TWO FACES OF REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS

solidarity and ideology in the Arab Spring

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A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of M.A. Political Science (Thesis)

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Abstract

Twentieth-century theorists of revolution focused on articulating what conditions were necessary for motivating transformative political change. In particular, theorists were concerned with the concept of consciousness raising. V.I. Lenin's theory famously argued that consciousness – an understanding of the inner-workings of one's unfreedom – must be brought to people by revolutionary vanguards. Leninist theory was later challenged when post-colonial theorists such as Ranajit Guha rejected the claim that people require their consciousness to be raised by external actors. Guha's work showed that rebels can be conscious on their own terms by highlighting evidence of oppositional consciousness in peasant insurgents in colonial India. My thesis situates itself in this debate by answering the question: *what is it* that will make people with legitimate claims against existing powers articulate and act on this claim in a way that radically shifts the current political order? Overlaying my argument on the early uprisings in the Arab Spring, I argue that Lenin and Guha describe two crucial, but conceptually distinct forms of political consciousness. Guha's articulation of oppositional consciousness, I argue, answers the first form of the question: rejecting one's subordinate status through solidarity and self-identification with others of the same status will bring about political contestation. Lenin's conception of revolutionary class consciousness answers the second part: a cohesive and public counter-ideology to that of the status-quo is required to challenge and shift hegemonic political practices. Guha's oppositional consciousness leads a revolution to what Asef Bayat calls 'revolution as movement': the radical mobilization and solidarity of political subjects against existing powers. However, the deciding factor for whether the political order will shift or restore is dependent on which actor(s) cohesively articulate the source of peoples' unfreedom, as well as a blueprint for a freer order. This is what Bayat deems 'revolution as change,' which he argues failed to materialize during the Arab Spring. Just as Bayat argues for a conceptual distinction between movement and change, my thesis complements his concepts through mirroring conceptions of revolutionary consciousness. As a result, my argument shows that Lenin's and Guha's conceptions of consciousness are distinct and complementary rather than rivalling accounts.

Les théoriciens de la révolution du XXe siècle ont cherché à définir quelles conditions étaient nécessaires pour motiver un changement politique transformateur. En particulier, les théoriciens se sont intéressés au concept sensibilisation. La théorie de V.I. Lénine affirmait que la conscience - une compréhension du fonctionnement interne de la non-liberté d'une personne - devait être amenée du «dehors» par des avant-gardes révolutionnaires. Par la suite, certains théoriciens post-coloniaux tels que Ranajit Guha ont contesté la théorie léniniste en rejetant l'affirmation selon laquelle les individus exigent que leur conscience soit élevée par des acteurs extérieurs. Les travaux de Guha ont montré que les rebelles peuvent être conscientes selon leurs propres termes, en mettant en évidence des preuves de la conscience opposée chez les paysans insurgés de l'Inde coloniale. Ma thèse se situe dans ce débat en répondant à la question: qu'est-ce qui assurera que ceux qui ont des revendications légitimes contre les pouvoirs existants articulent et agissent sur cette revendication d'une manière qui modifie radicalement l'ordre politique actuel? En reprenant mon argument sur les premières étapes du Printemps arabe, je soutiens que Lénine et Guha décrivent deux formes cruciales, mais conceptuellement distinctes, de la conscience politique. Je soutiens que la formulation par Guha de la conscience oppositionnelle répond à la première forme de la question: rejeter son statut de subordonné par la solidarité et l'auto-identification avec des personnes du même statut suscitera une contestation politique. La conception de Lénine de la conscience de classe révolutionnaire répond à la deuxième partie: une contre-idéologie cohérente et publique qui s'oppose à celle du statu quo est nécessaire pour défier et modifier les pratiques politiques hégémoniques. La conscience oppositionnelle de Guha mène une révolution à ce que Bayat appelle «la révolution en tant que mouvement»: la mobilisation radicale et la solidarité des sujets politiques contre les puissances existantes. Cependant, le facteur décisif pour savoir si l'ordre politique changera ou restaurera dépend de quel (s) acteur (s) énonce de manière cohérente la source de la non-liberté des peuples, ainsi qu'un plan pour un ordre plus libre. C'est ce que Bayat considère comme étant une «révolution en tant que changement», qui selon lui n'a pas réussi à se matérialiser lors du Printemps arabe. Tout comme Bayat plaide pour une distinction conceptuelle entre le mouvement et le changement, ma thèse complète ses concepts en reproduisant cette dualité, cette fois-ci appliquée à conscience révolutionnaire. En conséquence, mon argument montre que les conceptions de la conscience de Lénine et de Guha sont distinctes et complémentaires plutôt que rivales.

Acknowledgments

I would first and foremost like to thank my graduate advisor and thesis supervisor, Will Roberts, who has, throughout the years, challenged me profoundly. I could not have been under better guidance in these formative years as a student, TA, as well as an activist. Professor Roberts has had a substantial, inspirational influence on my work and beliefs. His insightful scholarship, seminars, and his public and principled solidarity has made him a solid supervisor for this project and an absolute pleasure to work with.

Second, I thank Jacob Levy, who has been an indispensable source of guidance as I have navigated through my academic endeavours. An acknowledgment can hardly do justice to the ways Professor Levy has been present in my development as an aspiring theorist. He has played a major role in believing in my work, pushing me further, and encouraging me to go as far as I can. I would not have made it to grad school if not for him as he consistently goes *above and beyond* in supporting his students, rooting for us in and outside the classroom. I could not ask for a better person to have mentored me these last few years.

Third, I thank Yves Winter, who has also intellectually challenged me in important ways. Professor Winter's knowledge of post-colonial theory and his seminar on the subject has helped me a great deal with this thesis by pressing me on my ideas in class and on my proposal. He has directed me toward increasingly tightening my arguments, anticipating objections, and approaching issues from unique angles.

Fourth, I thank Natalie Stoljar who has been one of the most major influences on my academic interests. Professor Stoljar was the first academic to introduce me to feminist theory, which later set the ground for my entry into the theories I make use of in most of my work. Her teaching and mentorship has helped me understand key theories I have made use of throughout my graduate studies and has made a substantial impact on my research interests.

Fifth, I would like to thank various philosophers and political scientists at McGill that, throughout the years, that have challenged me, given me new interests to explore, fostered a solid learning environment, and provided me with valuable feedback on my work. This includes the above, as well as: Arash Abizadeh, Oran Magal, Hasana Sharp, Sarah Stroud, Marguerite Deslauriers, Muhammad Velji, Lee MacLean, Victor Muñiz-Fraticelli, Fernando Nuñez-Mietz, Rex Brynen, and Khalid Medani.

Sixth, I would like to thank non-McGill professors, educators, and peers that have also helped with this thesis and that have contributed to my knowledge: Professors Sally Haslanger (MIT), Jennifer Saul (Sheffield), and Philip McShane (Mt. Saint Vincent, Emeritus) and Mr. Felipe Grossling (St. Thomas Aquinas High) have given me valuable insights and pushes in the right direction. Others that have been of great help and support to me on my practically decade-long and ongoing journey include: Christina, Fadi, and Ryan Ghorayeb; the Fayad, Ghorayeb, and Ladki families, Ken Clarke, Daphnne Chacon, Jordan Heaney, Jessica Scott, Luke Tancredi, and Lexie Bilhette.

Seventh, I thank Gary Sharma, a brilliant philosophical force who has not only been a fantastic partner but an intellectual muse, editor, and colleague. Additionally, I thank my classmates and colleagues in political science and philosophy throughout the years that have given me edits, talked things through with me, given valuable advice, and helped me become a better theorist: Kelsey Brady, Emma Elbourne-Weinstock, Oliver Chan, Sam Bagg, Edana Beauvais, Arabella Colombier, Caroline Copeman, Emma Ebowe, Theophile Deslauriers, Gab Hachard, Shahriar Alam, Zain Virani, Mary Jo MacDonald, Stefan Macleod, Sam Mongeau, Leo Plumer, David Milton, Chloe Pouliot, Arno Pedram, Helen Baker, Lias Borshan, Ariane Poisson, Florence Ashley, Shwetha Govindan, Mathew Sanza, Jacob Wald, Mariano Zagorski, Vertika, and Tiger Zheng.

Khalil Gibran once wrote: 'All our words are but crumbs that fall down from the feast of the mind.' The words I write are there because John Fayad gave my mind – and my heart – a million feasts as I grew into myself. I dedicate this work to him: a man who taught me to have convictions; a soulful poet, a fighter that never gives up, an honest worker, and most importantly, my grandfather. Lots of love to you, Jido.

Chapter 1 / Introduction: the first match

> When history is written as it ought to be written, it is the moderation and long patience of the masses at which men will wonder, not their ferocity.
> – C.L.R. James[1]

> What has to be explained is not the fact that the man who is hungry steals, or the fact that the man who is exploited strikes, but why the majority of those who are hungry don't steal and why the majority of those who are exploited don't strike.
> – Wilhelm Reich[2]

On December 17, 2010, Tunisian vegetable vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself aflame as an act of political protest in Sidi Bouazid. Bouazizi had suffered harassment by a police officer who claimed he did not have the right permit to be a vendor. The police officer reportedly spat on him, slapped him, vandalized his cart, confiscated his scales, and publicly humiliated him. Bouazizi was distraught at being unable to provide for his family; he soon complained at the governor's office and requested his scales be returned. He then threatened to burn himself if the governor ignored him. Nonetheless, the governor refused to see Bouazizi and denied his appeal. Bouazizi cried out to a crowded street: 'how do you expect me to make a living?' and self-immolated.[3]

Hours after Bouazizi burned himself, protests began in Sidi Bouazid. Two weeks later, Bouazizi died from his injuries, and more anti-government protests spread to Tunisia's capital. These protests eventually gained significant support from unions, lawyers, and the country's own

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[1] C.L.R. James, 'And the Paris Masses Complete' *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*; 2nd ed., (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 138.

[2] Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism,* (MacMillan, 1970).

[3] Rex Brynen, Pete Moore, Bassel Salloukh, & Marie-Joelle Zahar, 'North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia,' *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism & Democratization in the Arab World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), 17; Hanaa Hasan, 'Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi and the Start of the Arab Spring,' *Middle East Monitor,* (December 17, 2018), <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181217-remembering-mohamed-bouazizi-and-the-start-of-the-arab-spring/>.

military. One month later, Tunisia's president Zine el Abidine Ben Ali fled the country, signaling the collapse of Tunisia's neo-Destour regime that would come to be replaced by the Islamist *Al-Nahda* (The Renaissance Party).[4]

The fall of Ben Ali was widely broadcast on television and social media, and emboldened Egyptians to begin protesting their own government. Like Tunisians, Egyptians had many grievances: high unemployment and police brutality amid crony-capitalist practices and their resulting social inequality. Egyptians first took to the streets in late-January of 2011 to protest police brutality. Their protests expanded, with thousands coming to occupy Cairo's Tahrir Square.[5] Soon, groups that long opposed President Hosni Mubarak's government, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, threw their support behind protestors.

Pressure increased on Mubarak, but he was initially reluctant to resign. However, when the military, began to view him as a liability, Mubarak caved to the pressure. He resigned on February 11, 2011 and gave the military temporary control of the government. Egypt, like Tunisia, eventually elected an Islamist government – albeit a far more conservative one – led by the Muslim Brotherhood.[6]

What the transmission of these protests revealed was the regional permeability of Arab states that had been previously been unthinkable after the collapse of pan-Arabism.[7] After Egypt, anti-government protests toppled governments in Libya, and Yemen.[8] Similar manifestations of

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[4] Laryssa Chomiak & Robert P. Parks, 'Tunisia,' *The Middle East*, Fourteenth Edition, ed. Ellen Lust (Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press, 2017), 808. NB: While Al-Nahda was initially Islamist, they soon dropped this label.

[5] Brynen et al., 24.

[6] For an overview and general analysis of these events, see Brynen et. al., 23-26.

[7] See F. Gregory Gause III, ''The Middle East Academic Community and the "Winter of Arab Discontent": Why Did We Miss It?*' Seismic Shift: Understanding Change in the Middle East* (Washington DC: Stimson Center, 2011), 20.

[8] It should be noted that the toppling of Gaddafi, while influenced by the opposition, can also be attributed to the NATO intervention that targeted Gaddafi.

civil unrest presented a serious though not fatal challenge to governments in Bahrain and Syria. The contagious effect of Bouazizi's act among Arab states and the apparent suddenness of the revolutions would inevitably prompt scholars to the question of why this happened *now,* after forty years of stable authoritarianism in the region.[9]

It is clear to any observer of Middle Eastern and North African politics that there were enough issues for citizens to be aggrieved about, such as high youth unemployment,[10] presidents grooming their sons to rule,[11] unpopular sectarian rule,[12] police brutality, and crony capitalism.[13] Stable authoritarianism used to be explained away by appealing to citizen attitudes, with democratization scholars arguing that Islam or Arab 'tribal practices' were simply incompatible with democracy.[14] However, strong critiques from post-colonial scholars[15] coupled with recent data concerning Arab preferences have cast doubt upon this hypothesis.[16]

If the majority of people have a claim against those that hold power over them, the interesting theoretical question concerns *what it is* that will make them articulate and act on this claim in a way that radically challenges the current political order. Why openly protest and revolt *now,* as opposed to making requests from the usual institutional channels? This question is what made twentieth-century theorists of revolution debate the role of ideology and centralized leadership in cultivating revolutionary political dispositions.

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[9] Ibid., 'New Horizons in Arab Politics,' 1.

[10] Michael Hoffman and Amaney Jamal, 'Political Attitudes of Youth Cohorts,' *The Arab Uprisings Explained: New Contentious Politics in the Middle East* ed. Marc Lynch, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 274.

[11] 7 F. Gregory Gause, III and Sean L. Yom, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On," *Journal of Democracy,* 23, 4 (October 2012), 78

[12] Michael Herb, "Strategies of Regime and Opposition." *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 175.

[13] Brynen et. al., 23.

[14] Ibid., 'Political Culture Revisited,' 97.

[15] See, for instance, Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Random House Inc., 1978).

[16] Mark Tessler and Michael Robbins, "Political System Preferences of Arab Publics," *The Arab Uprisings Explained New Contentious Politics in the Middle East* ed. Marc Lynch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 253

The first major stream in this discourse is that of Marxism-Leninism. V.I. Lenin argues that a revolutionary vanguard is necessary for raising peoples' consciousness to the point where they will make revolution.[17] People thus engage in revolutionary contestation when, and only when, consciousness is raised by revolutionary theorists and agitators. In turn, critiques of Lenin reject the necessity of vanguardist consciousness raising. Instead, they argue that marginalized people can be politically 'conscious' without consciousness raising on the part of political leaders, an explanation which they view to be elitist.[18]

These two conceptions of class consciousness are compatible, I argue, if we split the question into two parts. The first part asks: what will make people act on a claim against those that hold power over them? The second part asks: what element of this claim-making will radically challenge (or fail to challenge) the current political order? These are two separate but equally important and overlapping elements of contesting domination. The former part, I argue, is a matter of whether grievances resonate strongly enough among people to self-identify with each others' grievances to make collective claims on them. For instance, over 5,000 Tunisians attended Bouazizi's funeral and claimed he was a martyr for their cause. Protestors identified with Bouazizi's grievance against the government and pledged to avenge his death.[19] This form of solidarity does not require someone from other ranks coming in to provide an explanation. Rather, it is simply cultivated through a shared desire for freedom among a dominated class of people.

The latter part of the question concerns a different kind of revolutionary consciousness that is primarily associated with Leninist theory. It concerns the distillation of these experience into a coherent explanatory framework. In other words, it deals with the ideological rationalization of

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[17] See: V.I. Lenin, *What is to be done?* (Marxist Internet Archives, 1902).
[18] See: Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of the Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Duke University Press, 1999).
[19] Hasan, 'Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi…' *Middle East Monitor.*

peoples' domination. Explanatory frameworks, such as religions or political ideologies, give an account of why people are dominated and what entities are responsible for it. They typically offer an alternative blueprint for a new political order that eliminates entities responsible for said domination. These frameworks can serve as intellectual precursors for political change. Marxism-Leninism, for instance, ideologically drove the Russian Revolution by locating entities of domination (monarchs and capitalists) and presenting plans to eradicate them (seizing the state and means of production). For Lenin, this form of consciousness necessarily requires external agitation on the part of theorists and cannot be coordinated by a collective desire for freedom alone.

To mirror and correspond to these conceptions of consciousness, I use Asef Bayat's two conceptions of revolution. Bayat argues that what was surprising about the Arab Spring was not that it happened, but that it possessed its particular 'ideological makeup, strategic vision, and political trajectories.'[20] It is theoretically ambiguous, Bayat argues, whether the Arab Spring was revolutionary at all. On the one hand, the rapid mobilization and solidarity against a common enemy – across sectarian lines and social statuses – was certainly revolutionary and opened up new possibilities. Bouazizi's self-immolation resonated with citizens of Arab states. Others felt his frustration, seized it, and ran with it. Furthermore, the toppling of Ben Ali in Tunisia showed what it took to take down an authoritarian regime. It is unlikely that there was a mass ideological shift from pro- to anti- regime sentiments; mobilization was far too rapid. Instead, citizens acted on an updated belief: namely, that dismantling existing powers was in the realm of the possible.

On the other hand, the Arab Spring did not result in revolutionary outcomes. Prior revolutions in the Middle East, such Gamal Abdel-Nasser's pan-Arabism, had far more radically

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[20] Asef Bayat, 'The Spring of Surprise,' *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 135.

transformative effects than those of the Arab Spring. Drawing on political ideologies like Marxist-Leninist anti-imperialism, leaders like Nasser proposed and led Egypt to a 'fundamental break from the old order.'[21] Bayat thus introduces a second conception of revolution: '*revolution as change.*' Revolution as change refers to 'significant [shifts] in the structure of power and state institutions or economic vision…'[22] This requires an ideological vision 'that has a crucial bearing on the outcome.' Such an ideologically motivated change in the structure of power did not materialize during the Arab Spring.[23]

Bayat's 'movement/change' distinction, I argue, helps us see an analogous distinction that applies to discussions of revolution. Critiques of Leninist consciousness raising are right to call attention to the political import of spontaneous popular consciousness. However, this is a form of consciousness with a fundamentally different character from the 'political' consciousness that Leninists insist must be purposefully introduced. Spontaneous consciousness especially pertains to revolution-as-movement; 'political' consciousness pertains, instead, to revolution-as-change. This distinction does not downgrade spontaneous consciousness, but it retains a theoretical insight from the Leninist tradition that is worth holding on to.

Like Bayat, I revisit the Arab Spring to argue that when power is being contested, mobilization and protest can occur without large-scale organizational prompting. What revolution as *movement* requires is not necessarily top-down prompting or ideological cohesiveness, but self-identification with those that have successfully mobilized. Revolution as movement is still a difficult feat that indicates deeply political motivations on part of protestors. Mobilization, as

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[21] Bayat, 'Revolutions of Wrong Times,' 11.
[22] Ibid. Bayat's italics.
[23] Ibid.

Ranajit Guha argues, exhibits a revolutionary consciousness that is noteworthy and increasingly important to acknowledge in the postcolonial era.

However, the way revolution as *change* takes place (or does not take place) is dictated by who is able to articulate i) which entities are responsible for domination and ii) how to alleviate the burdens imposed by domination. My argument will engage with frameworks offered by twentieth-century theorists of revolution and will read the problems and ideas they pose off of the Arab Spring and its results.

I will focus primarily on the early stages of the revolution to discuss the early processes of movement, solidarity, and transmission of protests from their initial site in Tunisia to Egypt. My task is not an explanatory project concerning the Arab Spring so much as it is overlaying theories on relevant events. I will be using the events of the early moments in the Arab Spring to illuminate a theoretical controversy and introduce a theoretical distinction, rather than to engage in the more comparative project of explaining why the Arab Spring revolutions did not lead to revolutionary change.[24]

§1.1. Why theory? The relevance of political thought in revolution

The focus on revolutionary ideologies such as pan-Arabism is situated in a rich history of revolutionary political thought. When we consider revolutions, we usually notice that there is a sort of banner or rationale that prompts protestors to join.[25] This rationale will also steer protestors' demands. As an example, Bayat invites us to consider Latin American liberation theology. Liberation theology offered a socialist and anarchist vision through the lens of Catholic ideology.

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[24] I am also reluctant to bring my focus to other Arab Spring states whose uprisings are still occurring or states that are the height of mass-instability due to foreign intervention – e.g., Libya and Syria.
[25] Bayat, 11.

It identified what elements of political society were unjust and offered a principled blueprint for a freer state.[26] In this example, we see an interplay between revolution as movement and revolution as change, where the ideological rationale of the latter prompts the former, and the former is the means to the latter.

Bayat aptly calls the Arab Spring a 'revolution without revolutionaries.'[27] The Arab Spring, he argues, lacked a revolutionary trajectory because the post-Cold war, neoliberal world order was taken for granted at the expense of class-based politics.[28] As a result, activists failed to offer a counter-ideology that contained an alternative to the status-quo. Islamists offered an ideology but had significantly changed their class politics in the age of neoliberalism to align more closely with status-quo politics. During the Cold War, Islamist platforms emphasized distributive justice, collectivism, and revolution. Now, however, they moved to social justice-oriented reformism and liberal free-market values.[29]

While explanations from comparativists draw on relevant indicators, such as civil-military relations and monarchical robustness, theory matters in this context. Revolutions typically have theoretical prompting, or what Bayat calls an 'intellectual precursor.'[30] To illustrate this phenomenon, an example many Middle East scholars have drawn on is the Iranian Revolution of 1978. This revolution drew upon grievances against the American-backed Shah of Iran but was propelled through Shiʿa Muslim religious themes and practices as an 'oppositional norm' to the

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[26] Encyclopaedia Britannica, eds., 'Liberation Theology,' Encyclopædia Britannica, (Encyclopædia Britannica inc., 2011), < https://www.britannica.com/topic/liberation-theology>

[27] Bayat, 2.

[28] Ibid., 21-26. Bayat brings a valid issue to the table here concerning the global implications of neoliberalism. While this is the focus of Bayat's book, and while I don't necessarily disagree, I will be going in a different direction.

[29] Ibid., 26.

[30] Asef Bayat, 'Revolutions of Wrong Times,' *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 4.

current status-quo.[31] For example, the movement used Shiʿa emphases on martyrdom against injustice as a rationale for participating in the revolution.[32] The intellectual themes driving the revolution offered a resonating explanation to participants that concerned why things are the way they are and how things ought to be different.

Protestors in the Arab Spring were not organized under a banner of pan-Arabism, economic grievance, or any sole banner at all. Ideologically variant communities with overlapping and divergent sets of grievances mobilized in solidarity with each other. Unlike previous revolutionary movements in the Arab world, the Arab Spring protestors did not have such a concrete vision of what the days after the revolution ought to look like. This indicated a shift from the sixties and seventies, where Nasser's Marxism-Leninism and anti-imperialist ideology clearly identified the oppressor and the oppressed with plans to eradicate the former and liberate the latter.[33]

Bayat emphasizes the need for a banner akin to Nasser's to motivate revolutionary change.[34] This is because there needs to be ways to motivate people toward mobilizing in a cohesive way. Individuals have a fundamental interest in being free; but this does not always provide a sufficient reason for them to contest dominating powers under the banners of *others'* freedoms as well.[35] It may be the case that *not* contesting power will make a person freer in her immediate circumstances. Palestinians that join the Israeli army, for instance, may contribute to making Palestinians less free as a group, but are individually compensated with salaries that allow

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[31] Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Harvard University Press, 2004), 6.
[32] Ibid., 164.
[33] Bayat, 'Revolutions of Wrong Times,' 5
[34] NB: I would not take this as necessarily an endorsement of Nasser himself, but rather an observational statement about the effectiveness of ideological leadership in igniting revolutionary change.
[35] William Clare Roberts, 'The Idea of Emancipation after Postcolonial Theory,' *Interventions* 19:6 (2017): 758.

them to live above the poverty line, unlike most of their compatriots.[36] This alleviates burdens in the soldier's immediate circumstances and shows the costliness of dissent.

To be motivated toward revolution requires more than simply an interest in being free, and certainly more than wishing one's circumstances were different. Motivation toward revolution and unity under a coherent banner requires a resonant rationale that connects an individual's unfreedom to the unfreedom others. The Arab Spring contained this with respect to *revolution as movement.* Tunisians were able to see themselves in Bouazizi, and Egyptians were able to see themselves in Tunisians. Thus, they were able to connect their experiences as people who lived under unjust governments, and that it was now possible – together – to take them down.

Ideologies like liberation theology or pan-Arab anti-imperialism have, in the past, offered this rationale by elucidating what the root of unfreedom was for groups of people with shared identities that are systematically immobilized (i.e., the working class). But this requires something more specific than an anti-government sentiment because it requires dealing with an entire system of social organization rather than a group of tyrants. It is through offering these alternate ways of understanding social conditions – coupled with offering an alternate vision – that groups are motivated to ignite radical social *change* once significant members of a powerful class have been deposed.

That is not to say that it is as simple as having a desire for radical changes, which is a key problem for theorists of revolution. Those contesting power must offer a viable alternative to the status quo while simultaneously having less resources than those that uphold it in virtue of their social status. Because of this, most individuals do not feel incentivized to engage in revolutionary

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[36] Jane Corbin, "Israel's Arab soldiers who fight for the Jewish state," *BBC News*, (8 November 2016) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37895021>.

action, and those that do are not always offered the best opportunities to do so. Hence, we are back at the question about i) what moves people to revolt and ii) what drives the trajectory of the revolution and the days after.

My thesis will proceed as follows. In the next chapter, I will provide an intellectual history of the twentieth-century scholarship on revolution. This chapter will address the question of revolution as change by situating itself between Leninist arguments for consciousness raising and vanguardism and critiques of it from a postcolonial perspective.

Chapter three will move on more explicitly to Tunisia's revolution, its transmission to Egypt, and its subsequent results. After going through the relevant events, I show how they unfolded as revolution as movement and indicate where the revolutions failed as revolution as change. I will argue that revolution as movement was able to occur by a shift in revolutionary consciousness, where protestors were able to identify with one another as aggrieved citizens. Bouazizi's concerns resonated with the Tunisian public, whose lived experiences with the state had grown to be unbearable. In turn, the fall of Ben Ali signalled to Egyptians that toppling corrupt dictators was possible. Egyptians had seen Tunisian protestors in their image and were moved to act. Hence, revolution as movement was exemplified by cross-border permeability and solidarity.

Chapter four will tie the previous two chapters together and argue that revolution as change requires something that resembles revolution as movement, but with an intellectual precursor. I will, with Bayat, argue that the victory of conservative Islamism in the Egyptian government indicates a failure in revolution as change. However, while Bayat attributes this to neoliberalism's deradicalization of politics,[37] I will reintroduce Lenin's approach – which, as we will see, criticizes

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[37] Bayat, 23.

revolutionary thinkers for their failure to take an active role in contesting power. Instead of neoliberalism versus anti-capitalism, my emphasis will be on hegemonic versus non-hegemonic ideology and how the latter's entrance into revolutionary arenas can take shape or fail.

In chapter five, I will continue chapter four's articulation of how those that wish to shape the trajectory of 'revolution as change' are tasked with offering a counter-ideology to what I will loosely call the 'ideological status-quo.' The ideological status-quo will refer to common understandings and assumptions that inform the ways in which we are organized (e.g., capitalist relations of production, patriarchal structuring of households, and so forth).

In sum, I conclude that revolution as movement is inspired by mass-mobilization against a source of unfreedom. Revolution as change challenges those that can offer, against the current state of affairs, to provide and disperse an explanation of peoples' unfreedom and how it can be eradicated. If revolutionaries want emancipation that radically breaks from the existing order, they must offer explanations and alternatives that account for marginalized peoples' experiences of unfreedom and that are more resonant than those offered under dominating ideological frameworks.

Chapter 2 / Ideology and political consciousness

> Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you want them to understand.
> – Frantz Fanon.[38]

During the twentieth-century, theorists of revolution were concerned about the ways rapid political change could unfold. V.I. Lenin's political thought and the ensuing Soviet revolution inaugurated a variety of debates about what contesting domination entails and how dominated people could overthrow the barriers to their freedom. Lenin's intervention concerns the role of theorists in facilitating revolutionary change. As we know, a conventional task for the theorist is to identify the misalignment of what is and what ought to be the case in political societies. In turn, Lenin is concerned with how this role translates into political action.

The task of this chapter is to elucidate the concepts of consciousness, vanguardism, and ideology. These will, in turn, analyze the Arab revolutions of 2011.

The main points of the Lenin's political thought are that i) revolution cannot happen on the basis of the dominated alone, ii) revolutionary consciousness must be propagated by dedicated revolutionaries, and iii) centralized party leadership, or vanguardism, is required to mobilize and successfully dismantle existing systems of domination.

The second theoretical framework I take is Guha's rejection of these Leninist tenets, as well as a broader post-colonial critique that problematizes the explanatory power of Marxist-Leninist theory when accounting for anti-colonial revolts. This framework attempts to show the ways that oppressed[39] people contesting systems of power possess oppositional consciousness

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[38] Frantz Fanon, 'The Pitfalls of National Consciousness,' *The Wretched of the Earth,* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 189.

[39] 'Oppression' is a technical term in political theory that may seem opaque. For the purposes of this thesis, I will use the term 'oppression' as defined by Marilyn Frye, where an oppressed group is one 'that is systematically reduced,

'spontaneously,' and that theories that suggest the need for centralized leadership and 'consciousness from without' arise from elitist and Eurocentric understandings of popular protest. My argument in the next chapter will show that, as the Arab Spring indicates, we must affirm the existence of two kinds of revolutionary consciousness rather than position them as rival accounts.

§2.1. Bowing to spontaneity

In Lenin's framework, spontaneity is 'that which exists "at the present moment."' It indicates a sense that resisting existing powers is necessary, but spontaneous protests are 'outbursts of desperations and vengeance' and not necessarily a struggle against existing systems of domination.[40] Contestations of power that are spontaneous will attack manifestations of said power but not the source of power itself. They are reactive and are not oriented toward systemic change.

Consider Bouazizi's self-immolation, which was shocking and spoke to Arab citizens to such an extent that Arab states had to outlaw the sale of small gasoline supplies because of imitators.[41] It is unlikely that Bouazizi intended or anticipated that his actions would cause widespread effects; rather, he was concerned with the immediate problem of being denied a meeting with the governor.[42]

Lenin famously argues that oppressed people need outside agitators in order to develop a political consciousness, or a 'social democratic consciousness.'[43] Political consciousness for Lenin

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molded, [and] immobilized.' 'Oppression' differs from 'domination' in that domination can be but is not *necessarily* systematic immobilization of a particular group. For more, see: Marilyn Frye, "Oppression," *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, (Crossing Press, 1983), 379.
group is an oppressed class
[40] Ibid., 11, 17.
[41] Bayat, 'Specter of Bouazizi,' 198; Robert Worth, 'How a Single Match Can Ignite a Revolution,' *New York Times*, (January 21, 2011), <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/weekinreview/23worth.html>.
[42] Hanaa, *Middle East Monitor.*
[43] V.I. Lenin, 'The Spontaneity of the Masses and the Consciousness of the Social-Democrats,' *WITBD*, 17.

is a distillation of the marginalized peoples' lived experiences into a theoretical and practical understanding of 'of the relationships between all the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life.'[44] This means that, for instance, one may be led to an understanding that people's place in the relations of production determines their political interests. Such an understanding, Lenin argues, does not develop immanently out of the experience of oppression, and should not be taken for granted by those who hope for revolution.[45]

What is to be done? is a message to other revolutionaries to remind them that the mere fact that the oppressed experience systemic abuses and occasionally respond to them does not, by any means, ensure that they will contest the system that engenders these abuses. Without the intervention of organized and ideologically cohesive revolutionary leadership, and without their propagation of a revolutionary class consciousness, those subjugated by a more powerful class of people can only cultivate what Lenin calls 'trade-union consciousness.' Trade-union consciousness describes a particular social situation of the working class that will incite 'spontaneous' contestations of *symptoms* of the abuse without contending with what causes them.[46] These contestations fail to be fully 'conscious' in Lenin's sense.

'Trade-union consciousness' can be made more generic for theorists that are describing domination more broadly. I will term the more generic definition as 'reformative consciousness.' This will refer to an oppositional consciousness that contests conditions *within* existing systems of power rather than contesting the system of power itself. Liberal feminism, for instance, might be one example, as would Bayat's conception of human-rights oriented reformism.[47]

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[44] Ibid., 'Trade Unionist Politics and Social-Democratic Politics,' 42-43.
[45] Ibid., 45.
[46] Ibid., 'The Spontaneity of the Masses…' 17.
[47] See: Bayat, 'Neoliberalism,' 21-27.

Lenin's theory of consciousness emphasizes that the social positionality of the oppressed bars them from diagnosing the entire picture of their condition. Similarly, Georg Lukács' discussion of class consciousness locates the relationship between immediate interests and long-term goals.[48] Lukács argues that someone lacking class consciousness has the 'social import' of his motivations 'hidden' to him.[49] He might strike to obtain a raise or spontaneously engage in destruction of machinery, but such action will not address the cause of the wage exploitation he experiences. It might instead address manifestations of unjust systems. Thus, spontaneity is 'consciousness in an *embryonic form.*' It indicates some understanding that one's conditions are unsustainably wrong; but not an explanation of why that is the case or what entities are responsible.[50]

Spontaneity is a glimmer of consciousness that has the potential to be channeled into more definitive political action. Thus, Lenin does not criticize spontaneity itself, but rather, *'bowing' to spontaneity.* If revolutionaries 'bow to spontaneity'[51] – that is, simply expect that abuses of power will engender spontaneous uprisings from the oppressed – contestations of power will be reformist as opposed to revolutionary.[52] Reformist actors contesting power will propose changes that are within the bounds of existing mechanisms we take for granted, instead of challenging or undermining them.

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[48] Georg Lukács, 'Class Consciousness,' *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics,* trans. Rodney Livingstone, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), 70-72.
[49] Ibid., 71.
[50] Lenin, 17. Lenin's emphasis.
[51] Ibid., 25. Here, Lenin is describing how revolutionaries do not deny that some contestation needs to take place. Instead, he criticizes the ways they passively wait for spontaneous uprisings to emerge and adequately resist existing power.
[52] Lukács, 71. By 'reformative,' I refer to changes that occur within a given system, e.g. a wage hike or shortened work hours. By 'revolutionary', I refer to a fundamental change in social order, e.g. a change from capitalist ownership of the means of production to democratized worker ownership.

In the context of Arab politics, for example, the grievances that are articulated by reformists will not be presented in a form akin to Nasser's Marxist anti-imperialism, which transformed Egypt from a British-backed monarchy into a republic, instituted redistributionist socialism, and humiliated colonial powers through the nationalization of the Suez. In other words, Nasser radically transformed Egypt's political landscape by challenging the monarchist system of power with socialist anti-imperialist ideology.[53]

Instead, reformist grievances take shape in practices like al-Nahda's limited human rights reforms in Tunisia. To theorists like Lenin, protests of this form are insufficient and fail to be meaningfully emancipatory because they still sustain the root causes of peoples' unfreedom. For instance, while many Tunisians protested corruption and unemployment in 2011, their new liberal government – amidst its other human rights reforms – continues to pardon wealthy and elite businessmen charged with corruption rather than contend with the power they wield over the country's affairs.[54]

Like Lenin, Frantz Fanon is concerned with bowing to spontaneity in the colonial context. Fanon's work recognizes that the question of contesting power is not a matter of 'why' but 'when.' Because of the violent nature of colonialism, it is inevitable that built up hatred and resentment of the colonized will explode into violent resistance.[55] At this point, colonized peoples may be enthusiastic in directly attacking their oppressors. Because their oppressors may retreat or try to make some concessions, the colonized will find justifications in their ongoing hostility toward them. This makes sense, because the violence and degradation imposed on colonized people will

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[53] Al Jazeera Egypt News, 'Arab Unity: Nasser's Revolution,' *Al Jazeera,* (June 20, 2008), <https://www.aljazeera.com/focus/arabunity/2008/02/200852517252821627.html>.

[54] Wesley Dockery, 'Tunisia protests: Is there a trade-off between a strong economy and democracy?' *DW Middle East* (September 1, 2018).

[55] Fanon, 'Grandeur and Weakness of Spontaneity,' *The Wretched of the Earth,* 71.

make them lose faith in traditional politics. For Fanon, spontaneity rules in this period, where 'colonialism remains in a state of anxiety.'[56]

Both Lenin's and Fanon's theories see spontaneous action as a necessary appearance of consciousness but find it to be incomplete. When spontaneity rules, it 'overwhelms' political consciousness.[57] This, for Lenin, shows that those revolting have a sense of their unfreedom, but lack the tools necessary to dismantle the power structures (i.e., dominant ways of social organization) at the root of their unfreedom. Experiencing manifestations of oppression does not necessarily mean that one understands the working mechanisms that generate said manifestations.

Spontaneity can achieve results. It can back the powerful into a corner as Fanon describes, for instance. It can also achieve better labour conditions, laws, and so forth. We have seen this in many instances throughout history in what Eric Hobsbawm calls 'primitive' protest. Here, spontaneous revolt is a mechanism of keeping the powerful in check. As an example, Hobsbawm discusses the way a mob would riot to achieve 'immediate objectives.'[58] The threat of rioting could thus serve as a check on rulers to make sure they did not let conditions become too unbearable.

But spontaneous riots cannot achieve revolutionary goals where institutions and social arrangements are 'fundamentally transformed, or replaced.'[59] In other words, as Hobsbawm puts it, spontaneity can get protestors through 'the first days of revolution,' but fails because 'social agitation does not end when a riot has achieved its immediate objectives.'[60] Hence, in a similar

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[56] Ibid., 83.
[57] Lenin, 'The Spontaneity of the Masses…' 21.
[58] Eric Hobsbawm, 'The City Mob,' *Primitive Rebels,* (Manchester: The University Press, 1959), 124.
[59] Ibid., 'Introduction,' 11.
[60] Ibid., 124.

vein as Lenin, Hobsbawm wants the oppressed to develop a higher stage of consciousness and agitate more effectively.

It is important to note that Lenin's remarks on spontaneity are not intent on criticizing the oppressed for revolting against their conditions in the way that they do. It would be absurd, for instance, to blame Bouazizi for what Lenin had called 'an outburst of desperation' in what was clearly a desperate circumstance. What more, Bouazizi's public proclamation of the state's injustice encouraged others to come and express similar awareness they held about the wrongness of their condition. The shared sense that 'things could not go on this way' was able to be translated into mass political action.

For Lenin, it is revolutionaries that must develop 'a high degree of consciousness' and bring 'class political consciousness' to the working masses and to 'all classes of the population.'[61] This is an indictment of revolutionaries and not the oppressed. Lenin writes: '[we] must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organise sufficiently wide, striking, and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages.'[62] He maintains that it is up to *his* political class to provide a framework that explains how different dominated groups are connected to one another through 'the same dark forces' that create the barriers they experience – even if they are manifest in different ways.[63]

Fanon expresses a similar frustration with the idleness of revolutionaries in discussing what he calls the 'cult of spontaneity.'[64] He writes that during the early stages of revolt – amidst the explosion of built up hatred – the masses are the most receptive to revolutionary organizing and

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[61] Ibid., 'Trade-Unionist Politics and Social-Democratic Politics,' 48.
[62] Ibid., 43.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Fanon, 71.

agitation. Fanon condemns leaders of nationalist parties that simply hope for the movement to continue when they could have used such an opportunity to raise political awareness and take 'their struggle to a higher level.'[65]

Spontaneity in Fanon's eyes will always fail: '[the] basic instinct of survival calls for a more flexible, more agile response.'[66] Fanon recognizes that some form of contestation or uprising is inevitable in societies that run on systematic domination, but this does not imply that these contestations will be revolutionary. Revolutionary thinkers are mistaken to believe that the former implies the latter, which is ultimately to the detriment of those that revolt. If a movement such as an anticolonial one has revolutionary goals, it will eventually will 'rediscover politics.' Fanon goes on to say that while initially violent and vengeful uprisings are warranted and legitimate given the colonial condition, they are not sufficient to achieve emancipation. They are instead, 'flashes of consciousness,' that Fanon – like Lenin – wants to be channeled into a more substantial political project.[67] In other words, we cannot conflate actions that are understandable or warranted with actions that effectively sustain revolutionary change. That does not mean that we cannot emphasize their importance.

§2.2. Spontaneity and class consciousness

Spontaneity indicates that class consciousness is yet to be cultivated because its actions do not strategically direct themselves toward the root causes of a group's systematic hardships. An agent might be aware that she is experiencing a barrier that relates to her social situation but may not be aware of the entirety of the workings behind it. Terry Eagleton frames this as follows:

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 85.
[67] Ibid., 89.

You can attain anti-capitalist consciousness simply by looking around the world with a modicum of intelligence and moral decency, but you cannot attain a knowledge of global trade mechanisms or the institutions of workers' power in this way. The distinction between spontaneous and acquired political consciousness, whatever historical disasters it may have contributed to, is itself a valid and necessary one. It is not a matter of the percipient vanguard versus the dim-witted masses, but of an epistemological distinction between types of knowledge that are the same for everyone.[68]

Eagleton is defending Lenin by distinguishing spontaneous consciousness and political consciousness as different kinds of socially situated knowledge. None of us, by default, have profound knowledge about the complex mechanisms of our unfreedom; most of what we know is from manifestations we experience in everyday life. Further, not everyone has the resources or time to develop such knowledge. But it is not wrong, Eagleton argues, for thinkers to want to raise the average person to think like intellectuals. [69] For Eagleton, suggesting otherwise is a product of viewing intelligence as a commodity:

It is not a matter of the percipient vanguard versus the dim-witted masses, but of an epistemological distinction between types of knowledge that are the same for everyone. This, however, is not a particularly valued difference for a pseudo-populist culture that increasingly suspects specialist knowledge itself as elitist, and you knowing something that I do not as privileged.[70]

Those able to be immersed in theory develop awareness of how our social and productive systems work. Therefore, they are the first that are able to develop theories about the sources of peoples' unfreedom. This is an observation about the way they are socially situated and not their innate capacities. People on their own contain a tendency toward freedom that helps cultivate an oppositional consciousness; the issue is how that consciousness can be channeled.

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[68] Terry Eagleton, 'Lenin in the Postmodern Age,' *Lenin Reloaded* ed. Sebastian Budgen et. al. (Duke University Press, 2008), 43-44.
[69] Ibid., 43.
[70] Ibid., 44.

§2.2.1. Ideology and counter-ideology

Theorists of revolution are concerned with ideology and consciousness as both a diagnostic tool and a strategizing tool. Diagnostics concerning consciousness will point to the ways in which carriers of corrupt or deficient consciousness unknowingly contribute to and perpetuate a given system of power. Strategizing pertains to identifying how ideology organizes us in certain ways and what explains our circumstances better than the standard explanation.

When we consider domination, we often conjure images of 'repressive' mechanisms of control that make use of violence; we may think of police or military brutality, for instance. Like other theorists, I will distinguish repressive domination from ideological domination, the latter of which refers to conceptual frameworks that reconcile us to our current conditions.'[71] Nonetheless, the distinction between repressive domination and ideological domination does not make them unrelated; ideology is not merely 'private psychological phenomena'.[72] Rather, it is materially inscribed in our social arrangements and dictates the ways we organize ourselves.[73] This means that it always takes place in *really existing* functions including our everyday behaviour, some of which we might take for granted.[74] For instance, we take capitalism for granted in our concrete actions; if I apply for a job, I would usually assume that I will not democratically own the means of production with those I work with. Our expectations are calibrated by what ideologies we take for granted in our typical practices.

Ideology reconciles us to our conditions by making intellectual sense of our relationship to the world and the practices we engage in. Insofar as it offers an explanation for acting, it

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[71] Sally Haslanger, 'Culture and Critique,' *Ideology and Critique I* (The Aristotelian Society, 2017), 149.
[72] Ibid., 155.
[73] See, for instance, Louis Althusser, 'On Ideology,' *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,* (London & New York: Verso, 2014), 185; Wedeen, 'Believing in Spectacles,' 12.
[74] Althusser, 188.

rationalizes[75] the way we currently act. For instance, religious ideologies explain why the world is a certain way and offers reasons to act in certain ways: e.g., 'go to Church every weekend or you won't go to heaven.' Political ideologies do as well: e.g. 'if you're a socialist, you should be protesting this new corporate tax cut.'

Perhaps one of the most influential, twentieth-century conceptions of ideology in action is that of Louis Althusser. Althusser emphasizes that because ideology shapes our relationship to reality, it is *pervasive* and built into assumptions that we may find obvious.[76] This makes it not just explicitly manifest, e.g., by one claiming they adhere to a certain ideology, but implicitly as well. When an ideology is status-quo, we take it for granted without prior deliberation.

Althusser argues that we first achieve consciousness when we recognize practices as ideologically conditioned and not simply an obvious or self-evident fact.[77] For instance, when slavery was widely practiced, slaves were thought to be naturally constituted for life-long enslavement, where the practice of slavery was intertwined with states' economic practices and ways of organization.[78] We then began to develop alternate understandings that picked out the ideological rationales behind this line of thought, especially in discerning who benefits from it and who does not.

Realizations of this sort, however, do not automatically translate into political action. Sally Haslanger, for instance, notes that those that do not benefit from status-quo practices and

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[75] By 'rationalize,' I refer to the way in which one's situation is made sense of by some sort of grounding framework. For instance, a woman might know she is being abused and that the person abusing her is an abusive person. Feminist theory might rationalize this experience by claiming this woman's experience is not accidental or situational, and instead provide a framework that explains why her identity puts her at risk for gendered violence. For instance, see Frye, *Oppression*.

[76] Althusser, 189.

[77] Ibid., 190.

[78] Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*. Laurent Dubois, trans. (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2017), 73.

ideological assumptions are still incentivized to *affirm* that these practices are the normal and right state of affairs. As an example, she discusses how men have historically viewed women as naturally disposed to submissiveness. While we have challenged these assumptions, Haslanger points out that women are still rewarded for performing behaviours ascribed to them and punished for deviating from them.[79] Thus, one's preferences can be consciously misaligned with the status quo but still not acted on. Nonetheless, the reasons for this misalignment or the history behind it should not be assumed as automatically apparent. Ideology, Haslanger argues, will guide basic assumptions and intuitions that we would otherwise view as non-ideological. For example:

> White Supremacy teaches us to be selective in what we notice, what we respond to, what we value. Just as the promiser, worshipper or chef ignores certain desires or considerations and takes this to be required by their practice, the police academy trains the officer to ignore (or interpretively skew) certain behaviours, for example, all too often the cries of the Black person or the poor woman in labour (Platrow and Flavin 2013).[80]

Ideology, for Haslanger, is not only morally problematic, insofar as it contributes to oppression, but epistemically problematic through 'distortion, occlusion, and misrepresentation of the facts.'[81] She thus argues that theorists have a role of challenging and explaining ideological practices we currently take for granted: 'theorists are part of the struggle, not standing outside of it, looking in [...] In fact, one way critical theory contributes to oppositional social movements is to provide context, language, and empirical research to articulate the nature and scope of the injustice involved in oppression.'[82]

An ideology is dominant when it is a default expectation of what will be practiced and prior to deliberation. Here is a basic analogy: as an athlete, when I talk to my coach, it is assumed that I

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[79] Sally Haslanger, 'On Being Objective and Being Objectified,' *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique,* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 67.
[80] Ibid., 'Culture and Critique,' 163.
[81] Ibid., 150.
[82] Ibid., 167.

accept him as an authority on my athletic endeavours. When he tells me to do a certain exercise, we would both find it absurd if I were to disobey and tell *him* to do it instead. This is because, assumed in our relationship and our designated roles is the fact that he instructs me, and I follow his assigned regimen. When we interact, we do not deliberate about whether we should behave in this way every time, because the aforementioned assumptions are embedded in the roles we have ascribed to ourselves as well as our social understandings of what 'coach' and 'athlete' means.[83]

Now, consider the analogy above, but with politically significant ideological assumptions such as capitalism or patriarchy. These ideologies contain a set of dispersed and internalized default assumptions. When we take practices for granted – particularly subordinating practices – we fail to see their ideological character – or their situation within history.[84] We might even see their obviousness in ways that my coach and I see our interactions: *of course, this is our role! That's what this has always meant!* Thus, challenging the assumptions we have from dominant ideologies might seem as absurd as if I started to tell my coach what exercises to do: it would challenge meanings that contribute to how we organize ourselves in meaningful ways.

Haslanger similarly argues that in reconciling us to our conditions, ideology helps constitute subordinating practices.[85] It does so by selectively framing our reality; dominant ideologies function by being thought of as non-ideological, or the normal state of things.[86] Men's rights activists might argue that it is natural to sexually harass (or 'flirt') with women if they look

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[83] I am grateful to Professor Sally Haslanger for discussing and working through this point with me and indebted to her ideas from her presentation, 'Consciousness Raising and the Epistemology of (In)Justice,' Lecture, 37e conférence Fillosophie, Montreal, (October 26, 2018). This analogy is also somewhat similar to Althusser's 'Hello' analogy in *On the Reproduction of Capitalism.*

[84] Friedrich Engels, 'Engels to Franz Mehring,' *Marx and Engels Correspondence*, (International Publishers, 1968), < https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93_07_14.htm>.

[85] Haslanger, 'Culture,' 149.

[86] See also: Sally Haslanger, "What Are We Talking About? The Semantics and Politics of Social Kinds," *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, (Oxford University Press: 2012), 377.

attractive by appealing to biology or evolutionary psychology. In doing so, they do not claim to be ideologically driven; but simply relaying facts.[87] Because deeply ideological beliefs are taken to be common sense or scientific fact, one major point of consciousness raising is to draw attention to these practices and explain that they are not the natural state of things and that people need not be resigned to them.

Taking ideologies for granted can be attributed to historical developments in both political thought and social practice. Lukács describes how we relate to our world through his theory of reification: wherein we partake in a system like capitalism through instrumental and individual practices.[88] Further, currently dominating ideologies, meanings, and related practices that comprise these systems reflect a 'relation between the tasks of the immediate present and the totality of the historical process.'[89] For example, the practice of marriage – now considered a normal practice without much contemplation – initially originated as a *transaction* of women between men in systems of kinship.[90] This is not, strictly speaking, how we view or practice marriage today. However, some argue that the origins of marriage impact the way we socially organize around sex and gender today; i.e. heteronormativity,[91] gender complementarity,[92] and the sexual division of labour.[93]

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[87] For instance, see the following comments from an infamous and influential McGill alum: Miranda Maples, 'Jordan Peterson Questions If Men and Women Can Work Together,' *Study Breaks,* (March 22, 2018), <https://studybreaks.com/news-politics/jordan-peterson-2/>.

[88] Lukács, 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,' 87-91. Reification is a significant contribution from Lukács that pertains to the topic of this thesis but cannot be fitted within its scope for the time being. However, I note the relevance of study of commodity fetishism to that of class consciousness – and perhaps a work that more strongly centres political economy would be suited to cover this.

[89] Ibid., 'What is Orthodox Marxism?' 24.

[90] Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women,' *Toward an Anthropology of Women* ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York & London: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 174.

[91] Ibid., 198.

[92] Ibid., 196.

[93] Ibid., 178.

Consciousness raising connects immediate experiences with domination – such as exploitative labour conditions – with concepts, systems, and patterns. This, Lenin argues, is required to combat 'economism:' a 'narrow conception of Marxist theory' that engages in 'struggle for *immediate* political demands' and divorces economic struggles from political ones.[94] Economists treat politics and economic struggles as distinct projects; the former for academically oriented liberals, and the latter for the working class. However, Lenin points out that this makes the gains of the dominated reliant on what the dominant can grant them – e.g., increased wages – but it does not challenge the fact that the dominated are *at the whims* of the dominant to begin with. This is because economism still operates under default assumptions given to us by status-quo ideology. Thus:

> The mass (spontaneous) movement lacks "ideologists" sufficiently trained theoretically to be proof against all vacillations; it lacks leaders with such a broad political outlook, such revolutionary energy, and such organisational talent as to create a militant political party on the basis of the new movement.[95]

In other words, Lenin argues that political contestation requires more than just immediate struggles and that the cultivation of an ideology is strategically required. Similarly, Lukács expresses concern about the 'fallacious' split between economic and political struggle that is due to a 'dialectical separation of immediate objectives and ultimate goal.'[96] Lukács claims that the proletariat's immediate economic interests had led them to take urgent action with the power they had without awareness of its place in a grander political picture. And so, 'immediate interests [must be] integrated into a total view and related to the final goal of the process' in order to become revolutionary: that is, in order to remove the structurally oppressive system instead of merely work

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[94] Lenin, 'The Primitiveness of the Economists and the Organization of the Revolutionaries,' *WITBD,* 66.

[95] Ibid., 'A Talk With Defenders of Economism,' *Lenin Collected Works* (Marxist Internet Archives, 2003), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/dec/06.htm>.

[96] Lukács, 'Class Consciousness,' 71.

within its confines.[97] Failing to 'strike at the heart of [the] totality' of oppressive systems of power will deprive the oppressed of the ability to 'influence the course of history.' Instead, there will be occasional explosive confrontations, but a failure to create a shift in hegemony.[98]

'Hegemony' concerns what I described as 'status-quo ideology.' It is a term commonly associated with the works of Antonio Gramsci and refers to the role of ideology and disciplinary power in maintaining the current system of production – i.e., capitalism.[99] Gramsci argues that social hegemony has two functions. First, it generates consent on the part of political populations to 'the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.'[100] The dominant group in question has historically had the power to direct the ways people relate to political society. Second, coercive power on part of the state will enforce compliance on part of those who do not consent to these arrangements.[101] Unlike other forms of violence, state coercion is legally legitimated and widely accepted as such. It is in this way that powerful groups of people can legitimately exercise coercion.[102]

Gramsci is concerned with the countering economism by developing a political theory that coincides with political practice[103] (though, unlike Lenin, approaches vanguardism more critically).[104] He criticizes the predominance of immediate economic concerns over concerning oneself with politics and ideology. If we concern ourselves with immediate economic struggle,

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 51.
[99] Antonio Gramsci, 'The Intellectuals,' *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* ed. & trans. Quintin Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1971) 12.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., 13. See also: Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).
[102] See also: Walter Benjamin, 'Critique of Violence,' *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott, (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 280.
[103] Gramsci, 'The Modern Prince,' *Prison Notebooks,* 165.
[104] Ibid., 'The Intellectuals,' 4.

Gramsci argues, we simply replace the control of 'the totality of economic forces' with more progressive people from the ruling class. Subsequently, a marginally progressive ruling group will still '[turn] the State apparatus to its own benefit.'[105]

Adjusting who is in charge of state apparatuses based on what they will grant marginalized people fails to be meaningfully emancipatory and will not necessarily shift hegemony. It is not that those who want more progressive leadership are necessarily on the wrong track, although more progressive leadership can certainly obscure state or corporate injustices. However, because the way we *organize ourselves* has not been challenged, people behave in ways that uphold our dominant modes of social organization.

For example: in the Middle East, this has amounted to limited reforms in which those that benefit from domination are lauded when they are slightly more progressive than their predecessors.[106] In small ways, these reforms are progress – but they are by no means emancipatory. It is not a bad thing, for instance, that Saudi Arabian Prince Mohammad bin Salman has granted legal permission for women to drive. In fact, it alleviates one of the immediate burdens that women in Saudi Arabia face. But this does not give women in Saudi Arabia much more meaningful power over their circumstances, nor does it free them from the whims of the royal family or their male guardians – particularly because the former still has the power to authorize the latter to keep women under their control.[107] Further, the way Saudi Arabians organize

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[105] Ibid., 166.

[106] For example, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman has been praised for 'emancipating women' by western media outlets e.g. Norah O'Donnell, 'Saudi Arabia's Heir to the Throne Talks to 60 Minutes,' *CBS News,* (March 19, 2018), < https://www.cbsnews.com/news/saudi-crown-prince-talks-to-60-minutes/>.

[107] Linda Mottram, 'Saudi 'guardianship' laws reduce women to perpetual minors: Mona Eltahawy,' *ABC,* (January 8, 2019), <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/pm/guardianship-laws-reduce-women-to-perpetual-minors:-eltahawy/10699960>.

themselves is still defaulted to. For instance, women are still subject to male guardianship laws and hence the wills of male authority figures.

It is in this way that reformist goals – via the focus of immediate struggles – are not emancipatory. Hegemonic practices will continue to be taken for granted. Leninists thus suggest that an ideology is needed to connect the way immediate barriers relate to systematic social practice.

Ideology is often conceived of as a weapon of class rule in theories of revolution. Like Gramsci, George Rudé points out that the ruling class not only materially subordinates the oppressed, but intellectually as well. In this way, the ruling class imposes their 'fantasies' on those they subject.[108] That is, on top of possessing coercive power, the ruling class 'imposes a consensus' on *all* members of society by having more privileged access to the media and educational systems, placing those under this system in a state of what Rudé calls 'ideological servitude.'[109]

Rudé shows the ways protest movements have formulated popular counter-ideologies. He divides the ideology of popular protests into two overlapping sections: inherent ideology and derived ideology. Inherent ideology is internal to the popular class and is based on experience and tradition. It takes protestors to the lengths of 'strikes, food riots, peasant rebellions…' and perhaps leads to a consensus among insurgents and their audience that there is a need for radical change.[110]

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[108] George Rudé, 'Ideology and Class Consciousness,' *Ideology and popular protest*. (Chapel Hill & London: UNC Press Books, 1995), 11.

[109] Ibid., 17. 'Ideological servitude' is strongly worded choice used by Rudé, though I would discourage interpreting this in more conspiratorial ways that views dominant members of society as a council of people that are consistently formulating what ideas to impose. Gramsci does not single out the oppressed as subjugated to ruling ideologies. The point here is that all are subject to it, including the dominant.

[110] Ibid., 26.

Derived ideology, on the other hand, is 'superimposed by a process of transmission and adoption from the outside.'[111] Derived ideas and beliefs come from a more structured system of ideas, e.g. socialism, nationalism, or faith. They may draw on familiar intuitions, but they introduce a structured, conceptual framework into the picture. Socialism, for instance, might appeal to peoples' expectations about unfairness, but it also takes this concern and explains it systematically: *what is unfair? Why is it unfair?* For Rudé, conceptual frameworks that attempt to answer these kinds of questions require 'well prepared' ground to be absorbed in to. For instance, socialism may have a better chance of absorption when there exists a shared disgust at severe wealth disparities in political society. Rudé describes the receptivity of derived ideas as a 'sophisticated distillation of popular experience and the peoples' "inherent" beliefs.'[112]

I want to propose yet another analogous distinction to my forms of consciousness here. Like my two forms of consciousness, Rudé's inherent/derived distinction operates analogously to Bayat's movement/change. While both are distinct, they overlap in their formation. Inherent ideology prompts initial protest because it is geared around what people have grown to believe they are owed. In other words, it can drive initial mobilization. Derived ideology travels with revolution as change by providing an alternative (or counter-hegemonic) conception of our relationship to the world and a blueprint for political change.[113]

§2.3. 'Elitist and erroneous': critiques of Leninist consciousness-raising

Theorizing consciousness was not received uncritically among theorists of revolution. Lenin's intervention generated substantial reaction and response from socialists and revolutionary thinkers

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[111] Ibid., 22.
[112] Ibid.
[113] More will be said on this in chapters four and five.

in the twentieth-century, including (but not only) during its post-colonial turn. Guha is one notable

theorist that found problems with Lenin's emphasis on centralized party leadership, or

vanguardism. He argues against the notion that the oppressed would *require* 'charismatic'

leadership to cultivate the right kind of consciousness to contest power. For Guha, western radical

political theorists' conception of revolution thus lacks in explanatory power and cannot properly

account for revolution in the global south:

> Consequently, bourgeois-national historiography has to wait until the rise of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress Party to explain the peasant movements of the colonial period so that all major events of this genre up to the end of the First World War may then be treated as the pre-history of the 'Freedom Movement'. An equally elitist view inclined to the left discerns in the same events a pre-history of the socialist and communist movements in the subcontinent. What both of these assimilative interpretations share is a "scholastic and academic historico-political outlook which sees as real and worthwhile only such movements of revolt as are one hundred per cent conscious, i.e. movements that are governed by plans worked out in advance to the last detail or in line with abstract theory (which comes to the same thing)"[114]

Post-colonial theorists have identified a traditional trope in western political thought that conceives

of racialized and colonized people in reductive, simplistic terms. These ideological frameworks

have been used as a tool of subjugation against those in the global south. For instance, the British

and French Mandate system that sought to 'develop' the Levant justified itself through the idea

that Levantines must strive to be more like Europeans.[115] European states, as noted by scholars

like Edward Said, had self-imposed 'limited vocabulary and imagery' about Levantine societies

that reduce the latter's citizens to unenlightened subjects in need of guidance. These frameworks,

Said argues, are grounded in history of upholding British and French colonialism.[116] Similarly,

Gayatri Spivak famously argues that western theorists have conceptualized persons in the global

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[114] Guha, 'Introduction,' 4.
[115] Antony Anghie *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 189.
[116] Said, 59.

south as one essentialized, homogenous unit. Consequently, the global south must wait on the west to save them and cannot speak on their own terms.[117]

Other theorists have critiqued the ways the west has molded dominant conceptions of freedom. Because these frameworks have been dominant, a reoccurring notion in western political discourse was that, for instance, Muslim women needed to be saved by enlightened western ideology.[118] This has not been helped by the fact that Middle East scholarship (even in recent history) has engaged in reductionist generalizations about the compatibility of Arab or Muslim culture with social freedoms.[119]

With important interventions like those of Guha and Said, attributing the failure of revolution as change in places like Egypt to a lack of revolutionary consciousness may seem troublesome – at least *prima facie.*

The dominant language concerning colonial and post-colonial states makes it not surprising – nor detrimental, as I will argue – that scholarship like Guha's would emerge. Guha, who wants to emphasize that the subaltern are conscious and active agents, accurately describes the ways colonized people are deprived of agency in popular thought: 'his identity amounted to the sum of his subalternity. In other words, he learnt to recognize himself not by the properties and attributes of his own social being but by a diminution, if not negation, of those of his superiors.'[120]

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[117] Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* ed. Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, (New York: Columbia University Press), 84.

[118] Saba Mahmood, 'The Subject of Freedom,' *Politics of piety: the Islamic revival and the feminist subject,* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 15; See also: Roberts, 751.

[119] This problem has been discussed at depth by Middle East scholars today; frameworks that are guilty of it are usually referred to (and will be henceforth referred to in this paper) as the 'essentialist' political culture view. See, for instance: Michael Hudson, 'The Political Culture Approach to Arab Democratization: The Case for Bringing It Back In, Carefully,' *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World: Theoretical Perspectives* ed. Brynen, Korany, and Noble, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 62.

[120] Guha, 'Negation,' 18.

The terms 'consciousness' on Lenin's part and 'pre-political' on Hobsbawm's might understandably carry baggage in the post-colonial era. The language Guha is pushing back against comes from a colonial history that denies agency of the oppressed. This rationale has been used to deny that subjugated peoples are naturally constituted for freedom to begin with.[121]

Those with power have had the advantage of being able to form a popular consensus about those without it because of their monopoly on major sources of information.[122] In colonial and imperialist contexts, the dominant have *self-imposed* limited information about their subjects into their understandings.[123] Because colonial subjects – as those such as Spivak and Said have noted – cannot speak for themselves, this limited, self-imposed information easily become the dominant understanding of colonial subjects.[124] Thus, Guha's concern about 'bourgeois historiography' is warranted; it is true that neglecting the conscious, political motivations of those in the global south has *both* limited our understandings of anti-colonial revolts and contributed to domination.

Hobsbawm's language in particular is a target for Guha. Guha argues that Hobsbawm's conception of the pre-political person who lacks an intellectual and ideological vision as well as more organized means of social agitation, is a contradiction. Hobsbawm, Guha argues, cannot claim that 'pre-political' rebels lack organization and ideology, while also claiming that they engage in primitive social protest.[125]

Guha rejects both the diagnosis – that the oppressed are 'pre-political' or lacking consciousness – and the prescription – that revolutionary leaders must bring consciousness to them. He does so by finding, within the documentation of elite authorities, how the ways in which

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[121] Mbembe, 73, 82-83.
[122] Guha, 'Introduction,' 16-17.
[123] Mbembe, 109.
[124] Spivak; Said, 59.
[125] Ibid., 'Introduction,' 6.

ostensibly 'pre-political' peasants in colonial India have exhibited actions of resistance that reveal

an oppositional consciousness. In challenging Hobsbawm's argument, Guha writes:

> There was nothing spontaneous about all this in the sense of being unthinking and wanting
> in deliberation. The peasant obviously knew what he was doing when he rose in revolt. The
> fact that this was designed primarily to destroy the authority of the superordinate elite and
> carried no elaborate blueprint for its replacement, does not put it outside the realm of
> politics. On the contrary, insurgency affirmed its political character precisely by its
> negative and inversive procedure. By trying to force a mutual substitution of the dominant
> and the dominated in the power structure it left nothing to doubt about its own identity as
> a project of power.[126]

Guha proceeds by showing the ways ostensibly spontaneous actions can actually be understood as

conscious and political. Rebel acts, in Guha's view, were falsely viewed as non-political because

documentation of them conceptualized them as crimes instead.[127]

This account of peasant insurgents in colonial India argues that seemingly unconscious and

pre-political action by rebels had a conscious and political character. Guha first claims that

revolting itself contains a sensitivity about what separates oneself (the subaltern) from society at

large. Because the default position is that this is a 'natural condition of his existence,' the rebel

exhibits consciousness by disrupting his status that is usually taken for granted in the dominant

social order.[128]

Consciousness, Guha argues, is seen in the way rebel actions are differentiated from

ordinary crime.[129] In Guha's words, insurgency establishes a kind of violence that is unique to it,

which is 'public, collective, destructive, and total in its modalities.'[130] The fact that these 'crimes'

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[126] Ibid., 9.
[127] Ibid., 'Ambiguity,' 78.
[128] Ibid., 'Negation,' 19
[129] Ibid., 'Ambiguity,' 95.
[130] Ibid., 'Modality,' 109.

are public and in the open politicizes them.[131] Further, there is a communal aspect to resistance that politicizes it as well; namely, the act of mass mobilization.[132]

Guha presents examples of destruction that incorporate themselves into resistance. The first is wrecking and burning symbols of authority.[133] These are not done because of economic incentive, but to make a politically symbolic point. An example for our purposes is the response to Bouazizi's self-immolation, where activists announced they 'would rather see police stations set on fire than people,' – and followed through on this claim.[134] Protestors took the prompting symbol of the revolution and turned it around on a major site of domination.

The account of consciousness given by Guha describes the ways people are able to come together and mobilize against existing powers. It is exemplified in the way that, for instance, Arab protestors publicized and collectivized their movement. Despite knowing the consequences, Arab youth publicized their discontent and developed unifying slogans, such as 'We are all Khaled Saʿeed' to express the ways Egyptians are all at risk of experiencing police brutality.[135] *Mobilizing* in this way is revolutionary.

The distinction between revolution as movement and revolution as change allows us to grant to Guha that his work is still describing revolutionary actions. His chapter on solidarity exemplifies this to the fullest extent: if protestors see themselves in others enough to mobilize and have some immediate goal, this is still a relevant form of consciousness.[136] As Lenin writes:

> the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life. Feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to react, and he will know

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[131] Ibid., 111.
[132] Ibid., 115.
[133] Guha, 'Modality,' 135.
[134] Bayat, 'Transformative Strategies,' 161.
[135] Merouan Mekouar, 'No Political Agents, No Diffusion: Evidence from North Africa,' *International Studies Review* *16* (2014): 210.
[136] Guha, 'Solidarity,' 169. More on revolution as movement will be discussed next chapter.

how to hoot the censors one day, on another day to demonstrate outside the house of a governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, on still another day to teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surplices who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc.[137]

Guha's *Solidarity* section focuses on this process by describing overlapping class solidarities among otherwise non-connected groups. He argues that many historical accounts of insurgencies in India have either mistook rebel discontent to be purely ethnic and sectarian when written by reactionaries or mistook to be purely class-related by left-leaning theorists. On the contrary, Guha claims that we ought to conceive of these insurgencies as transmitting both messages of ethnic/religious and class solidarity.[138] To make his point, Guha first discusses how antagonism between socioeconomic classes were worked out through religious solidarity, using the example of rural Bengali mosques. Here, Islamic ideology served as a mechanism to mend class relations between affluent and poor Muslims. In other cases, people who shared class-status among two distinct religions (Hinduism and Islam) came together and refrained from religious and sectarian violence against each other.[139]

It is true that sectarianism creates problems for solidarity movements. Guha points out that Hindus had more difficulty mobilizing than Muslims amongst themselves due to the amount of caste divisions within Hinduism. Nonetheless, this kind of mobilization exhibits a form of consciousness because it does not only connect one's individual hardships with those of other individuals, but groups hardships with those of other groups.

It is important to document and emphasize solidarity, because it counters the orientalist notion that protest in the global south is a matter of age-old hatreds or 'tribal-survival practices.'[140]

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[137] Lenin, *WITBD*, 43.
[138] Ibid., 171.
[139] Ibid., 172. Note that this exhibits some of the consciousness Lenin is concerned with; the realization of the oppressed that they share similar 'dark fates.'
[140] See, for instance: 'Political Culture Revisited,' *Beyond the Arab Spring,* 97-98, which describes Middle East scholarship that had dismissed Arab political action in these ways.

These conceptions rely on regressive notions that racialized and colonized peoples react to their circumstances through irrational anger rather than a genuine desire for freedom. Exhibiting that those in the global south have real, political inclinations towards liberty, on the other hand, has dealt important blows to colonial rhetoric.[141] For that reason, Leninists are tasked with reconciling popular post-colonial critique with their theoretical frameworks.

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[141] Susan Buck-Morss, 'Hegel and Haiti,' *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 51.

Chapter 3 / Movement: the art of the (im)possible

> 'Politics is the art of the possible,' I told the two young activists. Without skipping a beat, Ahmad replied, 'Revolution is the art of the impossible.'
> – Shadi Hamid.[142]

Comparative political scientists have used a variety of indicators to explain both the Arab uprisings and their lack of success in either deposing dictators or creating emancipatory change. These indicators comparative scholars have used include some measurable data, such as elaborate analyses of civil-military relations,[143] rentierism and state wealth,[144] and the weaponization of sectarianism.[145] In other words, comparativists are using classic tools of political science to try and explain burning questions about the Arab Spring and have done so to answer the following problems. First, and foremost, how did the Arab Spring erupt so suddenly after almost half a century of 'stable' authoritarianism? Second, why did people that were ostensibly most 'satisfied' with their economic conditions – according to polling – suddenly come out to topple their governments? And third: why did post-revolution governments take an Islamist form despite the declining popularity of Islamism in almost every Arab state?

After providing a background of the relevant events, this chapter will examine them as revolution as *movement.* My account of revolution as movement will discuss political consciousness that was exhibited through the reception of Tunisia's revolution via self-identification with the Tunisian struggle.

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[142] Shadi Hamid 'The Muslim Brotherhood: from Reform to Revolution,' *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle over Islam is Reshaping the World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 50%. Note: the e-reading version I have of Hamid's book uses percentages instead of page numbers.
[143] Gause, 12.
[144] Ibid., 16.
[145] Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, eds. 'Introduction: The Sectarianization Thesis,' *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Contentious Politics of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8.

§3.1. Background information

§3.1.2. Tunisia

Tunisia is a post-colonial state that that became independent from France in 1956.[146] During the colonial period, France controlled all of Tunisia's affairs and played a significant role in forming 'social classes and political strata.'[147] Workers and administrators from France were given entitlements to move to Tunisia, and French settlers and businesses were granted transfers of land. The French also conscripted what was mostly a class of poor Tunisians into the military and excluded Tunisians from their unions and technical bureaucracies. This political and social stratification facilitated the development of 'class and nationalist consciousness' among Tunisians.[148]

The Tunisian nationalist movement first arose in 1907, when The Young Tunisians – 'a mix of bilingual urban lawyers of aristocratic and bourgeois origins' – started Tunisia's first Muslim-owned newspaper, *Le Tunisien. Le Tunisien* did not explicitly call for independence, but it facilitated dialogue on reform in Tunisia. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was banned in 1912. In 1917, Tunisia's Destour movement began, which included religious administrators and scholars, artisanal guilds, and heads of urban quarters. Destour had two notable goals: reinstate the 1861 constitution – the first among Arab states – and gain independence from France. As a result, they were banned in 1933. In 1934, the Neo-Destour party split from Destour and formed as a separate party.[149]

Neo-Destour attracted educated, young men, and believed that mass mobilization could bring Tunisia to independence. They supported women's rights, modern education, and a secular

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[146] Chomiak & Parks, 817.
[147] Ibid., 216.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.

state. Neo-Destour first successfully mobilized workers and unions, and their promotion of independence united the country against French occupation.[150]

The party came to be led by Habib Bourguiba, who vocalized his desire to quickly modernize Tunisia. Bourguiba overthrew Tunisia's Hussaynid rulers on July 25, 1957 and made the new Republic of Tunisia independent from France.[151] Tunisia performed as a 'model country' that was considered to be the most progressive in North Africa. Bourguiba implemented what was then considered a progressive family code. The code placed marriage in civil courts, banned polygamy, provided divorce equality for men and women, created a minimum marriage age, and acknowledged nearly equal roles in the household. Further, Bourguiba's government attempted to reduce the overreach of religious institutions, dissolving religious endowments and undermining the authority of religious leaders. The government soon integrated the state's primary site of Islamic learning into the national education system.[152]

Bourguiba later faced conflicts with religious leaders because he did not want to independently accept them into the political sphere. Bourguiba's interior minister, whom we know as future president Ben Ali, feared that Bourguiba's conflict with the country's religious leaders would make him unfit for presidency.[153] He thus argued that Bourguiba was too old and senile to rule, and deposed him through a bloodless coup. After a largely uncontested election, Ben Ali came to power in 1989.[154]

Ben Ali had goals for 'liberalizing' Tunisia and began to allow religious actors to participate in politics as independents, including members of the Islamist al-Nahda who would

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[150] Ibid., 817.
[151] Ibid., 818.
[152] Ibid., 817.
[153] Ibid., 819.
[154] Ibid.

receive votes but no seats. Nonetheless, Ben Ali cracked down and arrested some members of Al-Nahda in 1991 while forcing others in to exile.[155] His repression and crony capitalist patronage garnered much criticism, as did his election tampering. Consequently, substantial but informal opposition grew. But it was not until the beginning of the revolution in 2010/2011 that these groups took Ben Ali down.

§3.1.2.1. The revolution in Tunisia
As we know, it would be Mohamed Bouazizi that would spark the uprisings against Ben Ali. Ben Ali's flight has been attributed not only to mass mobilization itself, but the intervention of relevant and respected agents, such as Tunisian labour unions as well as the state's own military. Tunisia's military – unlike some others in the Middle East – is known as 'institutionalized' as opposed to 'patrimonial.' This means that they are more meritocratic and emphasize military professionalism. Patrimonial militaries, on the other hand, are based on pre-existing relations between state powers and military members. In this way, those in a patrimonial military have more to lose from deposing the government than institutionalized ones, because their positions are tied to existing powers.[156] Naturally, this made Tunisia's military an easily-obtained ally against Ben Ali.

Al-Nahda would be the party to assume power after Ben Ali's fall. Al-Nahda campaigned on a standard democratic platform, and promoted political liberties, human rights, and a free market. While technically an Islamist movement, emerging from Tunisia's *Movement of Islamic Tendency,* they advocated for a secular constitution and assured worried westerners and secular

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[155] Ibid., 820.

[156] Risa A. Brooks, 'Military Deflection and the Arab Spring,' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics,* (February 2017): 5.

Tunisians that they would not implement Islamic law.[157] Al-Nahda's party was informed by Islam but not strictly 'Islamist' in the conservative sense. Instead, they promised to interpret Islam moderately and, in a way that is compatible with progressive liberal rights. 'There is no potential in Tunisia for an extremist understanding of Islam,' professed Al-Nahda's co-founder, Rached Ghannouchi.[158]

While the Neo-Destour party had classified Al-Nahda as a radical political group, they had generally behaved, throughout their history, as a compliant group that was willing to work within existing political institutions.[159] Throughout most of their existence, the mainstream line in the party had been to emphasize the compatibility between Islam and democracy. Because Bourguiba and Ben Ali had placed an emphasis on secularism in Tunisia, however, Al-Nahda members had to consistently re-affirm their commitment to secularism once in government.

This, however, put Al-Nahda in a predicament. On one hand, they were in a largely secularist parliament under the watch of concerned, secularist citizens. But on the other hand, they faced backlash from conservative Muslims who opposed the progressive promises made by Al-Nahda.[160] In this way, they had to maintain an appeal to both liberal secularists and conservative Islamists. Later dropping the Islamist label entirely, Al-Nahda claimed that religious freedom had been achieved for Tunisia in its new constitution.[161]

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[157] Janine A. Clark, 'Islamist Movements and Democratic Politics,' *Beyond the Arab Spring*, 138.
[158] Anne Wolf, 'An Islamist "renaissance"? Religion and politics in post-revolutionary Tunisia,' *The Journal of North African Studies*, 18:4 (2013): 560-561.
[159] Ibid., 564.
[160] Ibid., 566.
[161] Rached Ghannouchi, 'From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy: The Ennahda Party and the Future of Tunisia' *Foreign Affairs,* (Sept./Oct. 2016), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/tunisia/politicalislam-muslim-democracy>. While dropping the Islamist label is interesting to explore, the more recent events are beyond the scope of my analysis.

§3.1.3. Egypt

Oh, free men! Let them kill me where I stand!
– Gamal Nasser on the Muslim Brotherhood.[162]

The Arab Spring was not Egypt's first revolution. In 1952, anti-west riots erupted in Cairo and Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Free Officers overthrew Egypt's pro-west monarch.[163] Nasser began a process of nationalization in Egypt, established 'Arab socialism', and stifled conservative religious movements such as *Ikhwan Muslimin* (The Muslim Brotherhood).

Founded by Hasan al-Banna in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood spent most of its existence being criminalized and repressed by the Egyptian government.[164] Al-Banna was a conservative thinker and talented speaker that called for a return to Islam.[165] His charisma and direct outreach, as well as his community service and construction of mosques and schools, rallied Muslims together under the banner of resistance to the spread of Western values. Al-Banna criticized parliament elites in Egypt and accused them of negligence toward the majority of Egyptians living in conditions of wealth inequality and poverty. He promised that the Brotherhood would morally and socially renew Egypt and resist Western cultural imperialism.[166] However, the Brotherhood would later spend a good deal of time in prison, particularly during Nasser's rule.[167]

Nasser and those that followed possessed strong executive authority. Further, the Egyptian military played and continues to play a crucial role in Egyptian politics, and persistently intervenes in the country's politics and economy. Egyptian presidents, with the backing of the army, have

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[162] Ahmed Elmiligy, 'جمال عبد الناصر - حادث المنشية' (trans: 'Gamal Abdel Nasser – Al-Manshiyya Incident),' (Published 2008) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU1tC0L27s8>.
[163] Tarek Masoud, 'Egypt,' *The Middle East: Fourteenth Edition*, 430.
[164] Wickham, 'Conceptualizing Islamist Movement Change,' 1.
[165] Ibid., 21.
[166] Ibid., 22.
[167] As Sabeel, 'The Muslim Brotherhood: a history of arrests from 1948 to 2013,' *Middle East Monitor,* (January 27, 2014), <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140127-the-muslim-brotherhood-a-history-of-arrests-from-1948-to-2013/>.

typically had all-encompassing power, while the legislature lacked the ability to interfere or hold the executive accountable. This political structure made it difficult for Nasser to stick to his revolutionary promise of 'establishing sound democratic life' in Egypt, despite the fact that he led his movement under an emancipatory banner.[168]

Nasser was succeeded by Anwar Sadat. Sadat attempted to 'liberalize' Egypt, make peace with Israel, allow the Muslim Brotherhood more leniency, and establish peace with the United States.[169] Bayat argues that Sadat's *Infitah* policies brought about crony capitalism, inequality, urban segregation – and subsequent protest, such as bread riots and labour strikes.[170] Sadat was then assassinated by Islamist extremists, and was succeeded by Hosni Mubarak – who had plans for 'liberalization.' Nonetheless, Mubarak rigged elections, retained military dominance in Egypt, and passed legislature without restraint or checks on his power.[171]

§3.1.3.1. The revolution in Egypt

Egypt followed Tunisia and channeled widespread frustration into a popular protest. Egyptians had been experiencing discontent with Hosni Mubarak's regime after it interfered in Egypt's 2010 parliamentary elections, which signaled to opposition groups that reforms could not be achieved through institutional means.[172] What Egyptians had learned after Tunisia, however, was that mass protests could put enough pressure on the regime to make an impact in a way that institutional politics could not. On January 25, known as the Egyptian national holiday, 'Police

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[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid., 431.
[170] Bayat, 'Neoliberalism,' 23.
[171] Masoud, 431.
[172] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, 'The Brotherhood and the Egyptian Uprising,' *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, (Princeton University Press, 2013), 158.

Day,'[173] Egyptians participated in a protest for Khaled Saʿeed: a twenty-eight-year-old man who was beaten to death by Egyptian security forces. Saʿeed's memorial page on Facebook began to publicly document police abuses in Egypt, and the community that followed the page felt encouraged and ready to revolt.[174]

The memorial page soon created an event that called for Egyptians to mobilize and demonstrate against police brutality and regime abuses, and Egyptians followed suit.[175] On January 31, the military declared that they support the 'legitimate demands' of the people and that they would not use force against protestors. The military's support was crucial, and their participation substantial. On February 13, parliament was dissolved, and the constitution was suspended. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took control for the next sixth months before there was a new parliamentary election.[176]

Mubarak was succeeded by Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood and the 'Freedom and Justice Party' (FJP). Among the Muslim Brotherhood were other Salafist movements in parliament, like Nour and Watan. Unlike the long-existing Muslim Brotherhood, Nour was not established until Mubarak's regime fell, but came second in Egypt's subsequent election. Nour split due to internal disagreements in 2013, leading to the establishment of Watan – who maintained close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and briefly joined their supporting coalition, the National Alliance to Support Legitimacy. Nour and Watan eventually distanced themselves from

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[173] 'Police Day' is a national holiday in Egypt that commemorates the murder of fifty Egyptian police officers in Ismailia by British colonial forces. The holiday has existed since the revolution in 1952. See Noha El Tawil, 'Why January 25 is Police Day in Egypt,' *Egypt Today* (January 25, 2018), <http://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/41063/Why-January-25-is-Police-Day-in-Egypt>

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid., 163.

[176] Ibid., 166.

the Brotherhood and supported removing President Morsi from power in favour of Egypt's current president, Abdel-Fatah el-Sisi.[177]

While they did not last long in government, the Muslim Brotherhood was a crucial actor in the Egyptian uprisings. They helped maintain order in the Tahrir Square protests, protected crowds from the police, and ran security checkpoints to check for weapons.[178] However, once elected, the Muslim Brotherhood drafted a conservative Islamist constitution, with an Islamist majority in parliament.[179]

At the beginning of his rule, Morsi was reformist and worked within existing state institutions rather than attempting to undermine them. Morsi was known to be averse to conflict and feared causing panic in Egypt.[180] Because Morsi was so cautious and gradualist, many young activists within the Muslim Brotherhood became frustrated. In general, Egyptians that participated in the protests became agitated as well. Ehab al-Khouli, an activist of the opposition, famously declared on television that Morsi was a 'liar and deceiver,' which resonated with 'millions of Egyptians' that eventually took to the streets again on June 30, 2013. Protestors saw that their new democracy was failing. There was yet to be a shift in economic prosperity and civil freedoms. Soon enough, Sisi's coup overthrew Morsi's government and placed many members of the Brotherhood in prison.[181]

One supporter of the Brotherhood claimed in an interview that Morsi's government should have 'purified state institutions' and shut down 'lies' about the Brotherhood that were being

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[177] Georges Fahmi 'The Future of Political Salafism in Egypt and Tunisia,' *Carnegie Middle East Center*, (Nov. 16, 2015) http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/11/16/future-of-political-salafism-in-egypt-and-tunisiapub-61871

[178] Ibid., 'The Brotherhood and the Egyptian Uprising,' 167.

[179] Janine A. Clark, 'Islamist Movements and Democratic Politics,' *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism & Democratization in the Arab World* ed. Rex Brynen … [et al.]., (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2012), 119.

[180] Hamid, 36%.

[181] Ibid., 37%.

spread. Brotherhood supporters now wanted revolution and condemned the gradualist approach that Morsi's government insisted on.[182] While the Brotherhood had previously 'renounced violence', younger members were becoming more open to it.[183]

As Hamid notes, the events in the Arab Spring caused a shift in what Islamists believed was possible and what they could take for granted. Instead of challenging elections and contesting policies, many self-described 'non-violent' Islamists, such as those in Egypt, began to re-consider their gradualist approach. Arabs throughout the region were less confident that peaceful and generic political participation could achieve what they had initially hoped for.[184] Many Brotherhood members thought their failures were a 'blessing' that forced them to change their approach and shift their beliefs about political action.

§3.2. The revolution 'in their own image': movement and solidarity

In providing an overview of recent Tunisian and Egyptian histories we can see that popular protest and revolution were in recent memories of both Tunisian and Egypt before the Arab Spring. What I now want to consider is the 'why now' question. The 'why now' question can be further expanded into: 'what provokes the first movements?' While revolutions had happened before in Tunisia and Egypt, both countries had settled in to long and persistent authoritarianism. What brought out the revolutionary spirit once more?

Prior to the uprisings in 2011, Arab youth were more satisfied with economic conditions in their states than middle-aged and elderly Arabs. Despite high unemployment rates, Arab youth were more optimistic about the improvement of their conditions.[185] They also seemed to express

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[182] Ibid., 42%.
[183] Ibid., 43%.
[184] Ibid., 47%.
[185] Michael Hoffman & Amaney Jamal, 'Political Attitudes of Youth Cohorts,' *The Arab Uprisings Explained,* 283.

less interest in politics than older generations and were less likely to vote. Hence, scholars of the Middle East were puzzled with the large amount of youth participation in the Arab Spring; something must have happened to dramatically increase Arab youths' political interest and willingness to participate, since they had less expressed grievances against their respective regimes.[186]

For revolution to take place, participants need to perceive real opportunities for change in order to consider mobilizing. Bouazizi's act of dissent first resonated with the Tunisian public, who saw themselves in Bouazizi in various ways due to the systemic domination they had also experienced – be it poverty, sexism, homophobia, and so on.[187] Once Tunisians succeeded in getting rid of Ben Ali, those in other Arab states realized that contesting their government's power and its hand in systems of domination was possible as well.

The toppling of Ben Ali's regime in Tunisia served as this kind of signal. Revolutionary spirit was diffused from Tunisia to Egypt because of an informational cascade: the updating of one's personal inclinations based on new information.[188] As argued by Merouan Mekouar, local agents of revolution need to be 'willing to exploit symbolic acts of protest and transform them into mass mobilization.'[189] As he points out, Egyptian activists built on years of activism and seized the opportunity that the Tunisian revolution had created. The activism and popular discontent were present, and what was required was a radical event such as Tunisia's initial uprisings.[190]

C.L.R. James describes this phenomenon in discussing the Haitian revolution in *The Black Jacobins.* James writes about how the French Revolution served as inspiration for the slave revolt

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[186] Ibid., 284.
[187] Bayat, 'Counter-norm currents,' 180-184.
[188] Mekouar, 208.
[189] Ibid., 207.
[190] Ibid., 210.

in French-occupied San Domingo. Because of the connection slaves in San Domingo had to the poor in France – namely, suffering at the hands of the French ruling class – a cross-border solidarity was soon formed. James articulates how a new spirit of dissent arose in San Domingo when stories of white slaves in France rising and killing their masters spread to them. In storming the palace in France, the oppressed were overthrowing the old order 'not with speeches, but with arms' and showing that liberation could be won in this way.[191] The people of San Domingo were under the impression that the newly liberated people of France were now 'enjoying the fruits of the earth.'[192] James thus describes this new spirit as the creation of a new ideal where the slaves of San Domingo saw the revolution 'in their own image.'[193]

Egyptians were not only able to see themselves in Tunisians because of Arab and Muslim identities, but because they shared similar histories. Egypt and Tunisia had both been members of the Arab socialist movement and had both underwent a liberalizing economic shift in the seventies and eighties.[194] And, as we saw, both states had an extensive history of political protests.

Protestors during the Arab Spring rightly saw the domination they experienced manifest in state power. For example, economic inequality in the Middle East is often fostered by state corruption and dynastic rule. In Egypt, citizens were not happy with the fact that Mubarak was grooming his son to succeed him.[195] Dynastic rule is a clear manifestation of the existence and maintenance of a privileged and wealthy political class that sustains power while the majority of the population lives in unideal economic conditions. Further, dynastic rule closes the political

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[191] C.L.R. James, 'And the Paris Masses Complete' *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*; 2nd ed., (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 122.

[192] James, 'Parliament and Property,' 81.

[193] Ibid.

[194] David Patel, Valerie Bunch, & Sharon Wolchik, 'Diffusion and Demonstration,' *The Arab Uprisings Explained,* 64.

[195] F. Gregory Gause III & Shawn L. Yom, 'Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On,' *Journal of Democracy, 23, 4* (October 2012): 78.

arena to the majority of citizens who are not wealthy elites, making them unable to take meaningful action against the way the state maintains social inequality.

Mobilization in Arab states was able to take place through eschewing sectarian divisions where sectarianism usually serves as a barrier to mobilization. Sectarianism enforces the notion that those who share other connected hardships (e.g., economic ones) do not have enough in common to mobilize together. It is in this way that elites benefit from sectarianism.[196] Saudi Arabia, for instance, attempted to weaponize sectarianism to diffuse protests against the al-Khalifa monarchy in Bahrain by using Sunni/Shiʿa antagonisms to frame protests as an Iranian conspiracy and deflect attention from the protestors' demands.[197]

Eschewing sectarianism exhibits consciousness in Guha's sense – that is, through politicized action and solidarity – where sectarianism is rejected in favour of class solidarity. Here, people see the ways their oppression is interconnected with those that have been falsely positioned as their enemy. A poor Sunni understanding her intertwined fate with a poor Shiʿa in Bahrain, for instance, signifies a form of political consciousness. Protestors *knew* that sectarian elites were not acting to protect their religion when they claimed protests against Khalifa were orchestrated by Iran. Rather, people of all sects protested the Khalifa monarch as an agent of multiple forms of class domination and demanded that they be able to meet basic economic necessities.[198]

During the protests in Egypt, people from various groups experiencing domination – such as women and LGBTQ+ individuals – partook and began to make claims as well.[199] It was not only corruption that Arab governments exhibited, but repression, particularly from police against

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[196] Bassel Salloukh, 'The Architecture of Sectarianization in Lebanon,' *Sectarianization…* eds. Hashemi & Postel, 227.

[197] Salloukh, 'The Sectarianization of Geopolitics in the Middle East,' *Sectarianization*, 230.

[198] Ben Piven, 'Demanding equal rights in Bahrain,' *Al-Jazeera,* (March 7, 2011), <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/02/201122711137430846.html>.

[199] Bayat, 'Counter-norm currents,' 181-182.

the urban poor. When police control collapsed, the poor gained confidence that led them to make more claims and engage in direct action.[200] Collectives formed to tackle distribution problems and prices without waiting for events to fully unfold: 'they did not speak of democracy,' Bayat argues, 'but in tackling problems directly and personally, they were living democracy.'[201] Further, workers began to form unions to respond to wage and employment security concerns. In this way, people identified with each others' struggles and united by being empowered by new possibilities.

§3.2.1. Failure to change: the limitations of revolution as movement

The problem with revolutions that lack an overarching ideology is that too wide of a variety of claims come to be made. To understand what I mean, assume that a revolution does contain an overarching ideology such as anti-imperialist pan-Arabism. This limits the kinds of claims and proposals that can be made; I cannot, for instance, march in solidarity under this banner with those that dislike the government like me but want them to continue to support something like the United States dictating who will take the government's place. That would contradict the terms of the revolution and the changes it proposes.

Because the Arab Spring was only revolutionary in the sense of mobilization, it did not emphasize new kind of *ideological* trajectory was possible. Instead, it emphasized that people could come forth and make claims against one common enemy or create 'counter-norm currents.'[202] This means that religious conservatives also took the opportunity to make demands, such as asking that women cover up, advocating for female genital mutilation (FGM), advocating for marrying underaged girls, and advocating for polygamy. Religious conservatives had perceived

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[200] Ibid., 'Insurgent Poor,' 188.
[201] Ibid., 198.
[202] Ibid. 181-182.

themselves as unfree just as women and LGBTQ+ people had, but their trajectory moved in different directions.

The trajectories of these different groups moved in different directions because they adhered to different ideologies that rationalized their relationships to the world. Each group's picture of freedom – left untouched – will look different. For religious conservatives, the 'right' to marry underaged girls is considered a freedom. It is likely that feminists would not agree. Both groups possess different doctrines that explain the causes of their social subordination as well as what they are owed. As we know, these doctrines are vastly different.

Further, the ideological chasms between groups like Islamists and feminists were not brought out in the protests – they only became clear once the government had come apart. As we saw, groups like the Muslim Brotherhood showed broad and non-ideological support for the protests while they were happening because of a very broad and shared disapproval of Mubarak. Each group was ready for revolution as movement, but all protestors did not, as a unit, have a clear and unified plan for the days after Mubarak's fall.

Removing existing power does not necessitate that the new ways power is distributed will be freer or more just. Those that make claims commonly share the sense that the existing order is wrong, but the ideological rationales behind these intuitions differ greatly. If we consider Rudé again, we might say that protestors in the revolutions shared an inherent ideology – that is, a shared expectation built on their common experiences with one another.[203] Further, being moved to act on shared expectations can be a legitimately political motivation that people genuinely hold.

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[203] Note that Marx makes a relevant observation when describing the revolutions of 1848; namely that revolution became possible because people were compressed and assimilated under the same technologies and hence had their oppression manifest in concentrated sites. Similarly, the Arab Spring came to be partly because people were compressed under specific systems and sites of oppression. See: Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,' *Marx: Later Political Writings,* ed. Terrell Carver, (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

However, these common experiences, in the context of the Arab revolutions, were rather broad – namely, repression from the government and the social privileging of government officials. This is enough to get rid of the government but does little work for the days that follow. There were minimally shared expectations about what democratic life *ought* to look like: e.g., ruling the country should not be based upon what family one is born in to – but this can still take a wide range of forms, many of which would remain inhibitory to freedom.

This meant that the ground was primed for *some* sort of contestation against the government to take place if the right signals appeared. But there was not any specific instruction that showed what was to happen after. As we saw, it was not enough, from the standpoint of the desire for universal liberation, to merely signal that revolution is possible. There are many ways in which revolution can move. As Bayat argues,

> What the postrevolutionary societies in the Arab world were experiencing was not liberal or secular but societies in flux, unsettled by emerging trends, entitlements, and social dislocation – societies polarized between the highly conservative and highly liberal margins, between stubborn elitism and subaltern radicalism, with a large mainstream subject to a growing sociocultural fusion and hybridity.[204]

It is because of this that only revolution as movement could materialize, and not revolution as change. Every participant was able to perceive themselves as unfree and attribute this to the existing order, but there was not enough ideological cohesion to set up a blueprint for what to do after a source of unfreedom had been eradicated. People exhibited 'radical impulses' through their willingness to revolt, but 'no serious intellectual articulation, ideological frame, or social movement anchored them.'[205] While some radical, progressive ideas about future governance were

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[204] Ibid., 187.
[205] Ibid., 'Radicalism meets neoliberalism,' 203.

put forth, they were frequently dismissed by more powerful people as 'extremist, utopian, [and] illegal.'[206]

Nonetheless, the ways that mobilization and solidarity took place showed a shift in consciousness. This shift did not come from education, but from having pre-existing grievances and inclinations toward freedom. What it took was seeing that these mobilizations were possible. This takes a revolution to a certain extent: unexpected protests can overwhelm and even dissolve existing powers.

Yet, Bayat points out, this is only one side of what a revolution ought to contain. In closing his argument, he cites Badiou to argue that 'new consciousness and possibilities,' can disappear of they do not 'translate into an alternative polity', because it is easier to restore than to create something new.[207] Thus, it is not only movement that has to resonate, but an ideology that challenges a hegemony much larger than the current regime at hand.

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[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid., 'Revolution and Hope.'

Chapter 4 / Change: working with unprimed grounds

> We rarely decide to make revolutions willingly and voluntarily; rather, we are conditioned and compelled to make them.
> – Asef Bayat.[208]

In chapter two, I provided an account of revolution as change through an examination of twentieth-century revolutionary political thought and the ways it has been challenged. I argued that Guha's challenge to Lenin provides an account of revolution as movement that does well to politicize the grievances of those in colonial and postcolonial states. Nonetheless, Lenin's theory provides a compelling criticism of the radicals of his time and is relevant to Bayat's concept of revolution as change in today's political landscape. More on Lenin's relevance will follow in this chapter.

In chapter three, I provided an overview of the Arab Spring cases I am concerned with in Egypt and Tunisia and discussed the way revolution as movement materializes. Here, I want to reintroduce the theories from chapter two to build on chapter three. I have argued that revolution as movement pertains to a solidarity-based political consciousness: people with political grievances will mobilize when they change their expectations of what is possible and will be inspired to do so by *seeing themselves* in others that have successfully mobilized. While this form of mobilization does not necessarily entail a revolutionary consciousness in Lenin's sense, it is still a relevant form of political consciousness that is no less relevant than Leninist revolutionary consciousness.

Recall Rudé's conceptions of inherent and derived ideology. Inherent ideology is based on peoples' shared experiences and traditions.[209] Shared expectations of what people are owed can already incline people towards protests. That is, one need not formally learn about the history and

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[208] Ibid., 226.
[209] Rudé, 22.

mechanisms behind police power to know one has been wronged by police brutality or to do something about it.

Rudé's argument is that there are steps which will merge inherent ideologies into a derived ideology, such as the use of slogans or symbols.[210] Egypt's 'We are all Khaled Saʿeed' indicates an early stage of merging. It shows a shared sense of wrongness; Egypt's police do not treat its citizens the way they expect they should be treated. But it also shared a sense of self-identification with Saʿeed: i.e., 'this could happen to any of us – we all share the unjust subjection to the police officers' violent whims.' What happens next is dependent on who distills these experiences into cohesive explanations of peoples' unfreedom and a blueprint that purports to alleviate it.

§4.1. *Political* political Islam: a small offering of ideology

Restoration of status-quo power-hierarchies is what contestations of power can default to when no alternative is offered. What more, there are ways of organizing ourselves that are taken for granted even when we bring forth political grievances. The contribution of theorists like Lenin aim to show how political action that works within these confines fails to be emancipatory.

Self-limiting, reformative political actions often justify themselves by appealing to a conception of 'the possible.' Lenin describes, for instance, how some proclaim their actions as revolutionary while operating within 'normal bourgeois relations' instead of challenging them: 'thus far shalt thou go and no farther.'[211] Just as *movement* needs to resonate with observers, ideology does as well. In the absence of revolutionary ideology, others that offer resonating

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[210] Ibid., 27.
[211] Lenin, 'Our Revolution,' *The Day After the Revolution* ed. Slavoj Žižek, (Verso, 2017), 138.

explanations of and alternatives to the status quo – even if they are not emancipatory or radically transformative – will be 'defaulted' to.

The only concrete ideology to show a (somewhat) clear shape in the Arab Spring was Islamism, which did so in various forms: post-Islamism in Tunisia, conservative Islamism in Egypt, and the rise of more violent Salafists in Libya and Syria. It is important to look at why this is the case, as I will suggest that Islamism's new successes are not due to any relevant increases in religiosity.

I want to propose that Islamists took the opportunity, after the fall of pan-Arabism, to provide a resonant explanation of very real experiences of domination in Arab states in a manner that went beyond religiosity. It does not follow from this, however, that these groups' positive visions were desirable outcomes for everyone that participated in the protests. It also does not follow that they were ideologically revolutionary. They were able to, in some ways, resonate with peoples' experiences of domination. However, they did not provide a fundamental break from the political order that engendered these experiences of domination.

The union of Islam and politics, or political Islam, has been declining in popularity in Egypt and every other Arab state except Yemen. In a survey with two waves – 2006/2007 and 2010/2011, Egypt had a decreased favourability rate for political Islam.[212] In Egypt, only nine per cent of Egyptians saw the revolution to be about achieving Islamism; the rest perceived its goals to be about democracy and equality.[213]

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[212] Mark Tessler & Michael Robbins, 'Political System Preferences of Arab Publics,' *The Arab Uprisings Explained: New Contentious Politics in the Middle East* ed. Marc Lynch, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 260. See also Gawad Soltan et. al., whose findings suggested low favourability for Islamists that were not democratically open. Gamal Abdel Gawad Soltan, Ahmed Nagui Qamha, & Subhi 'Asilah 'Public Opinion Report on the Most Important Political and Social Issues in Egypt,' *Arab Barometer* (June 2011).
[213] Bayat, 'Islamism in Power?' 151.

It might seem strange, then, that the initial outcome of Egypt's and Tunisia's revolutions were both Islamist governments. Experts in comparative Middle East politics have offered various explanations as to why this is the case. One explanation is that respondents in these surveys might not have had a clear distinction between Islamist democracy and secular democracy in their mind. Neither the Tunisian Al-Nahda nor the Muslim Brotherhood were 'imposing Islamic prescriptions' during their respective campaigns and expressed openness to governing with non-Islamist parties.[214]

Another explanation is that elections do not necessarily reflect public opinion, which is reflected in two facts about Egypt's and Tunisia's political landscape. First, wealthier individuals vote more than those in rural areas. Second, both Al-Nahda and the Muslim Brotherhood have a history of communal involvement and are likely to be appealing to the public within the short period between the fall of the regime and the subsequent elections.[215] Moreover, when considering voter turnout in Egypt and Tunisia, neither Islamist parties had majority support.[216]

Finally, ideological political preferences were less important than the fact that Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood were opposed to the old regimes. For those that are not particularly ideologically committed while voting, Islamist parties are perceived as less corrupt and more 'sincerely committed to the welfare of ordinary citizens.'[217]

What is most fascinating is not necessarily the number of Arabs that support Islamist governments, but which Arab *demographic* supports it. What the data shows is that one's personal religiosity does not necessarily align with one's support for Islamist parties. Only forty per cent of Arab youth participate in communal worship, and less than sixty per cent identify as religious. In

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[214] Tessler & Robins, 261.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid., 262.
[217] Ibid.

comparison, eighty per cent of elderly Arabs identify as religious.[218] However, younger Arabs are more likely to support Islamist governance despite being less pious than their elderly counterparts.[219] What is not conditional on age is the link between unemployment and political Islam: regardless of age or level of education, unemployment was positively correlated with support for Islamic law and an overall support for political Islam.[220]

Middle East scholars have turned to social movement theory to explain how Islamism has been able to be integrated into institutional politics. Janine Clark describes its pertinence to Islamist movements by laying out three of its dominant concepts. The first is political opportunity structures: like other movements, Islamist movements will take advantage of political opportunities to mobilize. This means that, for instance, groups like the previously repressed Muslim Brotherhood had an opening during the Egyptian protests where they could offer themselves as an alternative to the existing order.[221]

The second concept is resource mobilization: social movements can only materialize when strategic resources and organizational structures are readily available. Here, Clark points out that Islamist movements are not irrational, religious outbursts; they require gathering money and skills in order to transform individual grievances in to movements. For instance, she points out that youth initially join Islamist movements because of its material, psychological, and emotional benefits.[222] For these benefits to exist, movements need some form of organizing power that can offer these incentives.

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[218] Michael Hoffman & Amaney Jamal, 'Political Attitudes of Youth Cohorts,' *The Arab Uprisings Explained,* 278.
[219] Ibid., 279.
[220] Ibid., 289.
[221] Janine Clark, 'Islamist Movements and Democratic Politics,' *Beyond the Arab Spring* ed. Brynen et. al., 136.
[222] Ibid.

The third concept, framing, relates to the second. It explains why people join Islamist movements despite high risks – such as being jailed or murdered.[223] The onus is on social movements to offer what Clark calls an 'interpretive schemata': the language and cognitive tools to make sense of their experiences and surrounding events. Framing offers rationales to everyday people to join movements. For instance, one might frame the movement's form of activism as a moral obligation that makes potential members willing to take risks for the sake of religious duty.[224]

Framing is key to the point I want to make. Recall from chapter two that Lenin and Fanon emphasized the role of the revolutionary in channeling the grievances of oppressed people into an emancipatory political contestation. The popularity of Islamism among Arab youth despite declining levels of their religiosity indicates a point in Bayat's and Lenin's favour: offering an ideology is crucial to dictating the next phases of the revolution after the government falls.

As I have mentioned, he Arab Spring showed us how Arab nations exhibited a special kind of regional permeability. The uprisings only spread around the Middle East, and specifically only in Arabic speaking states. Arab regional permeability has not been a secret; region-wide Arabic speaking news networks such as *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiyya* fostered a distinctly Arab political culture, especially after an era of pan-Arab and Arab nationalist political movements that assumed a unified identity across borders. But since the decline of pan-Arabism, we have seen Islamism take its place. Unlike pan-Arabism, Islamism is not uniquely Arab and encompasses identities beyond Arab borders. What more, Islamism is far broader. While pan-Arabism drew on Marxist and anti-imperialist themes, mainstream Islamist groups embraced liberalism and capitalism in

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[223] Ibid., 137.
[224] Ibid.

many respects. Islamist leaders got into business and finance and de-emphasized social and economic justice in favour of 'building an exclusive moral and ideological community.'[225]

The next question might be why Islamist parties were able to resonate among people during a uniquely Arab (and not necessarily Muslim) revolution. Islamism declined in popularity among the majority of Arabs, but Muslim *identity* and the racialization of Islam is undeniably tied to being Arab. And it is true that in the Western eye especially, Arabs are rarely divorced from Muslims.

Because Islam is so deeply tied to Arab identity, part of Arab unfreedom is due to powerful Western entities – such as the American government or U.S. media – positioning Muslims as their antagonists both in U.S. policy[226] and in popular culture.[227] This means that Islamophobia – the systemic othering and subjugation of people that are *perceivably* Muslim – does not operatively refer to criticisms of the theological doctrine of Islam, or even those that practice the Muslim faith. While 'Islam' is not a race, those associated with it have come to be racialized.

Racialization identifies group-making characteristics, 'drawing a line' around its members, and imposing traits and characteristics on given group.[228] This is partly because race is not only physical, but cultural. Racial divisions are therefore dependent on common *beliefs* about race.[229] For instance, the class 'Arabs' is broadly racialized and refers to language, culture, and often

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[225] Bayat, 'Neo-Islamism,' 86. Note: a possible explanation for this is simply the amount of time Islamism lasted – since it lasted past the Cold War whereas pan-Arabism did not.

[226] E.g., see Trump v. Hawaii, No. 17-965, 565 U.S. ____ (2018), which ruled in favour of Trump's travel ban. While non-Muslim majority states were included, the ban was largely understood as a legal push against Muslim entry into the United States that had to be modified multiple times to be accepted. This is supported by earlier rulings against the ban – such as its second defeat in Hawaii – which drew on Trump's earlier anti-Muslim animus to argue that the ban was, in fact, discriminatory. See: Jennifer Saul 'Racial Figleaves, the Shifting Boundaries of the Permissible, and the Rise of Donald Trump,' *Philosophical Topics* Vol. 45 No. 2 (Fall 2017): 115.

[227] E.g., popular films that operate on a 'Clash of Civilizations' narrative. See, for example, Rania Khalek, '"American Sniper" spawns death threats against Arabs and Muslims,' *Electronic Intifada*, (January 2015), <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/rania-khalek/american-sniper-spawns-death-threatsagainst-arabs-and-muslims>.

[228] Steve Garner & Saher Selod. 'The Racialization of Muslims: Empirical Studies of Islamophobia,' *Critical Sociology I-II,* (2014): 6.

[229] Charles Mills, 'But What Are You *Really?*' *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Cornell, 1998), 47-50.

religion. 'Arab' does not practically refer to a genetic or physical class of people, but a culture united by a common language and loose cultural similarities.

Because of the intertwining of Muslim and Arab identity, even Christian Arabs experience Islamophobia – as evidenced by instances such as the tragic death of Lebanese Christian Khalid Jabara, who was murdered by his Islamophobic neighbour.[230] In turn, a great deal of antagonisms between the west and Middle Eastern states are framed as a clash between Christian and Muslim culture.[231] It is no surprise, then, that Islam has been explicitly used to counter Western dominance in Middle Eastern states and explain peoples' Islam-related hardships to them.

Islamist movements offer as an all-encompassing worldview that is as an alternative to the ideas of people many Arabs see as their oppressors. Islamism offers itself as an enemy of Western culture – and particularly what many see as Western cultural imperialism. It also offers itself as an enemy to other forms of domination Arabs experience, such as Zionism and autocracy.[232] As Bayat points out, Islamism can serve as a substantial challenge to the international status-quo because of their anti-imperialist stances and religious language.[233]

Both right-wing and left-wing activists have had concerns with Islamism. The right, particularly in the west, has a popular line of Islamism being regressive and anti-modern.[234] But it is precisely western conservative discourse that allows Islamism to thrive. This is because Islamists have an immediate explanation of these criticisms that frame them as act of cultural imperialism. It is then in this way that they may deny that western conceptions of freedom and progress are

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[230] Michael E. Miller. 'Man's 'unusual fixation' with Lebanese neighbours led to killing, Tulsa police say.' *The Washington Post,* (August 16, 2016), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/08/16/mans-unusual-fixation-with-lebanese-neighbors-led-to-murder-tulsa-police-say/?utm_term=.c4e0f0c72683>.

[231] See, for instance, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, 2011); Bernard Lewis, *What went wrong? The clash between Islam and modernity in the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002).

[232] Bayat, 'Not a Theology of Liberation,' 69.

[233] Ibid., 70

[234] Ibid., 69.

good or desirable. In fact, it is this discourse that makes Islamists well-positioned to place themselves on the front-lines against the western cultural and colonial domination of Middle Eastern States, with a readily available framework that right-wing western powers have carved out for them. Islamist ideology takes Western discourse about Muslims and Arabs not being culturally compatible with the west and runs with it; it argues that Arabs and Muslims ought not to 'assimilate' in to western conceptions of freedom and 'progress' and return to traditional Muslim ideals. This offers not only a framework for resistance, but an all-encompassing blueprint for living one's life.

The left has resisted Islamism as well, for different reasons. There are more obvious leftist push-backs against conservative streams of Islamism exhibited particularly by feminist activists in post-revolutionary Tunisia and Egypt. Women resisted the presence of conservative Islamism by exposing their chests in public and taking their hijabs off on television.[235] LGBTQ+ people also joined by creating anti-homophobia campaigns on Twitter until many were arrested by the military.[236]

But this is not the only way the Arab left has been resistant to Islamism. Many leftists are concerned about what Bayat calls a 'tacit alliance' between the west and Islamists against anti-imperialist, socialist, secular Arab leaders.[237] This is because, as Bayat notes, Islamists have tended to present themselves as a viable resistance to Western imperialism, but have 'opposed inclusive democracy, pluralist ideas, and independent voices' in the process.[238] Their anti-imperialism thus becomes self-serving, and resistance to the west is ultimately dropped if the west can aid Islamists against Arab secularists; as we have seen, for instance, in American support for the Muslim

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[235] Ibid., 'Counter-norm currents,' 181.
[236] Ibid., 182.
[237] Ibid., 'Self-Serving Anti-Imperialism,' 76.
[238] Ibid., 77.

Brotherhood against Arab nationalism.[239] This is not simply a competitive act of opportunism; there are ways Islamism and pan-Arab nationalism are inherently opposed. For instance, Hamas has been resistant to secular nationalist Palestinian struggles against Israel because they see the occupation not as a racial conflict, but as a religious one.[240]

As I have emphasized, however, the union of Muslim and Arab identity that is partially imposed by western discourse can play a role in making Islamism accepted by Arabs that are otherwise not inclined towards it. In an era where other emancipatory ideals have failed in the Middle East, Islamism offers an 'ideological package' that is consistent, guides protests, provides welfare programs, and defies Israeli occupation and western interventionism. As Bayat writes, Islamists place themselves as the opposition of 'western global domination.'[241] This is appealing to people that are suffering under military, economic, and cultural imperialism – even if they are hesitant about the subsequent positive vision offered by Islamists. Furthermore, the prospects of Islamists increase when no other counter-ideology that is just as articulate as Islamism in explaining Arab unfreedom and offering a new vision.

It is easier to say we would reject Islamists because of a normative issue with Islamism when we are not under the same conditions of domination as those that voted Islamists in to power. It does not seem implausible that Middle Eastern groups that offer themselves up against western imperialism, as well as local economic domination, could take power. It is not necessarily the positive worldview that Islamism offers that is appealing, but the way in which it is framed *against* forces that perpetuate tyranny, occupation, and poverty.

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[239] Ian Johnson, 'Washington's Secret History with the Muslim Brotherhood,' *New York Review of Books,* (February 5, 2011), <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2011/02/05/washingtons-secret-history-muslim-brotherhood/>.

[240] Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement, 'Article 15,' *Hamas Covenant 1988: The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement*, (August 18, 1988), <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp>.

[241] Bayat, 'Not a Theology of Liberation,' 73-74.

Many that were willing to contest power in the Arab Spring were able to depose their governments because there was a unified consensus that these governments furthered an unacceptable form of domination. But the rest was yet to be articulated. Islamist groups were able to resonate with populations about what was to be resisted but fell apart or caused mass discontent post-revolution because they could not speak to people further than that. 'Any struggle, however heroic, that replaces imperialist supremacy with domestic forms of oppression will not serve the well-being of the subaltern population,' Bayat argues. 'The central question, then is not just how to challenge the empire but how to realize liberation; for the ultimate end is not simply anti-imperialism but emancipation.'[242]

§4.2. Ideology and consciousness revisited

What we have seen during the Arab Spring is that protestors were reacting to some form of domination that they personally experienced; be it gendered oppression, economic cronyism, or religious suppression. But, as I have emphasized, there was not one overarching point of contestation beyond dissatisfaction with existing governments. People that were aggrieved by different forms of domination saw their respective problem in their government, but they did not necessarily see their struggles as connected to those of other protestors.

This is not necessarily wrong: feminist activists, for instance, should not be expected to ally themselves with anti-government Salafists and likely see them as *part* of the domination they experience. Salafists might believe that feminists are part of the problem; e.g., they might believe that they are manifestations of western cultural imperialism, and thus agents of anti-Muslim domination. Either way, the interests among protestors may sometimes be irreconcilable.

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[242] Ibid., 'Anti-Imperialism or Emancipation?' 91.

But, all protestors had one common opposition to the current social order and those that led it. Namely, they all sought to challenge the existing political hegemony. When hegemony is being contested, it is up to those with a counter-ideology to put it up against what is hegemonic. As we saw, Lenin's and Fanon's response to this is that initial stages of uprisings need to be harnessed. Overthrowing the government will satisfy the immediate interests of all parties involved in the protests, but this does not have any bearing on how the current social order will transform (or revert).

Part of developing an ideology on the part of an aggrieved group is to *explain* peoples' frustrations with the existing order. These ideologies apply their worldview to explain the root causes of the domination people experience. For instance, the ruling classes in Middle Eastern states (e.g., monarchs and western-backed politicians) have perpetuated western and Israeli occupation, thus making themselves easy targets of protest movements across varied ideological lines. Pan-Arabism used to be at the forefront of this grievance and articulated that Arab monarchs and rulers were 'lackeys of imperialism.'[243] Its ideology offered a coherent explanation of the collaboration between Arab tyrants and western interventionists that connected Arab struggles as a product of, in Lenin's words, the 'same dark forces' – namely, western imperialism and global capitalism.[244] These explanations are far more systemic than those of the Arab Spring protestors, whose unity was based against their own governments – but not necessarily because of their relationships with the west or with Israel. Rather, as some have argued, the focus was within a far more immediate proximity.[245] Because of this, the space was open for ideological explanations as

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[243] Lamis Andoni, 'The Nakba: Catalyst for pan-Arabism,' *Al Jazeera* (July 13, 2009), <http://aljazeera.com/focus/arabunity/2008/02/200852518399431220.html>.

[244] Lenin, *WITBD*, 43.

[245] Andoni, 'The resurrection of pan-Arabism,' *Al Jazeera* (February 11, 2011) <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/02/201121115231647934.html>.

to what made these regimes oppressive, and how *that* could be eradicated beyond overthrowing the regime.

As we have seen, Islamists have attempted to take on this role because they are concerned with western global domination.[246] Islamists have positioned themselves as enemies of Israeli occupation and western interventionism, both of which are sources of grievances in the Middle East across ideological lines. Because there are widespread grievances about imperialism and occupation, there has been a longstanding inherent ideology (and historical precedent) that imperialism and occupation create an insufferable and unsustainable region.

This kind of inherent ideology means that people might have a shared sense of animus toward the current order more broadly, but that explanations of *why* the current order is as it is are variant. As Rudé argues, the experiences people have will determine 'the nature of the final mixture' between inherent and derived ideology.[247] Derived ideology requires a 'well prepared [ground]' to be absorbed, and some grounds are going to be better prepared than others depending on what kind of actions and norms have been produced.[248]

As I previously discussed, dominant or hegemonic ideology is that which is taken for granted. Thus, if no work has been done to counter the assumptions of the dominant ideology, the ground will not be well-prepared for a derived counter-ideology.

Further, a shared popular disdain for someone like Mubarak does not necessitate that those contesting him all have shared interests. They have one – namely, not living under Mubarak – but their needs and reasonings may be entirely different. For instance, Mubarak instated 'Suzanne's Laws' which gave women the right to initiate divorce. When Islamists came to power, government

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[246] Bayat, 'Not a theology of liberation,' 74.
[247] Rudé, 29.
[248] Ibid., 23.

officials wanted to take Egypt's Code 'back to [Islamic form]', which they believe had been distorted by Mubarak's more progressive personal status laws.[249] Egyptian feminists pushed back against this move; Cairo University's Omaima Abou Bakr argued that moves to undermine Suzanne's Laws were 'a false politicisation of the laws and an excuse to rescind certain women's rights - such things lead to the cancellation of the women's quota in parliament.'[250] Their grievances is in the revolution pointed toward different issues. For instance, more than eighty per cent of Egypt's women report being sexually harassed.[251] While the promulgation of laws like Suzanne's Laws is marginal progress, the participation of both high-profile feminists and women generally in Egypt's protests against Mubarak indicates that women did not find Mubarak's initiatives to be sufficient for their liberation.

Proponents of conservative Islamic Law would naturally have a different vision after the overthrow of Mubarak than feminists would. But attacks on Mubarak's minimally progressive women's rights laws is a move that perhaps identifies a similar intuition that feminists may have; namely, that Mubarak's rule is not emancipatory for either parties despite minimal changes he may make. This intuition, as we saw, was shared widely enough to move people to mobilize against Mubarak. Various derived ideologies that resonate with peoples' dissatisfaction can be absorbed into this ground.

Rapid mobilization after shocking events like Bouazizi's immolation primes the ground for receiving a derived ideology; as we learned from Fanon, this stage is where people are often most receptive. Receptivity means that people are ready to hear more of why they have been failed

[249] Hoda Elsadda, 'Egypt: the battle over hope and morale,' *Open Democracy* (November 2, 2011), <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/hoda-elsadda/egypt-battle-over-hope-and-morale>.
[250] D. Parvaz, 'Egypt's feminists prepare for a long battle,' *Al Jazeera* (February 7, 2012), < https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/01/2012117113758961894.html>.
[251] Ibid.

by the current order. Rudé points out that this starts in the form of slogans or symbols, such as 'Death to Revenue Officers!'[252] It is up to revolutionaries to articulate this intuition: *what makes revenue officers intolerable*? *Why are we subjected to their power? How can we undermine it?* Lenin's work, as I have laid out, argues that the answers to these questions are not obvious or apparent.

It is not only that these answers are not apparent; it is that multiple different actors can explain them in radically different ways. However, I argue, the more the explanation deviates or challenges hegemonic ideology, the more work needs to be done – and the more difficult it will be. Defaulting will occur when there is a failure to transform revolution as movement into revolution as change. In defaulting, a revolution's radical mobilization ends in a failure to create radical change.

While Islamism is an ideology, both Bayat's and Hamid's analyses show that the Islamism offered in the Arab Spring was not radical enough for Islamists and was not emancipatory for women, LGBTQ+ persons, and religious and ethnic minorities. Islamists were thus agents of restoration and defaulting rather than agents of revolution. They were given the revolutionary steering-wheel through their ability to have, in place, a worldview that clearly articulated the sources of Arab unfreedom allowed them to harness revolutionary mobilization into counter-revolutionary restoration.

Prior to the revolution, the ground was also primed for Islamists to take hold of revolutionary mobilizing. As Islamist politics eclipsed pan-Arab politics with no other *major* contenders, many anticipated that the regime changes would be Islamist, particularly because the post-Cold War world order had left people with the conception that socialist movements were no

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[252] Rudé, 27.

longer realistic.[253] Further, Islamism could resonate with people because it drew on majority-religious practices that most citizens were familiar with, even if they were not particularly religious. As I have pointed out, Islam has a complex but strong relationship to Arab identity – for better or for worse. Derived ideology that is Islamist thus draws on already-existing practices, sentiments, and intuitions that make Islamist ideology easier to consider than those that are entirely new.

§4.3. Inherent and derived ideology

As Fanon emphasizes, justified outrage does not necessarily translate into expedient political strategy, let alone political transformation. Restoration and defaulting are easier than revolutionary change because it aligns with peoples' inherent ideologies, with the status-quo, and with familiarized tradition. Derived ideologies that are for the most part restorative, such as the Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Nahda, can be easily wielded to frame political grievances. The way Islamists in the Arab Spring expressed and outrage at the old regimes used familiar language and familiar tradition. While Fanon is correct to point out that justified outrage is not a strategy, reactionary and restorative outrage can be far more successful than radical outrage that differs drastically from the status quo.

Bayat argues that the real roots of Arab discontent in the uprisings have gone unaddressed, but that there was a brief instance where the oppressed felt free and engaged in collective solidarity with one another.[254] Some hierarchies were informally challenged; the mobilization of women challenged patriarchal assumptions that many had taken for granted.[255] But yet again, this is where

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[253] Bayat, 146.
[254] Ibid., 'Revolution and Hope,' 224.
[255] Ibid.

the movement/change distinction is useful; as is both Lenin's and Guha's interpretations of revolutionary consciousness.

Guha's work describes a revolution-as-movement consciousness that insists on the *active* and political oppositional consciousness of the oppressed. This challenges some orthodoxy in political thought that concerns Middle East politics. For example, Timur Kuran's concept of 'preference falsification' has played a major role in describing political action (or lack thereof) in authoritarian states. The theory of preference falsification proposes an answer the question of 'why did we miss it?' by arguing that the opposition remains hidden and unknown due to repression of dissent.[256] In other words, actors that oppose the regime are incentivized to be silent and refrain from expressing their political discontent.

But it seems that instead, scholarship has mistakenly underplayed oppositional consciousness. In Egypt, it was common knowledge that Mubarak was hated. For instance, in the early 2000s, the Kefaya Movement campaigned against Mubarak and later served as a foundation for the 2011 protests.[257] As Bayat notes, political elites and academics are at fault because they often dismissed Arab grievances as 'bickering' and 'nagging' as opposed to expressions of political discontent.[258] He writes:

> The elites are in the business of governance, but governance would fail if it overlooked societal sensibilities, and its hegemony would fade in the face of any alternative mode of life citizens may construct. It is equally unhelpful to reduce politics, as Hannah Arendt does, to town hall meetings, organized civic activism, or mass demonstrations where conscious deliberation for freedom occurs, dismissing the realm of life, labor, and work as simply apolitical struggles for survival or apolitical endeavors.[259]

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[256] Ibid., 'Every Revolution is a Surprise,' 136; see also Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification,* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

[257] Marc Lynch, 'Media, Old and New,' *The Arab Uprisings Explained,* 98.

[258] Bayat, 137.

[259] Ibid., 138-139.

The depoliticizing of political grievances and subsequent denial of a public, oppositional consciousness is common in the global south but is by no means exclusive to it. E.P. Thompson's work shows how depoliticization took place when considering the acts of the working class as well. He writes that before the French Revolution, bread riots on the part of the common people were mistakenly seen as social disturbances driven by hunger. Thompson claims that they are perceived as such because 'common people' were denied status as 'historical agents.'[260] Rather than having serious political grievances, rioters were simply seen as driven by primitive and basic needs such as hunger. Thompson writes that historians have been

> guilty of a crass economic reductionism, obliterating the complexities of motive, behaviour, and function, which, if they noted it in the work of their Marxist analogues, would make them protest.[261]

Instead of simple and primitive motivations only, and instead of only suddenly obtaining an oppositional consciousness when a more sophisticated protest appears, Thompson argues that protest crowds always have a 'legitimizing notion' moved by a shared belief among community members. For instance, he describes how the food riots implicitly have a 'popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, baking…' that is grounded in 'a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations.'[262] These norms and obligations are not political 'in any advanced sense' but they are not apolitical, either. They contain something akin to Rudé's *inherent ideology*: a commonly and traditionally shared notion of what should be expected.[263]

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[260] E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,' *Past & Present 50* (1971): 76-77.
[261] Ibid., 78.
[262] Ibid., 79.
[263] Ibid.; Rudé, 26.

Emphasizing that oppressed people are political agents that want to be free does a worthwhile job of targeting historically dominant, pernicious discourse that denies this fact. It also enhances the way we theorize and predict contestations of power. Hence, this form of consciousness seems to accurately describe the initial stages of political dissent.

At the same time, the acknowledgment of a consciousness of this sort *differentiates* it from Lenin's conception, encapsulates more than the shared recognition of the need to control and change one's own circumstances. I can, for instance, desire to control my circumstances and act on that desire while still failing to engage in actions that are emancipatory in the long-term; perhaps I may do that for good reason, and perhaps I have yet to come up with a viable alternative. Perhaps someone in a more ideal social situation has failed to present a viable alternative.

Thompson's and Rudé's frameworks acknowledge this by differentiating between different levels of organized protest without denying the political character of them. These are politically and theoretically useful distinctions. These distinctions do not attack those that engage in revolts that are 'spontaneous.' Instead – and Lenin's argument supports this – the distinctions show how spontaneous revolts can 'prepare' the ground for more radical changes.[264]

Perhaps Guha would object to having his conception of consciousness placed in what seems to be in a more primitive stage than Lenin's. But it need not be seen in this light. The movement/change distinction, alongside the inherent/derived distinction does not necessarily prioritize one over the other. Revolution as movement – the solidarity and transmission of a new hope among marginalized people – is of no less importance than offering a theory that transforms peoples' grievances into demands and plans. As Rudé argues, our minds are not blank slates. There

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[264] Rudé, 23.

is no 'automatic progression from "simple" to more sophisticated ideas.' There is no dividing wall between inherent and derived ideologies that makes one superior to the other. Derived ideologies require something to draw on; e.g., solidarity from a shared sense of unfreedom.[265] Further, politicizing mobilization plays an important role in theorists that would otherwise 'lag' behind sparks of revolutionary inclinations.

The usefulness of this conceptual distinction is exhibited in Bayat's concerns about the Arab Spring. His movement/change dichotomy and Lenin's and Guha's conceptions of consciousness exhibit two distinct but equally important forms of resonation. By 'resonation', I refer to the ways people collectively identify with something in a way that moves them. Will Roberts articulates this in a recent article, writing:

> Emancipatory politics only stands a chance if it can speak to people, with the desires and values they already have, and make the case that they will be better able to get what they want and live according to their values if liberation movements are successful.[266]

I have divided the notion of a politics 'speaking to people' into two different but interconnected forms. The first is what we saw in the Arab Spring: Tunisians saw themselves in Bouazizi and carried on the initial act of pressure he put on the Tunisian government. In turn, Egyptians – who had a similar political landscape and history – saw a new formation of the possible. Solidarity formed across borders as people realized they could make demands together against a common and identifiable enemy.

Bayat argues that the dictators in the Arab Spring fell so fast that people had the false impression that their goals were achieved. However, the movements contesting state power did not 'establish alternative organs of power.'[267] Revolutionaries were not initially planning to do

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[265] Rudé, 22-23.
[266] Roberts, 'The Idea of Emancipation…' 759.
[267] Ibid.,' Different Times,' 169.

something like seize the state; they later realized it was necessary but did not have the resources. Namely, Bayat argues, they lacked 'unified organization, powerful leadership, strategic vision, and some degree of hard power.'[268] Islamists were the closest thing that existed to the resources Bayat writes of.

Resonation does not have an inherent value assigned to it. Emancipatory politics can resonate, but non-emancipatory, restorative politics can resonate as well – particularly in the absence of coordinated visions being presented. Because pan-Arabism has declined, Islamism has done the most effective job of articulating the underpinnings of Arab unfreedom and offering another vision. Who is able to offer this vision matters, because revolution as change (or lack thereof) will be dictated by who can offer an alternative framework to the status quo. These alternative ways of understanding how we relate to each other, to production, and to our unfreedom must resonate in the way that revolutionary movement resonates as well. Just as concrete political power stops being taken for granted in a revolution, so must hegemonic ideological assumptions.[269]

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[268] Ibid.

[269] Note: some scholarship has discussed the more empirical side of my argument, in that it deals with structural and economic factors that de-radicalized ideologically radical actors in the Middle East and North Africa. One argument is the 'inclusion-moderation hypothesis,' which argues that including more radical actors in institutional politics de-radicalizes them by making them constrain their radicalism to be electorally strategic (see, for instance, Clark, *Beyond the Arab Spring*). Additionally, Bayat's emphasis on neoliberalism may lend itself to a more elaborate discussion on capitalism *qua* hegemonic ideology. Raw economic power, as well, played a role in suppressing dissent, such as Saudi Arabia's reinforcements in Bahrain and their ability to influence the protest narrative through media presentation in *Al-Arabiyya,* which is controlled by Riyadh. These considerations may be beyond the scope of this thesis as a work of political theory. Nonetheless, I am grateful to Khalid Medani for bringing this problem to my attention. For a discussion/my perspective on the Arab Spring in solely comparative terms, see: 'The Future of Arab Authoritarianism,' (2017): https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/fd3d5c_d282b26cfcf64bdd9e58e968594da2af.pdf

Chapter 5 / Undertows: shifting ideological hegemony

> Ideology is insidious because it allows people to hide their reasons for obedience from themselves.
> – Lisa Wedeen.[270]

Recall that Lenin and Lukács both emphasize that we cannot take for granted that people will contest power simply in virtue of being part of an oppressed group. Lenin and Lukács further want to show that power can be contested in ineffective ways; an underdeveloped class consciousness, they argue, hinders the abilities of movements to create revolutionary *change*.

Consciousness raising involves building a theoretical counter-ideology. This theory offers a comprehensive account of how some experiences are not isolated incidents, but products of the existing ways that we organize ourselves. This is a different kind of political consciousness than what Guha's refers to. Guha's articulation of consciousness is one that is negative: '[inevitably], therefore, by rising in revolt the peasant involved himself in a project which was, by its very nature, negatively constituted.'[271] On Guha's account, the rebel attacks the subalternity that his oppressor ascribes to him, thereby contesting his subordinate status. But this attacks something immediate; the examples Guha gives, for instance, entail the destruction of property that directly represents the peasant's subalternity. This is certainly a conscious and political act, but it is not of the same character as the consciousness that Lenin describes.

Let's return to the Arab Spring for clarification. Bouazizi reacted to being harassed and immobilized by the Tunisian police and state. Others that later protested in Tunisia and other Arab states related to and empathized with Bouazizi's plight. In fact, Egypt's protests *started* as protests

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[270] Lisa Wedeen, 'Acting "As If,"' *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 77.
[271] Guha, 'Negation,' 75.

against police brutality.[272] But it is not simply police brutality that was the issue at hand, and many may have known this already. Knowing this on a personal level, however, is not enough. Just as Guha describes mobilization as having a public modality, so too must counter-ideologies. What is needed is a public theory of how police brutality was able to happen, what continues to feed it, and *who* is systematically vulnerable to it. What more, the theory must articulate how other grievances protestors brought forth are connected to concerns with police brutality, such as the concentration of political power and whose interests those with coercive power represent. In turn, what needs to be articulated is what institutions must be addressed beyond immediate representations of unfreedom. Islamists provide semblances of these explanations and hence position themselves to be successful revolutionary and restorative actors.

Counter-ideology must be spelled out and not assumed. The reason for this is that our default assumptions that we normally operate on have not spelled this out to us, otherwise there would be no need for theory. Hence, consciousness raising implies that the consciousness we start off with is ideologically conditioned in the wrong way; and of course, it would be. We calibrate our expectations and act as if dominant ideologies are true even if we do not believe them on a personal level. But we may not know the full reason why we do not believe them or the exact ways the impact our relations to each other. Women may know, for instance, how sexual harassment makes us unfree in the immediate sense. Knowing this, however, does not imply that we all have an understanding about how male dominance flourishes and is excused from the home to the courts or the way such dominance is situated in history.

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[272] Merouan Mekouar, 'No Political Agents, No Diffusion: Evidence from North Africa,' *International Studies Review 16* (2014): 210.

Therefore, theorists such as Sally Haslanger argue that political struggle must be ideological: 'thought, perception, emotion, and other psychological states depend on a public "field of pre-existing meanings […]"'[273] Haslanger argues. 'We can object to [unjust social practices] and resist a particular framing of our (and others') action, but to do so meaningfully we must draw on other practices and framings.'[274] Consider, for instance, how Islamists will frame women's actions in ways that differ from feminists, and their framings will logically lead to different prescriptions. As an example, Islamists have used Islamic law to fight against personal status laws in North Africa and claim that men ought to regulate women's roles in the household to preserve Islam.[275] Under their ideology is an assumption about women's roles. Feminists will thus object to the role of women as it is framed by Islamists and offer an alternate explanation. Their explanation will answer how women's subjugation has benefitted a dominant group of people (men) and how Islamist ideology has rationalized it. It may then deconstruct the logic of these rationalizations and offer an alternative way to frame women and their roles in political society.

What we take for granted shifts. For instance, essentialist views on the Middle East are far less predominant now than they were before being challenged by thinkers like Said and other Middle East scholars.[276] Yet these essentialist views and their influence still have a relationship to political practice, as do conceptions of racialized peoples from the colonial era. Making the explicit argument that, for instance, Arabs are rationally inferior to Europeans would be far more controversial now than when colonialism was at its peak. Nonetheless, if we consider the progress

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[273] Sally Haslanger, 'Culture and Critique,' 155.
[274] Ibid., 158.
[275] Feryal M. Cherif. 'Culture, Rights, and Norms: Women's Rights Reform in Muslim Countries.' *The Journal of Politics* 72, no.4 (2010): 1145; Fatima Sadiqi. *Women's Movements in Post-Arab Spring North Africa* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2016): 4-5.
[276] See: Hudson, 'The Political Culture Approach…' (1995); Brynen et. al., 'Political Culture Revisited,' *Beyond the Arab Spring* (2012).

of history and the way we now relate to it, we can point to the ways harmful (e.g., racist) thought still influences the ways in which we relate to our surroundings today. In other words, political theorists can observe how our ideological histories inform today's dominant ideologies. Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' theory is an apt example. While it does not explicitly position Arab minds as rationally inferior as colonial literature once had, it uses similar rhetoric to divide the world into a 'civilized' west and 'uncivilized' east. In turn, his work has propped up predominant American rhetoric and foreign policy after 9/11; thus, rationalizing violence and interventionism in the Middle East that resembles the colonial era – under which hegemonic states engineered the governments of global southerners for them.[277]

Because our assumptions are structured around practices that inhibit the freedom of socially salient groups, they complicate the pathways to removing barriers to freedom. This is a popular way to encourage limited reforms over revolution, i.e. 'we can do *this*, but we can't alter *x*, because *x* is just the way things are.' However, as we saw, the resonation of Bouazizi's act as well as the mass mobilization and solidarity during the Arab Spring was previously unthinkable by scholars and observers of Middle East politics. Just as Bouazizi's act and the toppling of Ben Ali shifted our assumptions of the possible, counter-ideology must as well.

Bayat argues that in the contemporary post-Cold War context, it is neoliberalism: 'an economic rationality that solicits contention and a form of governmentality that cultivates compliance,'[278] that is taken for granted:

> The political clout of neoliberalism lies in its ability to serve as a form of governmentality,
> in its ability to structure people's thinking to internalize the methods of the market society,

[277] Davide Orsi, 'The "Clash of Civilizations" and Realism in International Political Thought,' *The 'Clash of Civilizations' 25 Years On: A Multidisciplinary Appraisal* (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2018); see also Anghie, 247-248.
[278] Bayat, 'Neoliberalism,' 20.

considering them to be a commonsense way of being and doing things, against which no concrete alternative is imagined or needed.[279]

Bayat continues to define neoliberalism as 'hypercapitalist rationality' whose 'relentless ideology' is 'couched in "human dignity" and "individual freedom"' and is manifest through deregulating the economy, free-trade, privatization, a reduction in welfare programs, and austerity.[280] The key to neoliberalism's place in our discussion is its hyper-rationality that allows people to take it for granted.[281]

In post-colonial states, western powers and their allies will argue that the path to freedom is through the spread of liberal values and policies within said states. For instance, pro-west Anwar Sadat, who came to power in Egypt after Nasser, did so through a series of policies known as *infitah* ('openness'). *Infitah* increased privatization and tried to open Egypt to foreign investors and increase free-trade.[282] It brought Egypt under the umbrella, within the context of the Cold War, of a rationality that positioned capitalist market economics as the logical trajectory for economies that seek to develop themselves and become wealthy.

Lenin's description of 'trade-unionist politics', while prior to what Bayat describes as neoliberalism, describes a similar skepticism toward radical politics by painting reforms as the only logical and practical solutions to peoples' socioeconomic hardships. Lenin points out that trade-unionism is positioned as the 'realistic' option for the emancipation of workers. Because trade-unionists position themselves in this way, they operate under an assumption of capitalist

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[279] Ibid, 23. Lukács similarly points out that commodified relations between people are granted 'an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people.' See: Lukács, 'Reification…' 83.

[280] Ibid.

[281] As my last few sections may indicate, I do not think neoliberalism is uniquely alone in the ideological list of things that are taken for granted, but Bayat is right to note that it is a rather significant social order today.

[282] Marvin G. Weinbaum, '" Infitah" and the Politics of US Economic Assistance,' *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 21 No. 2 (April 1985): 210-211.

rationality by claiming that a fight for alternate *systems* as opposed to gradual reforms are 'absurd.'[283] And a push for systemic change may appear absurd *prima facie.* After all, they challenge the 'obvious.'

Since ideology is inscribed in our social conduct, it will also structure peoples' conduct when bringing forth their political grievances based on what demands seem realistic.[284] Because neoliberalism is a given, making claims and expressing grievances in politics is now a matter of asking for increased civil liberties. But this makes politics remain a matter of what the privileged class is willing to grant everyone else, i.e. *permitting* women to drive, *granting* labour protections to foreign domestic workers, and so on.

Further, emphasis on civil liberties, such as free expression, does not put a large burden or pressure on privileged classes. Especially in Arab states, where sharp economic inequality is a reality, advocacy for civil liberties usually applies to an exclusionary political class. For instance, gender activism in Arab states has more recently taken the form of NGO-style developmentalism. It focuses on some problems, such as personal status laws and including more women in government, but often fails to more seriously contend with the oppression of lower-class women that are disadvantaged in virtue of both their gender and economic class.[285]

§5.1. Counter-ideology: dismantling what we take for granted

In chapter two, I laid out the claim by theorists of revolution that simply waiting on those that are hegemonically dominated to revolt is insufficient. Everyone, including those that are dominated,

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[283] Lenin, 'Dogmatism and "Freedom of Criticism,"' *WITBD,* 8.
[284] Bayat, 'Neoliberal Climate,' 174.
[285] Ibid., 175.

have taken too much for granted. There are certain means of social organization that will arguably render attempts at social change ineffective if these means themselves are not challenged.

As Haslanger argues, contesting power entails forming new conceptions of the world that challenge dominant ideologies.[286] Lenin has written similarly when describing what it means to be 'armed with social-democratic theory.' Challenging dominant ideologies require a mass-dismantlement of what we take for granted – including the fundamental assumptions about how we organize ourselves. In offering Social-Democratic ideology to struggle against 'bourgeois ideology', Lenin wants to fight against the latter's entrenchment.[287] That is, for Lenin, we need to actively fight against fitting what he deems 'bourgeois ideology' into our default assumptions and practices. Those that instate changes in how people organize themselves are those that are able to offer a counter-ideology. This counter ideology provides i) an alternate explanation of why things are a certain way and ii) the ways in which i) will be action-guiding in attempting revolution as change.

The way ideology pertains to social organization does not necessitate that people be fully ignorant of their state or social situation. The ways we relate to our surroundings underlie what our ideals are about the roles we ought to play. People do not typically challenge norms about power on a daily basis regardless of whether they are conscious of them or not. A worker may believe the power her boss has over her is wrong, but still goes to work with the assumption that that power exists and ought to be complied with. The ways these assumptions are not challenged produce compliance with them in varying degrees of severity. If others at work also comply, the assumptions about the boss's power remains.

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[286] Haslanger, 'Culture,' 149.
[287] Lenin, 'The Spontaneity of the Masses…' 24.

A further problem is that because inherent ideology is grounded in experience and tradition, it corresponds to the expectations and norms we take for granted. Hence, derived ideologies can appeal to and rationalize these intuitions. That does not mean that we cannot recognize our interest in being free; rather, it is that some ideologies that are offered do not necessarily challenge the current order as a source of our unfreedom. Instead, it might depict these *very challenges* to comfortable and operative norms as the source of peoples' unfreedom instead.

Conservative ideology appeals to people – particularly amidst social challenges to the traditional – for this reason: it rationalizes the traditions we used to take for granted as the way things naturally ought to be. Thus, it ascribes social unfreedom to the attempted removal of conservative norms. Conservatism resonates when new alternatives are offered by framing these challenges to the status-quo as a loss or potential loss. Further, as Corey Robin argues, it *differentiates* itself from mere traditionalism – the static and non-political preservation of the traditional – by defending a form of life *as it is being challenged.*[288] The Muslim Brotherhood's rejection of Suzanne's Laws, for instance, resisted feminist influences on Egypt's legal system because they saw it as a western imposition on an established way of life. Their attitude could express that Mubarak (an American ally) made people unfree by leading them further from conservative tradition and importing 'western' ideology, precisely because Suzanne's Laws eroded (albeit minimally) practices conservatives were reluctant to change.

What this means is that dissatisfaction with a regime is not necessarily revolutionary; in many cases, it can be restorative. As Lenin's and Fanon's theories can explain, mass uprisings indicate in some way that the ground is 'primed' for someone to offer an alternative to our default

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[288] Corey Robin, 'The Private Life of Power,' *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Donald Trump,* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 23.

practices. Either restorative or revolutionary forces can harness mass dissatisfaction and suffering. Hence, Lenin's and Fanon's most pertinent contributions are that those that seek revolutionary change have to actively offer frameworks that explain peoples' unfreedom in a way *superior* to rationales offered by restorative and status-quo forces.

Anti-imperialist movements of all stripes, for example, have been so popular in the Middle East because people were 'primed' for it by experiencing, first-hand, the burdens of western interventionism. Anti-imperialist leaders like Nasser were able to dictate Egypt's transformation because they draw on peoples' real grievances and experiences, explain who is responsible, and provide a blueprint for emancipation from these conditions. However, conservative anti-imperialism, such as that from the Muslim Brotherhood, has resonated to the same extent.

Thus, counter-ideology offered against the status-quo does not necessarily translate to emancipation. Rather, it *steers* the direction of the grievances that people initially bring forth. Leaders that can pick up on peoples' immediate grievances and intuitions can create compliance with their movements even if the movements contain beliefs that people do not normatively accept. Lisa Wedeen articulates this by using the example of Syrian Baʿathism. Baʿathist ideology positioned itself as revolutionary by drawing on valid grievances from Syrians: outrage at Western colonialism, the Israeli occupation, and the need for solidarity in the face of these. Yet:

> [t]he official rhetoric's conflation of consensually held beliefs (e.g., that Zionism is a neocolonial enterprise) with patently absurd propositions (e.g., that Asad will "live forever") may also help citizens justify their compliance to themselves. The rhetoric's consensually shared claims, in any case, help to keep the transparently phony statements from seeming simply comical.[289]

Offering a derived ideology that draws upon peoples' inherent beliefs, traditions, and intuitions influences what revolution as change will look like irrespective of its moral value. Syrians do not

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[289] Wedeen, 'Killing Politics,' 41.

believe that Asad will live forever, but there was a way Baʿathist could move the direction of Syrian revolutionary change by offering a resonating ideology.

The grounds in the Middle East and North Africa have been ripe for large-scale political contestation. There are plenty of overlapping grievances as well as complex and contradictory ones. What I have argued is that revolutionary consciousness – in Lenin's sense – remains relevant because of what Bayat calls revolution as change. Specifically, it grapples with the fact that despite having real, political inclinations toward freedom, everyone also internalizes and acts on dominant ideologies that might be detrimental towards it. Revolution is thus not a simple matter of desiring freedom and taking down existing, concrete manifestations of power (such as governments). Rather, it is a transformative shift in the assumptions we have about how we organize ourselves. Bayat brings this problem to the forefront and exhibits how Leninist theories of revolution remain relevant in this light.

Chapter 6 / Conclusion: 'first as tragedy...'

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please in circumstances they choose for themselves; rather they make it in present circumstances, given and inherited. Tradition from all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.
> – Karl Marx.[290]

Twentieth-century political theorists have offered valuable insights about how revolution can unfold. The focus on political consciousness and ideology has invited us to consider the dispositions behind the creation of revolutionary change. It has also created a debate about the ascription of revolutionary consciousness, particularly when discussing racialized groups. Guha presented a challenge to Leninist theories of consciousness by showing how rebels *have* been conscious without the external agitation Lenin advocates for. He has further put leftist theorists on trial for reproducing colonial rhetoric when describing revolution and class consciousness.

I have argued, through observance of parts of the Arab Spring, that Lenin and Guha have described forms of consciousness that should be made conceptually distinct. As Bayat has shown, there are two sides of the revolutionary coin. Just as revolutionary action has more than one form, so too does revolutionary consciousness. While Guha's negative consciousness would precede Lenin's revolutionary class consciousness, it need not be thought of as less necessary or even more primitive. Rather, they describe different and equally necessary acts on the same stage.

The first form of revolution is revolution as movement, which refers to the way people rapidly shift their political expectations and mobilize against a dominant political power. Revolution as movement is prompted by a consciousness that rejects one's subordinate status, self-identifies with others who are subordinated with oneself, and mobilizes in solidarity with others.

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[290] Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire,' 32.

As Guha argues, this form of consciousness has a public modality that distinguishes rebel actions from ordinary crime. We have seen this take shape in the Arab Spring: protestors publicized their grievances, attacked sites of domination such as police stations, and expressed public solidarity with others that shared their subordination. Bayat presents a compelling account that shows how Arab Spring protestors' mobilization was, in fact, revolutionary. Like Guha, he provides an overview of Arab solidarity, and the shift in how people perceived their political opportunities. He argues that it provided an instance where people felt *free*, and where hierarchies were challenged in numerous and significant ways.[291]

Bayat's work brought the concern that the Arab Spring was not revolutionary when it came to social transformation. That is, unlike other revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa, there was no significant transformation in the existing political order. While liberal reforms occurred in places like Tunisia, the enabling conditions of the hardships of marginalized groups were not adequately addressed or dismantled. The ideological assumptions that Bayat and I have pointed out – such as market economics and patriarchy – were vaguely challenged in indirect ways but remained intact overall.

I have argued that with respect to revolution as change, revolutionaries are challenged to provide a counter-ideology to the status-quo. This means that revolutionaries are tasked with explaining peoples' unfreedom in a way that resonates with them. The revolutionary's framework must also provide an ideological blueprint that builds on her account of peoples' unfreedom. This did not materialize in the Arab Spring, as we have seen. I further discussed the presence and successes of Islamists during the Arab Spring but treated them as a restorative force rather than a

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[291] Bayat, 'Revolution and Hope,' 224.

revolutionary one. By 'restorative,' I have not insinuated that they are identical to the regimes they have overthrown. Rather, they have been agents of restoration by maintaining conservative ideological assumptions akin to those of the old regimes. These assumptions failed to be emancipatory to marginalized groups that came out to protest, including the poor, women, LGBTQ+ communities, and religious minorities.

I explained Islamists' recent successes through their capabilities to offer what Bayat called an 'ideological package.' This ideological package contained elements that did challenge the status-quo in reformist ways. Further, Islamism has a history of providing explanations of peoples' unfreedom that can be popular when they appeal to foreign interventionism. With no other robust contenders after the fall of pan-Arabism, Islamists were positioned for success when it came time for a major political contestation.

Revolution as change – and Lenin's conception of consciousness, by my extension – requires a robust appeal to peoples' grievances. Because it is easier to restore than radically shift the political order, those that wish to ignite revolution as change have far more work to do than restorative or counter-revolutionary forces. This is because revolutionaries seek to fundamentally transform the assumptions we operate on in our everyday lives. Restorative forces, on the other hand, will be the default leading actors if there is nothing else to be latched on to. They have the advantage of familiarity and more readily available hermeneutics to explain what is the case and what ought to be done.

We have seen, through observing political protests, that the dominated have an inclination toward freedom. Spontaneous uprisings against existing powers reveal that people are not resigned to their conditions. And that in itself reveals an oppositional consciousness. Lenin's points complement this rather than oppose it; they affirm that people are not resigned and passive in the

face of domination. However, they go further to explain that this should not be taken for granted. It is one thing to challenge immediate barriers to freedom, and another to fulfill Lenin's project of recalibrating the ways we organize ourselves.

Nonetheless, it is not guaranteed that offering counter-ideologies of any sort will be emancipatory. What it will do is continue to steer the revolution after immediate barriers have been handled. If the counter-ideology is revolutionary, it will challenge the fundamental assumptions that structure our social organization. If it is restorative, it will challenge immediate barriers (such as the regime) but maintain the assumptions behind the current political order (such as free market capitalism).

As Bayat points out, despite the lack of an anchoring ideology, the Arab Spring had radical impulses. Marginalized women, minorities, lower class youth, and the poor sought to 'reclaim dignity' and '[contest] the logic of neoliberal orthodoxy that the political class had largely taken for granted.'[292] But many more powerful actors did not grasp on to this. One of Egypt's leading activists, for instance, was a marketing executive and used that to 'sell the protest' and brand 'democracy and freedom.'[293] The ideological broadness of the revolution permitted this disparity, even if all actors possessed an oppositional consciousness in Guha's sense. Bayat's observation – that revolution as change did not take place because there was no overarching ideological banner – is thus well-supported by Lenin's account of consciousness raising.

I hope to have complemented Bayat's movement/change distinction by assigning them each a form of revolutionary consciousness. The Arab Spring, as well as Bayat's account of it, do well to make sense of the theoretical controversy I have laid out. Lenin's famous question: 'what

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[292] Ibid., 'Radical Impulses of the Social,' 179.
[293] Ibid., 178.

is to be done?' remains a challenge to revolutionaries today, asking them to *seize* revolution as movement rather than merely *expect* it to materialize into revolution as change. Where theorists like Guha reject external agitation, I have argued that a failure on the part of revolutionaries to agitate will simply leave a gap open for restorative forces to harness protest themselves. Hence, revolution as change fails.

Despite the lingering question of what is to be done, the Arab Spring showed that a significant deal *had* been done. Therefore, I hope to have emphasized that my two conceptions of consciousness do not seek to prioritize Leninist consciousness raising or undermine the value of consciousness that is not externally prompted. What I have emphasized was how they feed in to and play off one another. Radical mobilization, for instance, indicates to revolutionaries that people are ready to receive alternative blueprints to the existing order. Proponents of Leninist consciousness raising are also calling for receptivity from the revolutionaries and condemning them for lagging behind mass mobilization.

At the core of revolutionary theory is the identification of a misalignment between how we are socially organized and how we ought to be socially organized. Political and social theories have provided us with avenues to diagnose political problems and to offer alternatives. These theories have helped transform political systems in radical ways; they sometimes mobilize people, and sometimes they seize what is already mobilizing in front of them. But they are limited to peoples' opportunities to mobilize and to the momentum that mobilization obtains from its inception. That is, there needs to be a people that are receptive to these alternate accounts of how the political order should be. Thus, the two faces of revolutionary consciousness will both play a crucial role in contestations of political power.

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