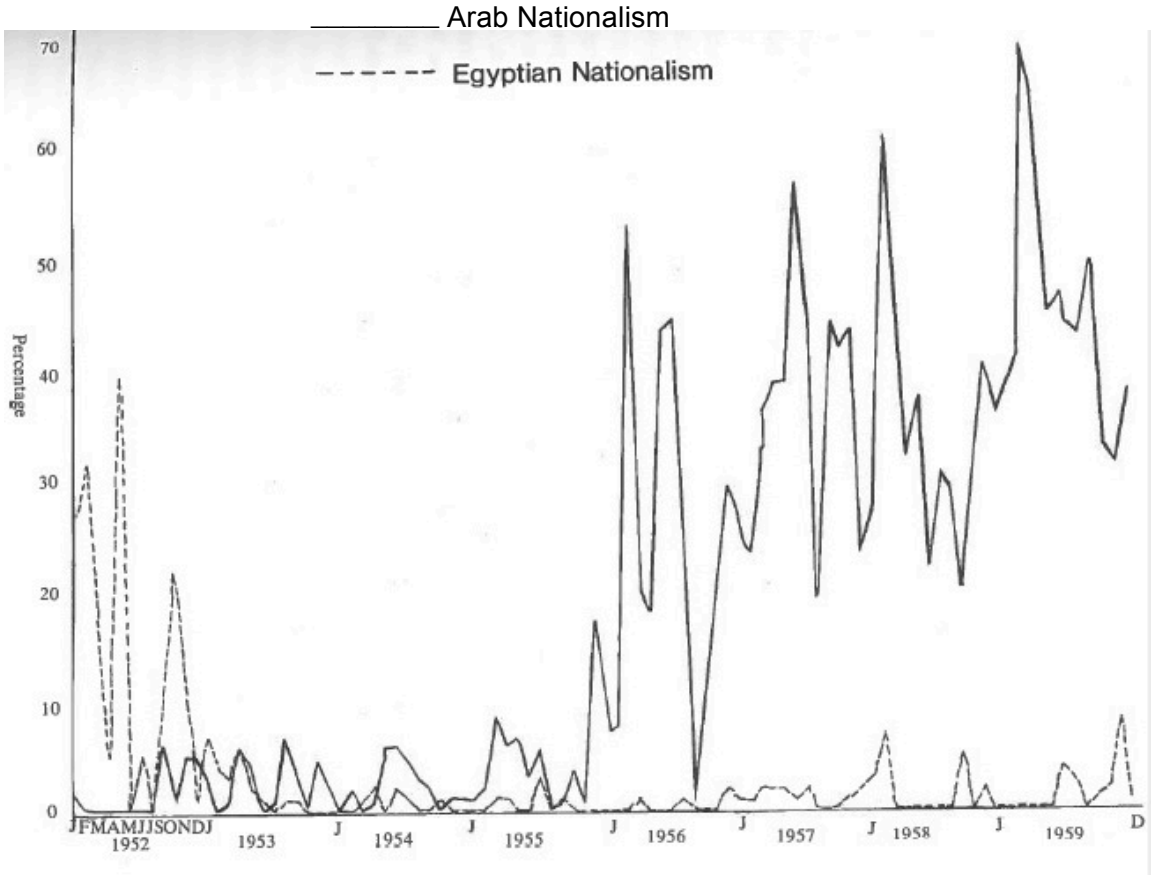
not rationality, the national interest, or power politics… it was the emotional and mystical power of Arab nationalism, articulated by a charismatic leader, that brought the Jordanians onto the streets [against the Baghdad Pact]."[24] Marlène Nasr's systematic analysis of Nasser's major addresses shows that nationalist terms had been unqualified in his earlier speeches, with words like "homeland" and "nation" left unqualified (and thus referent to Egypt) while phrases referring to Arabs were qualified as "the Arab homeland" and "the Arab nation", and only appearing later in Nasser's lexicon. Similarly, Nasser spoke in the plural of "Arab peoples."[25] A similarly systemic analysis of Egyptian radio programming by Dekmejian in 1971 also shows the noticeably increased usage of what he terms "Arab nationalist" rhetoric vs. "Egyptian nationalist" rhetoric around 1955-1956. It shows both the pre-Revolution emphasis that the *ancienne regime* put on Egyptian nationalist symbols and how Nasser (and Voice of the Arabs) came to increasingly embrace the use of Arab symbolic language in 1955-56 (see figure 1, next page).[26] In this, one observes what Bourdieu called "the labor of enunciation" of symbolic politics, in which the vision of the heterodox challenge to the existing order of things. Through this, Nasser began presenting a "*paradoxical pre-vision*" for not just Egypt but for the Arab state system, starting towards "creating the collective representation and will which contribute to its production."[27]

Concurrent with this rise in rhetorical deployment were performances of symbolic politics in the international realm which continued to accrue symbolic capital for Nasser. The 1955 Bandung Conference reinforced Nasser's transformation from a *primus inter*

[24] Dawisha 2009, 172
[25] Nasr 1981, 16-17; Jankowski 2002, 29; 32
[26] Dekmejian 1971, 93-95
[27] Bourdieu 1991, 128

pares in both his prestige in the domestic RCC and the Arab world, as Nasser's tour of the periphery included stops in Pakistan, India, Burma and Afghanistan on his way to Indonesia where he was feted as the leader of the Arab anti-colonial struggle.[28] This symbolic capital bolstered Nasser at home, where RCC members and the American ambassador observed Nasser holding court and treated as the now-indisputable leader of the Free Officers.[29]

Figure 1



Source: Dekmejian 1971, 94

Nasser's most ambitious performance of this period, the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, was unsurprisingly that which afforded him the most symbolic

[28] Podeh 1999, 21
[29] Jankowski 2002, 67-68

capital. On July 26, 1956, Nasser shocked the world when he announced, in a speech broadcast over Voice of the Arabs, that he had moved to nationalize the Suez Canal. The announcement marked Nasser's Arabist apotheosis, with Egypt now included in the referent "Arab nationalism" in the speech as Nasser spoke of "our Arab nationalism" and "our Arabism" as he announced that he had accepted the idea of unity with Syria (who had passed a parliamentary resolution to pursue that end earlier that month) and announced that the Arabs could metaphorically "march together, united as one country, one heart, one man."[30]

The nationalization and speech were a rousing success for Nasser's prestige in both Egypt and Syria. Delegations of Syrians began appearing at the Egyptian embassy to pay tribute at the office of Ambassador Mahmud Riyad, who himself had wondered why Nasser had been focused so much on speaking to Arabs (rather than Egyptians) in his speech before announcing the nationalization halfway through the ninety minute speech.[31] The next month saw crowds of 100,000 take to the streets of Damascus in solidarity with Nasser's stand against the West, taking up Nasser's call in chanting "One flag, one nation, one homeland."[32] While Nasser and his cohorts were only spared the combined British, French, and Israeli invasion by American intervention, Nasser appeared to have stood strong in the face of imperialism, all the while promising a new era for Arabism. In these performative acts, Nasser came to possess the symbolic capital necessary for wielding symbolic power (the power of the state) as a power of group constitution. As discussed in Chapter 3, "Symbolic capital is a credit; it is the power

[30] Jankowski 2002, 32; Kienle 1995, 64
[31] Jankowski 2002, 83; Kienle 1995, 64
[32] Jankowski 2002, 83; Podeh 1999, 33

granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition."[33]

Nasser's Politics: Pragmatism, Centralization, and Authoritarianism

Along with his adoption of charismatic and symbolic politics, Nasser's habitus and practical sense was also shaped by his experiences as a revolutionary leader in Egypt's domestic political field. As mentioned above, Nasser's formative years as a politically-minded nationalist saw him unconvinced of the potential of political parties and dogmatic ideologies by his experiences with Young Egypt, communists, and the Muslim Brotherhood. In place of ideological imperatives, Nasser developed an acute sense of pragmatism as a political virtue. The consolidation of power under Nasser was not the inevitable outcome of Machiavellian machinations, but rather the result of a series of gradual practices and processes that built on one another.[34] Considering his near-obsession with roles, it is not surprising that he wrote after the coup, "I can say now that we did not ourselves define the role given us to play, it was the history of our country which cast us in that role."[35]

And the RCC grew into their roles as they saw them. The Free Officers Coup had banished the monarch but originally left much of the ruling structure of government and political parties in place. The Free Officers' commitment to a new politics came gradually, originally they had planned to let the existing parties reform themselves and resume parliamentary democratic rule after a short transition period. But over time the civilian political parties had proven unable to purge themselves of the corruption and

[33] Bourdieu 1989, 23
[34] Gordon 1991
[35] Quoted in Litvin 2011, 40

nepotism that had characterized their affairs pre-1952. The RCC (except for Khalid Mohi al-Din) grew to have little faith in the benefits of restoring parliamentary democracy over the course of 1952 and abolished political parties on January 17, 1953.[36] This coincided with a series of incidents involving artillery officers in the military, who felt the RCC was straying from promises to democratize the country and becoming an unaccountable clique. After the regime arrested 35 officers, the nascent regime faced potential fratricide among its military ranks as the artillery officers' desire for democracy seemed to threaten the entire revolution.[37] After a brief attempt at restoring democracy in March went sour on account of polemical politics and the press, Mohi al-Din reminisced in his memoirs that "All those actions prompted Nasser, as well as other members of the Revolutionary Command Council, to believe that it must be either the revolution or democracy, and never shall the twain meet."[38] Compromise also became increasingly seen as a threat.

As a result, the RCC and Nasser personally became more and more comfortable with transitioning from transitional caretakers to assuming a pragmatic but authoritarian approach leadership. As Nasser solidified his position within the RCC and other competitors to state power were pushed out, the field of Egyptian politics took on a distinctly top-down shape. As Podeh writes, "the political and economic measures of 1952-1954 virtually destroyed the old landed elite."[39] Measures such as agrarian reform, the abolishment of political parties, and the increasing coherence of the combined military-technocratic leadership as it coalesced around Nasser lent the Egyptian political field a "pyramid" structure (no pun intended) in the mid-1950s. Nasser's "practical

[36] Beattie 1994, 76-79; Mohi al-Din 1995, 177-187
[37] Beattie 1994, 88-89; Mohi al-Din 1995, 153-156
[38] Mohi al-Din 1995, 217
[39] Podeh 1999, 20

sense" going into the UAR then was one shaped by his habitus (an appreciation of charismatic politics, a leadership style emphasizing pragmatism over ideology) and overlapping fields (the Egyptian domestic political field and the political order of the region), lending much explanatory power, it will be shown, to the course of unification.

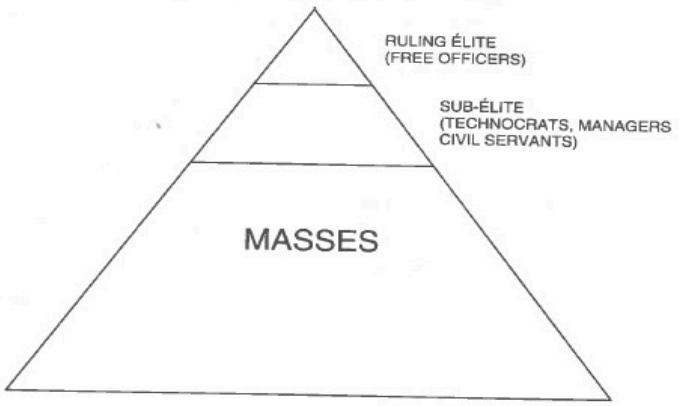


Figure 1.1 Egyptian élite (post-1952)

Source: Podeh 1999, 22

Syria, Pre-unification

Syria had a very different set of both "objective conditions" and the "subjective dispositions" of its elites and population in the lead-up to union. After the end of Ottoman rule (including a period of Egyptian occupation of Syria from 1831-1840), Syria had come under French mandatory authority. Split from some of its territory that went instead to British mandates Jordan and Palestine, Syria further fragmented into sub-states, split largely along sectarian lines.[40] The Syrian state that emerged independent in 1946 was much more disconnected than post-colonial Egypt had been from the legitimating bases for practices of sovereignty in both the "state-based" (territorial) and "nation-based"

[40] Mufti 1996, 43-47

(population) senses of Barkin and Cronin's conceptions.[41] When the last French troops left on 17 April 1946, the country's then-president Shukri al-Quwatli's radio address concluded his radio address by saying that "we shall not accept that any flag other than that of Arab unity will fly over this country."[42] Both of Syria's traditional party blocs at the time espoused Arab nationalism in their party platforms, while the "counter-elite" that formed the Arab Ba'th party in 1947 took for their motto, "One Arab nation with an eternal mission," stressing that "The Arab cause is one and indivisible… total Arab unity is the aim of the Arab struggle."[43]

The years that followed saw Syria a "state" in disarray, with coups and counter-coups leading to the routinization of military intervention and domination in the political field. The military dictatorship of Adib al-Shishakli also espoused the rhetoric of unity, and the country's 1950 constitution explicitly identified the Syrian nation as part of a larger Arab nation that should be united in one state.[44] Just as al-Quwatli's first address adopted the symbolic politics of union, so too did Syria's first military leader, Husni al-Za'im, who proposed union with Hashemite Iraq within days of seizing power in March, 1949.[45] His successor, Sami al-Hunnawi, handed power to a civilian cabinet dominated by unionist traditional political parties. These parties also sought union with Iraq, this time aiming to insulate themselves from the military. When the aforementioned al-Shishakli toppled this government (Syria's third in nine months), the first communiqué of the new regime announced that the coup was launched to stymie the civilian leadership

[41] Barkin and Cronin 1994, 111
[42] Kienle 1995, 58
[43] Ibid., 58; Ilyās Faraḥ and Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī al-Ishtirākī (Syria), *Evolution of Arab Revolutionary Ideology: National Thought* (Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, 1978). 64; it is Podeh who identifies the Ba'th movement as Syria's counter-elite, see Podeh 1999, 16-17
[44] Kienle 1995, 59
[45] Mufti 1996, 50

who "conspire with certain foreign circles against the well-being of the army and the integrity of the state and its republican institutions."[46] But al-Shishakli also came to use unionism as a rhetorical strategy and was surrounded himself for a time by unionists. One of his protégés, 'Abd al-Hamid Sarraj became Nasser's most trusted Syrian ally in the UAR, while Shishakli was initially advised by Akram al-Hawrani, whose Arab Socialist Party would merge with the Ba'th in 1952 and would become the first Vice-President of the UAR.[47]

But whereas the RCC in Egypt had explicitly sought to overturn the traditional elite structure in enacting land reform and outlawing party politics, Syria's deeply rooted elite structures (largely Sunni Muslim) maintained their positions in the Syrian field regardless of the rise of military rule or challenge by counter-elites. Agrarian and commercial holdings were quite entrenched after reinforcing themselves throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Industrialization shifted some capital away from the landed elites, but not away from extreme wealth consolidation—the post-war cartel commanding a significant portion of Syria's economy was known as "the Company of Five" for its five constituent family firms.[48] This capital was convertible across the Syrian political field and economic power translated easily to political power.

> An analysis of Syrian deputies and cabinet ministers between 1919 and 1959 showed that only 145 individuals filled the total of 360 posts in the various cabinets. Between the years 1946-1958, 90 individuals, most from the landowning and mercantile elites, filled the 208 managerial positions. Since some politicians were related by blood and marriage, Winder came to the conclusion that Syria was almost literally governed by '100 families' during the period under review.[49]

[46] Ibid., 53-54
[47] Ibid.., 54; Kerr 1971, 21
[48] Podeh 1999, 15-16
[49] Ibid., 17-18

What Podeh calls the counter-elite emerged from a coalition of the growing, multi-sectarian professional classes of bureaucrats, intelligentsia, and educators that coalesced around the Ba'th party. The result was a heterogenous mix of "traditional" and "modern" elites, "competitive" and "highly unstable" with a pronounced propensity for military involvement, though essentially "conservative" without the same "revolutionary" zeal in overturning traditional elite structures that had characterized Nasser and the RCC's early rule in Egypt.[50]

Figure 1.2 Syrian Élite (mid-1950s)

Source: Podeh 1999, 23

As Syria's elites were more differentiated, so too were their respective habitus. Nonetheless, there were meaningful commonalities. First was the widespread espousal of pan-Arab and pro-union rhetoric from across various elements of Syrian society, from traditional elites to the military to the Ba'th and even the communists (though these

[50] Ibid., 21

groups, particularly the military and the Ba'th, were not entirely distinct).[51] To be sure, each of these sectors had different reasons to view unity as in their strategic interests (recalling that considerations of strategy are *not* outside a logic of practice). The traditional Syrian economic elites wanted favorable access in the much larger Egyptian market, the Ba'th had deep-seated ideological commitments to pan-Arabism, and the discourses of unionism had been almost universally adopted by Syria's succession of leaders based on its popular appeal.

What becomes clear when looking over this period is that unionism becomes a nearly universal strategy for all of Syria's respective attempts at leadership-- whether military or civilian, conservative or revolutionary, and supported by the traditional or counter-elite. In this, Mufti's hypothesis is likely correct in that unionism was a "defensive" strategy for Syrian elites to draw on external support for their internal struggles. But the logic of the strategy, what made the strategy make "practical sense", was the interaction of the habitus of the actors (internecine conflict, the rhetorical practices of unionism, the relative inarticulate sense of Syrian nation and statehood) with the distribution of capital across the field (Syrian domestic politics *and* regional politics), rather than the ex post facto intellectualism that posits that elites acted "as if" Syria would increase its "stateness". In fact, significant repression and other indicators of "state" control of Syria in both this period and in the UAR often backfired.[52]

Most crucial in the push for union in 1958 were the Ba'thists, who at this juncture possessed particular sympathy in much of the military leadership but also in the civilian cabinet, including Foreign Minister and Ba'th party founder Salah al-din al-Bitar. The

[51] Kienle 1995, 58-60; Mufti 1995, 89-90
[52] Mufti 1996, 50-51; 56

Ba'thists were the preeminent political advocates of Arabism, with intellectual Michel 'Aflaq responsible largely for the party's ideological development.[53] The cornerstone of the ideology revolved largely around Arab unity, which was constructed in party thought as "axiomatic, requiring no analysis or proof; [its comprehension] enters the heart and possesses the mind at once."[54] The Ba'thist's had their own "enunciation" of a revolutionary vision of the Arab future, but one that lacked a prophet capable of charismatic constitution. It was the Ba'thists who had the strongest investment in union, as it was to them a step towards the realization of the core of their ideology.

But while the Ba'athists thought the draw of Arab unity to be self-evident, theoretically sound, and historically inevitable, they came to see in Nasser's charismatic politics a leader with whom there was potential for Arab unity to "leave behind the stage of potentiality and become a practical fact."[55] Through his symbolic performances in 1956, Nasser had transformed himself into al-Hakim's "man from among them who will manifest all their emotions and beliefs and become for them a symbol of the ultimate" for not just Egyptians, but for Ba'thists and Arab nationalists across the region.

The push for union then gained immensely from this congruence of practices on the part of most of Syria's relevant stakeholders. The true negotiations were spurred by the Syrian Military Council decided to fly to Cairo and present union plans without the consent or even knowledge of the civilian government.[56] The military's long-established practices of intervening in politics had led them to push for union in an effort to

[53]N. Salem Babikian, "Michel 'Aflaq: A Biographical Study of His Approach to Arabism." (McGill University, 1975), http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&current_base=GEN01&object_id=108808; Kerr 1971, 8-9
[54] N. Salem Babikian, "A Partial Reconstruction of Michel 'Aflaq's Thought," *The Muslim World* 67, no. 4 (1977): 292
[55] Farah 1978, 170
[56] Ibid., 43

circumvent the paralysis Syria seemed to suffer in civilian politics, framing their actions by oft-repeated rhetorical practices of framing Syrian politics in pan-Arab terms. At that moment, the contours of the field and the interaction habitus of the various agents involved made appealing to Nasser for union make "practical sense" to the actors who made it possible.

The Practicality of Unification

Where the record gets muddled is the actual discussions around unification that took place over the course of January and February of 1958. By nearly all accounts, Nasser had little interest in full unification going into the talks.[57] He was reported to have known "fewer than half a dozen Syrians" and had never before set foot in the country.[58] How did unification come to seem practical to both parties? And what determined the course of negotiations and the shape of the union?

Because of a uniquely singular role for Nasser, his actions and dispositions are of particular importance to a more complete understanding of the event. The form that union would take seems more directly attributable to him and his habitus as established through his lived experience than any other factor. Indeed, even the act of taking upon himself this singular role is a manifestation of elements of the interaction of both his habitus-- individualistic, pragmatic, role-driven, and semi-authoritarian-- and his positions in overlapping fields-- Egyptian politics and regional politics, in which he had accrued the unparalleled political and symbolic capital that drove Syrian elites to seek unification in

[57] Jankowski 2002, 108-109; Dawisha 2009, 196-198; Podeh 1999, 43-46
[58] Jankowski 2002, 21; Podeh 1999, 48

the first place-- allowed him to dictate the terms of union and made union seem necessary despite his more "rational" inclinations to the contrary.

He had been cool to Syria's first direct overture, a military contingent which arrived in Cairo in mid-January. When Nasser questioned the first military delegation's representative status as self-appointed saviors of Syria, Syrian Foreign Minister and Ba'th founder Salah al-Din al-Bitar flew to Cairo for further negotiations. As the Syrian delegation pulled out all the stops in their increasingly frantic efforts to sway him, Nasser's individualistic leadership style was on display, as he conducted the negotiations himself with little to no input from the Foreign Ministry, military, or other members of the RCC. His role was so singular that Nasser later regretted not keeping a diary, as there was no official record of the negotiations and it was essentially just himself representing the Egyptian position in negotiations. [59]

From his singular role, Nasser approached the "ideological" draw of union from a decidedly pragmatic position in line with his habitus. Nasser came to recognize over the course of negotiations that he could not reject union and maintain his status as the rising leader of the Arab world.[60] Nasser was indeed a charismatic leader, and "only by keeping the social bond with his followers can the non-conformist leader remain charismatic, instead of becoming a law-breaker."[61] So in Nasser's understanding, to reject union was to reject his charismatic authority. Nasser acted as though he had found himself under pressure to accept a "role" thrust on him by the circumstances of history, telling the

[59] Jankowski 2002, 108
[60] Podeh 1999, 46; Barnett 1998, 130-131; Jankowski 2002, 110-11
[61] Kratochwil 2011, 40

American ambassador that "he had taken the plunge because there was no alternative," and his civilian cabinet that accepting union was a circumstantial necessity.[62]

This pragmatism, an element of a habitus shaped by Nasser's experience in the revolution and the transition to personalized rule, also structured his perception of what commitments he needed from Syrians in order for union to succeed. Seemingly inspired by his early experiences running Egypt, he demanded Syria's political parties be dissolved and a commitment to the withdrawal of the military from politics. Nasser's increasingly personalized style of leadership was reflected in the need for the proposed state to be a centralized, total union with a single political structure (the National Union) rather than the politically-competitive federation that Syrians had initially pursued. Nasser thus approached union in accordance with his practices and habitus, strengthened by his unrivalled position in the field of regional politics.

But the Syrians pushing for unification came to unionization from a different set of habitus and practices. Where Nasser's leadership was intensely personalized, Syrian politics were highly fragmented and competitive. Rhetorical desires for union had been a time-tested strategy in these competitions, but a strategy which had taken on new value and possibilities in the field of Syrian politics, thanks to both the concurrent rise of the Ba'th and Nasser's embrace of symbolic/charismatic politics and concomitant increase in regional stature. Both Nasser and the Ba'thists viewed union through their historical dispositions and brought to the UAR a sense that union would bear out their historically-shaped expectations. Nasser's embrace of charismatic politics over the course of the mid-1950s made union seem literally irresistible, but his Egyptian experience also shaped the way he approached it and his requirements of his Syrian partners. The Syrians were more

[62] Jankowski 2002, 111; 109

disparate in their motivations, but nearly all viewed union as a legitimate strategy with an established precedent in the Syrian political field, with the Ba'thists in particular thought they'd benefit most from union and framed their expectations in terms of their theoretical inclinations.

In this we see the first evidence of emerging hysteresis, a misfit of the subjective habitus of actors and the objective conditions of the field. The Ba'thist habitus—informed by its historical experience in the Syrian political field, rhetorical practices stressing unification as a sovereign practice, and a commitment to dogmatic and deterministic theory—led the Ba'thists to evaluate the historical moment and anticipate for themselves an outcome in which they would be the primary beneficiaries of unification *despite* indications to the contrary, such as being forced to dissolve their party. Their practices were dictated largely by ideological considerations of the exact kind that Nasser repeatedly showed himself to have little use for, but their belief in "unity" as a theoretical axiom led them to believe that unity itself would necessarily resolve its own contradictions.

> We can… disengage a theoretical and general scientific law which can help us to foresee the future. Since the experience of union has satisfied subjective and objective needs by ensuring the revolution's immortality in the Arab Homeland, it cannot fail to consolidate the factors of its success and prove its ability to conquer fragmentation definitively and eliminate class differences and colonialist, Zionist and reactionary projects. Unity is equivalent to an acceleration on the path of head-on confrontation with the main contradictions of the Arab condition.[63]

In part, this belief in the inevitability of their theoretical postulates led the Ba'thists to feel that they would be integral in management of post-union Syria regardless of the official dissolution of the party. Despite agreeing to Nasser's demands and dissolving, the

[63] Farah 1970, 173

Ba'th felt that they it was they who should "solely control the Syrian region."[64] Party leader Michel 'Aflaq explained later:

> We hoped that the party would have a basic and responsible share in the governing of the new nation which we helped to create. We hoped our role would be both practical and theoretical since it was we who began preaching Socialist ideas at least fifteen years before Nasser assumed power.[65]

This almost patronizing tone towards Nasser's ideological credentials highlights that for the Ba'th, union was not pragmatic but ideologically and theoretically necessary. This condescension echoes throughout the Ba'th's public statements on union. Kerr writes:

> The Ba'th was an ideological party, and its leaders suffered the common illusion of ideologues everywhere that that they possessed a unique vision of the Truth, which was somehow indispensible for effective political action and which could somehow be converted into political power. Nasir had admirable revolutionary instincts, but as Michel 'Aflaq indiscreetly told the press just after the inauguration of the union, he was in need of a 'philosophy'. This implicitly, the Ba'th would provide. They could see that their slogans of 'liberation, unity, socialism' were being adopted in practice by the Egyptian regime and that a general identity of revolutionary orientation existed, but 'Abd al-Nasir's policies, because they were improvised and pragmatic rather than doctrinaire, were thought by Ba'thists to be, at heart, undisciplined, opportunistic, and open to contradictions. For what revolution could be preserved without a guiding creed? Surely before long Nasir would be brought by his own experience to acknowledge this need, and would turn to the Ba'th.[66]

To put it perhaps a bit crudely, the Ba'thist habitus led them to believe that they were "the brains" behind the operation and would be treated as such in the unified state. But this habitus was distinctly out of phase with the objective conditions of the fields of both Syrian politics (where they were by no means politically dominant) and the distribution of symbolic capital across the field of Arab politics, in which Nasser was clearly preeminent.

Given Nasser's status as the senior partner in unification, the recognized pan-Arab leader of the region, and a leadership role in Egypt so unrivalled that he could single-

[64] Quoted in Podeh 1999, 53
[65] Quoted in Jankowski 2002, 118
[66] Kerr 1971, 12

handedly conduct negotiations on unification, it is hardly surprising that the terms of unification were determined by Nasser and corresponded little with the expectations of the Ba'th. Perceiving events through his habitus, Nasser saw in unification another role laid down at his borders, with no one else to play it. Because of his embrace of symbolic politics over 1956-57, he seemed to feel as though he had little choice but to take up the role- his charismatic politics depended on the symbolic power afforded to him as the preeminent Arab leader. But with this social logic came the pragmatic habitus that had characterized Nasser's political life thus far—anti-dogma, anti-party, and personalized. Once union was determined to be the course of action, Nasser was going to do it his way.

Nasser and the Masses: Unification as Representation

Nasser's position in the talks was determined largely by his symbolic capital and position as a regional leader, a result of his charismatic performances during the Bandung Conference and the Suez Crisis. Charismatic politics, as discussed in Chapter 2, are primarily symbolic. They are seen in both "the labor of enunciation" in which an alternative vision to the extant symbolic order is developed and propagated, and symbolic action, in which the charismatic leader becomes "representative" of collectives by performing certain semiotic practices. Nasser seemed to have embraced both over the course of the mid-1950s, relentlessly challenging the regional status quo via Voice of the Arabs and alluding to a revolutionary new politics (albeit one less theoretically developed than that of the Ba'th) while taking highly symbolic actions at Bandung and Suez that helped him to speak an Arab people into coherence and appoint himself their

representative in homily-laced speeches painting himself as an *ibn al-balad* ("son of the land").[67]

It was these performances, and the recognition of Nasser's accumulated symbolic capital by "the masses", that gave him his privileged position in the negotiations with Syrian elites over unification. Because nearly every work on Nasser or the UAR highlights at some point his "charisma" as an integral component to union, this element of Nasser's power should not be ignored on account of the difficulty political science has with such intangible concepts. According to an American diplomat, it was his "name" which brought Egypt and Syria together, and in the late 1950s it was indeed his name on the lips of everyone from the Maghreb to the Fertile Crescent. According to one anecdote, a group of Iraqi air force officers on an official visit in Morocco were shocked to hear "From the rebellious Gulf to the roaring ocean, At your service, 'Abd al-Nasir" recited by many Moroccans they encountered.[68] When Afif al-Bizri, the Syrian military officer who headed the first delegation to Cairo, later remarked that "we followed the masses… who at that hour could dare say we do not want unity? The people would tear their heads off," he speaks to the immense role that Nasser's charismatic politics played in union.[69]

Recall that for Bourdieu, the exercise of symbolic power "whose form par excellence is the power to make groups," rests on two conditions. The first is the recognition of symbolic capital, which Nasser had accrued through the Voice of the Arabs and performances of pan-Arab rhetoric paired with action at the Bandung Crisis and in particular during the Suez Crisis. The second is that "the vision proposed is

[67] Litvin 2011, 41
[68] Dawisha 2009, 185
[69] Mufti 1996, 91

founded in reality… in the objective affinities of those agents who have to be brought together."[70] Given that the event occurred over 60 years ago, traditional methods such as ethnography or survey data are obviously of little use. However, there is substantial evidence that the dispositions of the masses, of what Hopf calls "common sense" in a post-Gramscian sense, were supportive of union.

The results of a referendum held to ratify the union were near unanimous, with 99% of voters in both Egypt and Syria voting in favor. While these numbers were likely somewhat tainted, with foul play later alleged in the memoirs of unification opponent Khalid al-'Azm, union clearly "commanded the overwhelming and ecstatic support of the vast majority of Syrians."[71] The formation of the UAR, and particularly Nasser himself, seemed to have an effect that Bourdieu described as part of the labor of enunciation. For many across the region, unification under the auspices of the UAR was a means of "externalizing the inwardness", tapping into an emotional, internalized, almost "irrational" and unreflexive element of social action.[72]

For this, one looks for evidence of representation: the "objectification" and externalization of the heretofore internal and subjective.

> The political labor of representation (not only in words or theories but also in demonstrations, ceremonies, or any other form of symbolization of divisions or opposition) gives the objectivity of public discourse and exemplary practice a way of seeing or of experiencing the social world that was previously relegated to the state of a practical disposition of a tacit and often confused experience (unease, rebelliousness, etc.).[73]

There is an abundance of evidence that these Arabist sentiments were these kind of internalized aspirations that led to the sort of recognition of common properties despite

[70] Bourdieu 1989, 22-23
[71] Dawisha 2009, 202
[72] Bourdieu 1991, 129
[73] Ibid., 130

otherwise salient and dividing classifications such as class or nationality, performed and represented across the region with unification. Michel 'Aflaq, never one to shy from intellectualization, nonetheless said of unity that it was simply: *"a living experience, incapable of being understood by reason alone."* (italics in original)[74] Speaking after the plebiscite, Nasser literally spoke for many when saying:

> Each one of us feels in his heart that his will has triumphed; that his faith and aspirations have been victorious; and that Arab nationalism, which was merely a dream to all of us… and which had been mentioned in poems for many long years… has now been realized.[75]

Upon his surprise visit to Syria two days later, people took to the streets as word spread of his presence at Syria's presidential residence. The scene left a lasting impression on all present. The Ba'thist al-Hawrani remembered "It was an awesome sight, this sea of colliding humanity which gathered with astonishing speed." Hundreds of thousands crowded onto the premises, and moving from the residence to the official guesthouse took two hours as the car was adrift on a human wave of admirers. Anwar al-Sadat, Nasser's successor, wrote later in his autobiography:

> I really feel incapable of describing that week. It was like a constant delirium—a stream of (speeches) that flowed day and night… The crowds could not get enough and seemed to grow increasingly frenzied. All that was said was hailed, applauded, celebrated. People chanted and screamed and called for more. For a whole week the crowds besieged the Guesthouse. They camped outside in the wide square, eating, drinking, and sleeping in the open air.[76]

Mufti, Barnett, Podeh, Jankowski, Kerr and others all attempt to explain the UAR primarily through an elite-focused lens emphasizing logics of consequence and appropriateness. But a critical aspect to unification, in particular for Syrians, was the combined appeal of Nasser as a charismatic leader, capable of recognizing, constituting,

[74] Faraḥ 1978, 59
[75] Podeh 1999, 50
[76] Dawisha 2009, 202-203

and mobilizing a group in representation of a primarily internal, non-reflexive, socialized collective habitus of Arabist identities.

The salience of these semiotic practices and performances crossed borders and continental divides, proving potent across the region even in countries whose political leadership were primarily at odds with Nasser. Unification "externalized the inwardness" of Arabs all over. In Hashemite Iraq, "the citadel of the anti-Nasirist forces in the area", a leading regime figure noted in his memoirs that unification "generated among the educated and politically aware Iraqis an overwhelming sense of exuberance and ardor, and resuscitated within them aspirations, the realization of which they had considered to be no more than a dream."[77] The importance of charismatic politics and Nasser's symbolic power of representation help explain how the UAR came about as the recognition of a group not constructed *ex nihilo*, but rather recognized in collective dispositions, habitus, or mass common sense of Syrians. Nasser's strategic performances of Arabism, honed over both his and Egypt's regional rise in the mid-1950s, led to his accumulation of the symbolic capital required to bring the UAR into existence. But the charismatic leader "must keep the bond with his followers", and the objective implications of the UAR on the lives of its Syrian citizens would strain these bonds immensely.

Hysteresis: Politics, Economics, and Administration

As described above, a certain hysteresis present among Syrian elites led them (the Ba'thists in particular) to believe that unification made practical sense as a strategy. But as union took shape, they were among the first Syrians to be gradually disavowed of their

[77] Ibid., 204

lofty aspirations as the UAR became a political entity in practice. They were, however, joined by Nasser and other Egyptian elites, who sought to import many of the same practices they had implemented to some success in Egypt with correspondingly little appreciation or adaptation for various elements of Syrian *mētis*, or practical, experiential knowledge. Egyptian-style governance proved a very poor fit for Syria in nearly all sectors: political, economic, military, and even cultural mismatches proved to undercut the union and sow the seeds for disillusionment and eventual secession. While some of this can be (and often is) blamed on perceptions of Nasser's high-handedness in dealing with his Syrian counterparts, it might be more appropriate to view many decisions as the result of hysteresis—the misfit of a habitus to changed circumstances.

This was evident in unification from the very beginning. As shown above, Nasser's desire to abolish political parties was based on experience in the particular Egyptian context in which Nasser had developed his political acumen. In the course of development of Egypt's coup-turned-revolution, most of the traditional parties embedded in the pre-revolutionary order: corrupt and close to the previous regime, inseparable from constituencies of traditional economic elites which had long benefitted from the status quo, proved either unable to reform themselves in the year following the coup. Other competitors, namely the Muslim Brotherhood, engaged in the same kind of symbolic struggles for remaking society in their image that Nasser did, and were thus necessarily exclusive rivals to be eliminated. After these parties were dissolved, the Free Officers responsible for the coup became the Revolutionary Command Council responsible for the totality of a political revolution.

In Syria, despite the noted lack of a singular Syrian national identity, there was indeed a thriving and competitive (often to its own detriment) political field in which both revolutionaries (Communists and Ba'thists) and conservatives (traditional elites) were competitive and engaged. Nasser's aim for the politics of the UAR were similar to the precedent he'd set in Egypt- a de-politicization period of the government, bureaucracy, and military to be followed by a single party system for mobilization, ideology, and organization. The proposed National Union had begun to take shape in Egypt in 1957, and grew to become the stand-in envisioned for Syria's political culture in 1959.[78] The National Union was slow to develop, and Nasser's relationship with the Ba'th had already frayed by the time the first elections were held in July of 1959.

The Ba'th were still holding strong to their aspirations towards partnership or even a paternalistic or pedantic role in the union, only to be disappointed time and time again by Nasser's refusal to kowtow to the Ba'th in his initial appointments to the UAR's joint cabinet.[79] They attempted instead to appoint themselves the on-the-ground managers of the Syrian region, removing many traditional rivals from administrative, bureaucratic, and military posts and replacing them with party cadres. So when the National Union held its first elections, the Ba'th hoped again to be awarded a dominant position. Instead, the elections only served to humiliate the Ba'th as their rivals collaborated to exclude them from election lists, leading to a widespread boycott that left the Ba'th with just 100 or so of 9,445 total local seats.[80] The Ba'th had seen themselves as the Syrian leaders of the UAR, but both the Syrian masses and Nasser clearly felt differently when undercutting their positions in the National Union elections.

[78] Jankowski 2002, 123
[79] Podeh 1999, 53
[80] Podeh 1999, 92; Kerr 1972, 14

The evidence points again to a hysteresis effect- a mismatch of habitus between Nasser, the Ba'thists and the masses. In the build-up to the elections, Nasser reiterated that the National Union *was not* a return to party politics: "The National Union is not a single party but an entire homeland, meeting inside one framework in which all become equal." The Syrian population, just a year removed from the intense party politics and factionalism that had characterized their independence thus far, treated the elections as a return to the old ways and saw a chance to settle scores with the Ba'thists who had made themselves the local administrative face of the UAR. The US Ambassador in Damascus noted the disconnect in a cable, writing Washington that "Cairo's unrealistic hopes for a nonpartisan election have been swallowed up in the quicksands of Syrian political animosities."[81]

Though it highlighted the increasingly schismatic relationship between Nasser and his original allies in unification, the Ba'th's losses in the National Union were not necessarily a loss for the overall political project of the UAR. In fact, traditional elites did quite well in the National Union elections, and thus many analysts see in the results a kind of rapprochement for Nasser and conservative elements of Syrian society.[82] But this rapprochement had been necessary due to another mismatch of practices, habitus, and *mētis* in the economic realm.

Syria and Egypt had significant economic differences at the time of union. Egypt had become an increasingly centralized economy over the first decade of Nasser's regime, quickly enacting widespread agricultural reform and nationalizing much of the country's industrial capacity in the mid-1950s. Nasser's performances on the world stage,

[81] Podeh 1999, 92
[82] Jankowski 2002, 123; Kerr 1972, 14

particularly after the Bandung Conference, also seemed to influence his economic vision as his policies shifted towards socialism like much of the developing world at the time. The shift was gradual but apparent. The Egyptian Constitution of 1956 did declare a right to private economic activity and property, but also stipulated that these considerations would yield to the needs of the general society's welfare.[83] In the year before unification, Egypt had taken significant steps towards centralizing the economy through bureaucratic and administrative reforms, commissioning a number of bodies responsible for centralized economic planning for an economy increasingly aiming to implement Nasser's desire for "Arab Socialism".[84]

Syria's economy, in contrast, was built around large agricultural holdings, exports, and private enterprise. The Syrian state was but a nascent economic actor itself, slowly developing its post-colonial capacity; it took until the founding of the Central Bank in August 1956 for Syria to have its first "independent and centralized monetary system of its own, as well as the administrative machinery with which to direct it."[85] The state possessed very little extractive capabilities of its own, with nearly all of its revenues coming from taxation of its private citizens, who had been benefitting from an economic boom driven almost entirely by private business. A 1955 report by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development highlighted both the role of private enterprise and the conspicuously minor role of the Syrian state in the day-to-day of Syria's economic life, noting that "A characteristic feature of Syria's rapid economic development is that it has been almost wholly due to private enterprise… The Syrian economy has now probably reached a stage in its development at which the government must undertake a

[83] Dekmejian 1971, 125
[84] Ibid., 126
[85] Edmund Y. Asfour, *Syria: Development and Monetary Policy* (Harvard University Press, 1959). 55

more important promotional role" though "even the application of other comparatively simple taxes is hindered by lack of trained personnel and modern procedures and equipment."[86]

Nasser, whose Egyptian economic policies had taken on a distinctly centralized and bureaucratic form under the guise of "Arab socialism," found himself less than impressed when the Syrian economy came under his management, noting that "the administrative machinery of the Syrian government was a rather simple affair by comparison to that of Egypt—scarcely worthy of a grocery shop, as [he] once remarked."[87] Much of the UAR's early efforts were then dedicated to laying the groundwork for economic integration of its two regions.

Both Nasser and the Ba'thists were keen to replicate Egypt's successes with land reform, and announced a Syrian corollary in September of 1958.[88] In many ways, the Syrian Agricultural Reform Law (ARL) was functionally similar to Egypt's, which had been passed in 1952. But differentiation in the cultivation and investment structures of agricultural land holdings between the two regions led to the Syrian implementation to be "in a sense… more radical since the output per acre in Egypt was much greater than in Syria."[89] Observers at the time noted the implementation of an "Egyptian" approach to land reform in the UAR, despite some efforts to tailor the laws in different ways.[90]

Sowing Egyptian habitus in the Syrian field(s) delivered little but a bumper crop of hysteresis. In December, Syrian shareholders submitting a memorandum to Nasser

[86] Mufti 1996, 57-58; Podeh 1999, 68-69
[87] Dekmejian 1971, 124-132; Kerr 1971, 23-24
[88] Podeh 1999, 76
[89] Ibid., 77
[90] Kenneth H. Parsons, "Land Reform in the United Arab Republic," *Land Economics* 35, no. 4 (November 1, 1959): 319–26

highlighting "the inapplicability of Egyptian land restrictions to Syria" noted that while the signing groups "do not in principle object to social justice, but the law was never considered in the light of conditions prevailing in the Syrian province."[91] Mohammad Heikal, the squire of Nasser's court, spoke to this problem of misfit objective conditions, noting that Egypt was a "river society" in which all cultivation was necessarily dependent on the Nile (and substantial state intervention in its irrigation networks) whereas Syria was a "rain society" in which unpredictable rainfall determined crop yields.[92] Exacerbating problems was a factor beyond even Nasser's control- severe drought. Syria had been hit hard by a drought that would ultimately last throughout the short lifespan of the UAR, and the ARL only seemed to further exacerbate matters. Between 1957 and 1960, Syrian per capita income declined nearly one-fifth on account of the drought and related economic concerns.[93] As the drought continued, the US consul-general in Damascus reported to Washington that because Syrians would not blame Allah for the drought, "it was necessary to blame the man next to him—in this case Nasser."[94] By 1960, the draught and the continued failure of the UAR to bear its promised fruit combined in a quip circulating Syria that "There's been no rain since the Egyptians came and there'll be none till they go!"[95] Nasser's nearly prophet-like charisma, so integral to union, also burdened him with understandably high expectations of the new order that would accompany his performances.

Like the centralized, "high modern" interventions highlighted in Scott's *Seeing Like a State*, the implementation of the ARL was a misfit of a centralized notion of high

[91] Podeh 1999, 78
[92] Ibid., 3-4
[93] Jankowski 2002, 134
[94] Quoted in Podeh 1999, 133
[95] Jankowski 2002, 134

modernism applied to a field where both the objective factors in Syrian agriculture and the social *mētis* of local agricultural production were at odds with the policy pursued. While the result was not a humanitarian disaster along the lines of a famine, it was a political disaster for the UAR in its early days. It both alienated the traditional elites and served to unify them in their increasing opposition to the union they had so recently supported, and easily transferred resentment onto the most visible in-country representatives of the state- the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus.

Increasingly throughout the union it was the movement towards bureaucratization and centralization (in concordance with the appearance of Egyptian domination of the resultant apparatus) that alienated Syrians from all sectors from the UAR as a political project. While Ba'thists had been disappointed in their failure to secure a meaningful political role in the UAR, they had nonetheless taken prominent positions in the local administration of the Syrian region. This was one of the main reasons for their poor showings in the National Union elections: many Syrians, both elite and non-elite, held the Ba'thist officials responsible for the UAR policies that they saw as contrary to their interests.[96] Of these decisions, the ARL was a major sticking point. Clashes of bureaucratic habitus also plagued relations between Egyptian civil servants sent to Syria and their interlocutors, with differences in pay, work habits, and culture leading one Syrian official to comment after his resignation, "We can't work with these people."[97]

While the transfer of Egyptians to the Syrian province of the UAR was less prevalent than is often believed, the sense of an intolerably overbearing bureaucratic (one more often than not associated with Egyptians) presence appears to have been a real

[96] Podeh 1999, 97
[97] Jankowski 2002, 131-132; Kerr 1971, 24

source of frustration for Syrians during the UAR.[98] Even the Ba'th, who had initially taken advantage of positions in the local bureaucracies to further their agenda in Syria, would ultimately come to condemn the effect of "bureaucracy" in their reflections on the UAR experience:

> Authorities in power continued to enclose the spiritual, organizational and revolutionary dimension of unity within the circumscribed phraseology of information, created new paradoxes as each day passed and, finally, aggravated fragmentation in the name of unity. Instead of unifying the worker and agricultural sectors of the masses and canalizing their production in a revolutionary manner, instead of converging its attention on revolutionary spirit and applying itself to evolving a climate favourable to creativity, bureaucracy—with its unjustified cultural superiority complex—annihilated freedom and killed initiative. They suffocated any voice raised in criticism and invented new production sectors and methods of falsification and torture to lead the masses astray, weaken unity and empty it of its progressive, popular content.[99]

It was the final—and most severe—steps towards centralization that would ultimately undo the UAR. In July 1961, Nasser announced a sweeping set of proclamations aimed at establishing a truly socialist economy in what had until that point been a somewhat hybridized economic regime. The "July Laws" proposed wealth redistribution through increased taxes and mandated profit-sharing, strengthening workers' rights and privileges, and nationalizing large sectors of the national economy. In addition, a new administrative system was announced in which the regime would no longer be split into regional cabinets but rather amalgamated into one central cabinet. Fourteen of thirty-five ministers and two of seven vice-presidents would be Syrian, while Damascus would be the country's capital from February through May each year.[100] While these reforms were intended as an overture to assuage the alienated feelings of most Syrians through properly unifying the two regions, they only served to heighten the senses of both traditional and

[98] Jankowski 2002, 131; Kerr 1971, 24
[99] Faraḥ 1978, 183
[100] Jankowski 2002, 162-163; Podeh 1999, 141-145

counter-elites that union was an increasingly costly mistake for them.[101] Despite the appearance of public signs imploring "Please, Be Patient," the Syrian *infisal* (secession coup) brought unification to an end on September 28, 1961.

Post-Secession: Habitus Dies Hard

Even when it results in hysteresis, habitus dies hard. In response to the coup, Nasser doubled down on his use of charismatic strategies. His first inclinations were to ignore his Syrian interlocutors and rely instead on his charisma, as personally implored the Syrian population to rise against the *infisal* in his name. After the successes of the secessionists, his speeches broadcast over Voice of the Arabs highlight the failings of the UAR as primarily symbolic, and led him to reemphasize his commitment to a charismatic politics now distinct from any attempts to found a unified Arabist state on charismatic grounds.

The first communiqués from the *infisal* stressed that the apparent coup explained their actions as a "purification" of "criminal cliques" that had derailed Syria's experience in the UAR and made no mention of secession from the UAR. negotiations between the coup leaders and Nasser's right hand man, Field Marshall Abdel Hakim Amir, centered around amending the ARL, elimination of "opportunists" (perhaps the Ba'thists who had taken such prominent positions in local civil administrations and were seen to use them against domestic opponents) from the regime, and turning the UAR into a federation in which Syria and Egypt would enjoy equal status.[102] Amir was amenable, but Nasser was

[101] Podeh 1999, 148
[102] Jankowski 2002, 167; Podeh 1999, 150

not. Once it became clear that Amir was no longer speaking for Nasser in negotiations, he and other pro-UAR ministers were put on a plane with a one-way trip to Cairo.

Faced with the prospect of negotiating and potentially saving, albeit changing, the overall structure of the UAR, Nasser instead took to the airwaves, refusing "bargaining" and "a half-way solution." Instead, he sought to draw once more on the symbolic political performances that had brought union and would, he hoped, save it. Encouraging every Syrian "to carry out his duty in the service of the principle," he promised that he would not "abandon those who have today supported the Arab Republic and unity."[103] Nasser launched a military operation in support of a counter-coup, but ultimately called the mission off after the coup had consolidated its hold in the cities and among the units of the former First Army of the UAR.[104]

We can see here two elements of Nasser's habitus, mismatched to the Syrian field, taking center stage for one last charismatic encore. Nasser's refusal to compromise and immense fear of military intervention in politics (stemming from his experiences in the 1953 near-coup with the artillery officers and Syria's history of repeated coups) precluded him from seeing the likely possibility that the UAR could be saved with some not unreasonable policy changes to address grievances stemming from the application of Egyptian policies to Syrian society. But perhaps more important was his return to the symbolic politics of charisma, taking to the airwaves again in an attempt to personally implore Syrians to mobilize on his behalf against the *infisal.* It was not entirely unsuccessful, as there were some relatively inconsequential counterdemonstrations in

[103] Quoted in Podeh 1999, 150-151
[104] Ibid., 151

Syria and Nasser's popularity remained high enough that the coup initially refrained from publicly criticizing him.

In the post-mortem, he emphasized the failure to accomplish the "radical transformation" of symbols and semiotic practices that a charismatic politics needs. Translating a speech broadcast on October 16, Podeh writes that Nasser blamed the failure of the UAR on five factors: "reconciliation with 'reaction' (raj'iyya); lack of sufficient popular organization; the lack of revolutionary zeal among the masses; a government machinery unqualified for its revolutionary task; and the failure to eradicate opportunism and selfishness."[105] Most of these are evidence of the failure of charismatic *metanoia*, Weber's term for the potential for a charismatic politics to "effect a subjective or internal reorientation… result[ing] in a radical alteration of the central attitudes and directions of action," rather than diagnoses of specific policy grievances.[106] Nasser's charisma could bring Syria and Egypt together, but other elements of his practical sense led to policies that only highlighted the artificiality, the utter "unnaturalness" of the UAR for its Syrian population.

Although their limits had been recently demonstrated in the case of the UAR, Nasser was not moving away from his brand of charismatic politics. Mohammad Heykal, editor of the regime-affiliated *al-Ahram* newspaper and unofficial court scribe of the Nasser regime, wrote an editorial distinguishing between "Egypt as state" and "Egypt as revolution." Writing that "as a state, Egypt deals with all Arab governments… as a revolution, Egypt should deal only with the people," Heykal's editorial is a mission statement for Nasser's post-UAR performances, reemphasizing a commitment to

[105] Ibid., 163
[106] Quoted in Kalyvas 2002, 73

charismatic and symbolic politics as a transformative subjective project for the masses, now distinct from the objective practices of sovereign governance that had doomed the UAR. In his own speeches, Nasser stopped speaking of "unity of ranks" and began speaking of "unity of purpose," showing that his politics were not now focused on uniting states as objective structures, but rather mobilizing the Arab peoples outside of the practices of governmental sovereignty.

The habitus of Syrian elites that had both inspired and doomed union also continued in seemingly full effect. The secessionist coup was supported of a broad cross-section of Syrian society just as unification had been, including many elites who had been just as supportive of unification. Shukri al-Quwatli, who stepped down from his presidency of an independent Syria to become the (politically meaningless) "First Citizen of the UAR", condemned the hysteresis-laden UAR experience in speaking of his support for the new government.

> Two happy dates have marked my life, Syrian independence on 17 April 1946, and the Syrian-Egyptian union of 5 February 1958… I was greatly disappointed… they did not understand that what could be applied in Egypt could not be applied in Syria.[107]

Even the Ba'thists Bitar (who had led the negotiations with Nasser in 1958) and al-Hawrani (who served as the first Syrian Vice-President of the UAR) signed the statement of support for the secession government. But within months, Syria appeared quite as it had pre-union. The traditional elites had taken a dominant role in the government, but the intense factionalism that had characterized the country's pre-UAR politics- 4 cabinets in two years, a re-privatization of the economy, and a highly politicized military. After a Ba'thist coup in 1963, Syria's elites even attempted once more to unify with Egypt and

[107] Kerr 1971, 33

draw on Nasser's charismatic appeal to bolster the new government.[108] For Nasser, however, this time union seemed far from a practical course of action.

Conclusion

A practice theoretical frame and its attendant social logic can help to account for the entirety of the UAR's existence, from unification to dissolution, by enabling an evaluation of the events as they were perceived by their participants rather than applying the logic of intellectualization or rationalization ex post facto. Unification came about from an overlapping correspondence in the habitus of both Nasser and Syrian elites. However, despite this momentary correspondence, these habitus were also distinctly unique and informed the actors perceptions and intentions quite differently. The UAR in practice came to exemplify the potential of charisma and symbolic politics, but also the limitations of these powers, as attempts to intervene in the lives of its Syrian citizens tended to conflict with their collective habitus. Nasser's charismatic performances could bring Syria and Egypt together, but the same habitus that informed those practices led to others that informed the implementation of policies that proved problematic for the Syrian region and resulted in a hysteresis effect as the UAR increasingly developed as an objective state only to highlight its "unnatural" and alienating effects on Syrian subjectivities.

In forming the UAR, Nasser, having come to possess unparalleled symbolic capital in his early years as Egypt's revolutionary leader, speaks into existence a new state by appealing to widely shared, if submerged, subjective dispositions towards Arabism. His charismatic performances of representation, capable of "externalizing the

[108] See Chapters 2 and 3 in Kerr, 1971

inwardness" (in Bourdieu's words) of a pre-reflective pan-Arabist sentiment, led to an attempt at a new sovereign performance for Egypt and Syria after the momentary overlap in the habitus-shaped perceptions of Syrian elites and Nasser. This is in many ways attributable to the effects of Nasser's charismatic performances on the Syrian masses, who as a result of their own weak collective identification with the state came to see in Nasser a transformative, revolutionary leader.

But his vision for the new state, shaped by a habitus shaped by and attuned to his experience in the Egyptian political field, clashed with those of various Syrian actors who had initially desired union but quickly found that the mismatch of Nasser's practical sense to the Syrian field resulted in a hysteresis effect. As a result, Nasser pursued policies that had made "practical sense" in the Egyptian field (abolishing political parties, agricultural reform, bureaucratization/centralization) but alienated the Syrian constituencies of the UAR, including the dogmatic and party-oriented Ba'thists, the traditional agricultural and mercantile elites, and the military.

In this, the UAR's attempt to "routinize" the charismatic, to accomplish the "radical transformation of subjective orientations and attitudes"[109] through which the state "incarnates itself simultaneously in objectivity, in the form of specific organizational structures and mechanisms, and in subjectivity in the form of mental structures and categories of perception and thought" was ultimately doomed as these processes seemed to work against one another.[110] The objective elements of the state in the UAR—the bureaucracy, the organizational structure, the policies—never managed to become "naturalized" or monopolize the legitimate use of symbolic violence in a manner

[109] Kalyvas 2002, 72
[110] Bourdieu 1994, 4

that corresponded with the lived experience of its Syrian subjects. The objective reality of the state was eminently out-of-phase with the subjective expectations of its Syrian participants, with the unified state ultimately proving quite fragile *despite* enabling a much more developed bureaucratic and security apparatus and expanded scope for state intervention.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis began as a project informed primarily through the theoretical concerns of IR theory, seeking to answer how two sovereign states willfully abridged into one without overt coercion or subjugation. But while researching the IR literature on sovereignty was stimulating, the story of the UAR was downright fascinating. It has little precedent and no comparable successors. It inspired feelings of euphoria and triumph in Arabs from all backgrounds and classes only to provoke distrust, dysfunction and despair within a few short years. Its principle partners both left the project dissatisfied, blaming others for bringing about the demise of what had seemed such an inspirational endeavor.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the story's uniqueness, the episode garners relatively little attention in the political science literature. Where it does merit a mention, it is usually fit into larger investigations of regional dynamics. The discipline's emphasis on identifying regularities and generalizing from the particular likely makes the UAR in and its uniqueness less than appealing terrain upon which to stake new theoretical claims. Nonetheless, the UAR as an event for analysis provides a number of opportunities for theorization.

In outlining a method of "practice tracing" in his chapter in a forthcoming volume, Vincent Pouliot suggests "that a successful practice tracing account should accomplish two basic things: (1) demonstrate local causality and (2) produce analytically general insights."[1] My case study attempts to satisfy both goals. It outlines the role of habitus and practical logics in the formation of the union, as well as the importance of Nasser's "charismatic" politics. The practice emphasis can also account for the union's

[1] Vincent Pouliot, "Practice Tracing," p. 4, in Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press) forthcoming 2014

disintegration, as the same habitus that colored unification also result in hysteresis-policies and perceptions that would alienate Syrians from the UAR and break the charismatic bond between Nasser and his symbolic capital and the objective conditions of life in the Syrian "Northern province".

As for analytically general insights, the second chapter explores a number of concepts that could have applications far beyond the particularities of the UAR. The utility of practice theory, still relatively new to IR theorizing, opens new possibilities for analyzing behavior beyond the reflective biases of the logics of appropriateness and consequence and the attendant result of intellectual distance from the practical senses of agents in action. While this epistemic criticism has been put forth, developed, and demonstrated elsewhere, it is useful for both critiquing and integrating the existing work on the UAR and the case presented here demonstrates the possibilities that the "practice turn" enables for research.

More unique to this thesis are two insights borrowed from Bourdieu. First, the state is a site of symbolic power and that the state must both correspond with and exercise power over the subjectivities of its constituents. These dimensions of the state are rarely explored in political science literature, although Ted Hopf's 2013 work on mass "common sense" as a conditional variable is a step in the right direction.[2] Similarly, James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* explores how high modernist projects like agricultural collectivization and authoritarian urban planning do "violence to human practice," but the case of the UAR shows that symbolic and political imposition can also end up at odds with the practical knowledge underpinning a given political field.[3] Bringing the masses

[2] Hopf 2013
[3] Scott 1999, 110

"back in" in conjunction with a practical understanding of social action can help to account for why centralized and authoritarian "revolutionary" political programs can fail along much the same lines as something like collectivized agriculture.

Secondly, Bourdieu's notions of symbolic politics and representation in combination with Andreas Kalyvas's readings of Max Weber, help provide a theoretical basis for the phenomena identified by many elsewhere but left relatively unexplored: Nasser's charisma. Most authors acknowledge it, but few have a theoretical account of how it could mobilize, inspire, and "externalize the inwardness" of pan-Arabist sentiments in people across the region "in practice". While the concepts presented here remain underdeveloped, Michael C Williams's chapter in a volume on Bourdieu and IR and the work here show the potential for much more research on the role of charisma and symbolic representation in international politics.

In combining these insights with the existing literature on the UAR from both political science and history, the case study presented provides a sound and unified interpretation of the UAR in which a single social logic, the logic of practicality, can better account for the entire course of the UAR than can those efforts limited to logics of appropriateness or consequence. Nasser's habitus informed his practical appropriation of symbolic politics and charismatic performances, which in turn accrued to him symbolic capital. In the mid 1950s, Syrian elites, guided by their own historically-informed habitus, came to see union with the charismatic Nasser as a practical strategy. Both came to union with different expectations and demands, which would hint at the first instances of hysteresis, in which an agent's historically-attuned habitus proves maladapted to changed circumstances. This hysteresis only increased as union continued, and the

symbolic power of the state-- those elements necessary to enable the state's capacity for violence to symbols and subjective perceptions of its citizens—became increasingly problematic for Syrians as political restructuring, agricultural reform, and bureaucratization made their own state seem foreign.

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