Arab Citizenship: the Arab Spring and its Unintended Consequences

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ABSTRACT

The wave of protests and revolts across North Africa and the Middle East occurring in the first half of 2011 has generated considerable academic and journalistic interest. Starting in Tunisia, the centre piece of these uprisings was the 25 January Revolution in Egypt resulting in the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, the popular election of Mohamed Morsi, and the creation of a panel to develop a new constitution. A popular uprising in Libya resulted in the killing of Colonel Gaddafi and the arrest of his son. In the Yemen, the unstable relationship between the tribal North and the modernized South began to unravel. Despite the general enthusiasm for a peaceful transition to democracy, by the autumn of 2012 there was more realism if not cynicism about the prospects of lasting social change. I refer to this unanticipated development of the Arab Spring and associated popular uprisings as 'the winter of our discontent'.

There is widespread concern about what might come after the overthrow of the regimes in Yemen, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, and even more anxiety about what, if anything, may come after the civil violence in Syria. Democratic elections in Tunisia and Egypt are producing governments and legal codes that are inspired more by conservative Islam than by secular versions of democracy. One indicator is the trend towards an erosion of the rights of women by new laws. I analyse these developments within the framework of Max Weber's notion of the unintended consequences of action by arguing that these societies will struggle to create citizenship, viable civil societies and democratically transparent political institutions. Social movements are unlikely to survive without becoming embedded in local institutions and social groups. The growth of

citizenship typically depends on a relatively well established and successful middle class – a social class that is largely absent in the region with the exception of Turkey. The Muslim Brotherhood gains strength from its long-term involvement at the village level, and hence its more conservative view of social transformation has slowly replaced more inclusive, secular components of the revolution.

KEY WORDS: citizenship, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Max Weber, middle class, Muslim Brotherhood, public religion, secularization, unintended consequences.

INTRODUCTION: FROM THE ARAB SPRING TO THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

There was justifiable excitement about the wave of protests and revolts across North Africa and the Middle East occurring in the first half of 2011. These movements were triggered by events in Tunisia, but the centre piece of these uprisings in size and importance was the 25 January Revolution in Egypt which dramatically resulted in the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, popular elections, and the creation of a panel to write a new constitution. After controversial interventions by Britain and France and the creation of a 'no-fly zone', a popular uprising in Libya resulted in the killing of Colonel Gaddafi and the arrest of his son. In the Yemen, the unstable balance between the tribal North and the modernized South following the unification of the country in 1990 began to unravel. At the time there was also evidence of 'copy-cat' protests around the world. Chinese authorities worried that dissident groups in China might follow a similar pathway in forcing the Communist Party to engage with policies that would result in more democratic openness. In Singapore, which is a successful soft authoritarian state, the poor showing of the ruling People's Action Party at election time produced some nervousness about similar protests breaking out on the island. Youthful ambition, if not revolutionary enthusiasm, was in the air. Throughout much of 2012, the Occupy Wall Street in the United States was also interpreted as evidence that disillusionment with finance capitalism might result in real political change. However by the autumn of 2012 there was more realism if not cynicism that the Arab Spring and associated popular uprisings had, to quote Shakespeare from *Richard III*, become 'the winter of our discontent'.

There is now justifiable anxiety about what might come after the overthrow of the regimes in Yemen, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, and even more anxiety about what, if anything, may come after the civil violence in Syria. Democratic elections in Tunisia and Egypt are producing governments that are inspired more by Islam rather than by western versions of secular democracy. In fact the entire region is now unstable and there is an important question around what response we might expect from Israel as its relations with neighbours such as Egypt, Lebanon and Syria become increasingly uncertain. The Syrian conflict is now beginning to undermine the position of Turkey as a model of democracy in the Middle East, because it has exacerbated the long-standing problems of Kurdish independence. It also brings into question the future role of minority Alawites in both Turkey and Syria as well as the future of Christian communities in the region. In October 2012 Turkish forces struck at targets inside Syria in retaliation to a shell that killed civilians in the Turkish border town of Akcakale. The Syrian crisis is also adding to the internal instability in Iraq. One ironic outcome of the fall of the regime of Sadam Hussein has been the growing influence of Iran and Shi'ism in the region. With discontent in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are busy trying to counter Shi'ism with their brand of Sunni Islam. In response to Iran's nuclear ambitions, the Israeli Prime Minister warned the United Nations that a 'red line' must be drawn against Iranian nuclear ambitions. The foreign policy positions of both the United States and Russia are also complex. President Obama's administration, while officially avoiding yet another military engagement with Muslim societies, has been drawn into the Libyan conflict following the assassination of the American ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi on September 11, 2012. There is evidence that Al Qaeda and Ansar al-Sharia are now operating successfully in much of the Maghreb and the Sahel. The United States has attempted to stay away from direct involvement in the Syrian crisis, recognizing that it is already involved, largely unsuccessfully, in two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Russia, fearful of Muslim unrest in former Soviet satellites in Central Asia, is supplying weaponry to the Assad regime, while Saudi Arabia is supporting the Syrian rebels, because it fears the growing influence of Iran.

FROM SECULAR PROTEST TO RELIGIOUS RULE?

How have western academics responded to these diverse opportunities and risks? Before the Arab Spring a number of sociologists and political scientists had sought to engage with Gaddafi to encourage the growth of 'deliberative democracy' (the work of David Held), or social capital approaches (the ideas of Robert Putnam) or McWorld (by Benjamin Barber) or theories of social democracy (Anthony Giddens). Unfortunately these ideas at the time had only remote relevance to societies such as Libya which has followed a strategy of familialism and clientelism for which the Gaddafi family had ample resources. The conflicts and military violence against civilians in the Yemen, Syria and Bahrain suggest that building citizenship institutions in these societies will be a difficult and long-term process, but one that is nevertheless worthwhile and important.

The Arab Spring was interpreted by western academics as the early flowering of a genuinely popular and essentially secular democratic movement against well entrenched authoritarian regimes that had been tacitly or openly supported by western governments precisely because they were not Islamic. Alain Badiou (2012) saw a parallel between the revolutions of 1848 and the uprisings of 2011-12 as protests against despotic regimes that created new openings for critical thought and radical politics. Western intelligence agencies took comfort from the fact that the popular uprisings did not appear to have strong connections with either Al-Qaeda or Salafiyya. While President Hosni Mubarak had been tolerated by the United States because his government had come to a *modus vivendi* with the Israelis, President Obama had eventually to throw his support behind the uprising. Did the uprisings bring something new to the political landscape of the Middle East? Jeffrey C. Alexander offered an interpretation of the Egyptian uprising in *Performative Revolution in Egypt* (2011), in which he defended cultural sociology as an important framework for understanding modern politics. His study of the Egyptian uprising - described as 'an essay in cultural power' - claimed that it 'was a living drama whose political success depended on its cultural power: its ability to project powerful symbols and real-time performances, plot-compelling protagonists and despicable antagonists; to stimulate and circulate powerful emotions......To gain access to dramatic meaning, we must examine collective representations' (Alexander, 2011). His cultural-sociology essay criticized the left-wing political-economy explanations of the Arab Spring which overlooked or down-played the cultural and performative dimensions of these events.

While many western observers were inclined to see these Arab uprisings as driven by a 'new class' of educated technocrats, Alexander noted that the activists came from a broad social basis. The movement that converged on Tahrir Square and successfully fought battles with the police and army included both men and women, rich and poor, pious Muslims and convinced secularists. These diverse social actors engaged in a common social drama that was galvanized by shared representations and, in Emile Durkheim's terminology, by 'collective effervescence'. The civil sphere in Alexander's study is constituted by social movements, by important squares and streets in Cairo, and above all by the Internet, and thus the civil sphere is an evolving, fluctuating assemblage of movements, sites and media, but it does not have anything like a more or less enduring set of institutions.

In looking at the causes of the Arab Spring, Alexander did not seek to dismiss political-economy explanations in terms of demographic imbalance, class resentments or economics interests, but he insisted that 'Meanings make revolutions' even though the actors may not always embrace them under circumstances of their own choosing (Alexander, 2011: 66). Revolutionaries must also be able to overcome brute force and the apparatus of the state, but in addition activists need a stage for political performances. They also need access to the means of symbolic production and to the means of media communication. The Egyptian uprising demonstrated the crucial role played by Facebook and twitter in communicating these cultural representations and in solving the practical problem of gathering people into organized demonstrations, avoiding the police, and by-passing the curfew. The revolution would not have been possible without digital technology which by-passed the government's control of broadcast communication. There were other important factors, especially the reluctance of the army to intervene in support of the regime and to suppress the protests. The passive position of the military was influenced by the United States which played a major role behind the scenes in funding and supplying their technology. For liberal observers then, it was hoped that the final outcome of the Arab Spring would follow the model of the eastern European revolutions of the late 1980s rather than the Iranian Revolution of 1979, namely a relatively peaceful transition to democratic elections rather than the dominance of a clerical party with an authoritarian agenda to impose its religious ideology.

REVOLUTION OR REFORM?

Political performances do not in themselves solve the problems that were the occasion of their enactment. With the fall of Mubarak, Egypt has a shattered economy, a continuing problem of youth unemployed, a dismembered tourist industry, and growing conflict between Copts and Muslims. Democrats could only welcome the election in November 2011, but it delivered a result that neither western governments nor youthful protesters nor Copts necessarily support. The Muslim Brotherhood, which had candidates in 65 percent of the seats, gained a workable majority, but in the background they were also being challenged by the Nour party which had connections to the Salafiyya movement (Meijer, 2009). The election of Mohamed Morsi, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood and the head of the Freedom and Justice Party, was not therefore a surprise, because it is probably the only organization with strong links into the countryside.

While political performances may be dramatic and exciting, in their aftermath there are the mundane but necessary tasks of politics: how to form functional political parties, how to organize fair elections, how to eradicate state corruption, how to rebuild an economy that will deliver jobs to young people, how to create an effective taxation system, and how to create a police force that is not repressive and corrupt. After the excitement of revolution, the drama of social movements has to give way to the humdrum task of creating the modern institutions of citizenship - an electoral system, effective taxation, the rule of law, and gender equality. A similar argument probably applies to all forms of political performance - how to deal with the complex problems of everyday politics once the collective excitement of protests, marches and uprisings fade into the historical background. In the post-performance reality, the revolutionary structure of feeling is replaced by mundane resentments against the elites, foreign powers, the police and the bankers who run the economy.

How can we think of these developments sociologically? One answer is to always consider the unintended consequences of action. Thinking about the problems that have faced China after Deng Xiaoping's reforms, Henry Kissinger (2012: 336) neatly captured the dilemmas that face the aftermath of both revolution and reform: 'the frequent outcome of revolution is an increase in central power; the more sweeping the revolution, the more this is true. The dilemma of reform is the opposite. The more the scope of choice is expanded, the harder it becomes to compartmentalize it'. It appears that the dilemmas of the Arab Spring have more to do with reform than with the centralization of state

power. At the time of writing neither Yemen nor Libya has a functional state. The destruction of Sufi shrines in Libya in 2012 demonstrated the power of Ansar al-Sharia and the weakness of state agencies against the militia. With the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi and the breakup of his security system, Libya was flooded with weapons from his arsenal, the country has been plagued by violence relating to ethnic and tribal divisions (Pargeter, 2012). The elections in both Tunisia and Egypt have favoured conservative Islamic forces rather than urban liberal and democratic groups. This is because the Tahrir Square protests were not, contrary to Alexander's view, representative of the whole community especially the countryside where the conservative peasantry form the bulk of the population. The Brotherhood has been successful because for a long time it has been the main opposition to secular government, the most organised component of civil society and the organization most able to offer the masses both welfare and meaning.

Because secularization has been typically associated with modernization, sociologists have either ignored or down played the importance of religious beliefs and organizations in influencing political movements for reform or revolution. The Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 toppled Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi who had pursued a programme of secular nationalism to bring about economic modernization. However, the authoritarian nature of the state produced large-scale opposition. While opposition had drawn strength from left-wing students and the urban working class, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was able to draw upon the Shi'ite tradition of suffering and martyrdom, and eventually the revolutionary movement was dominated by the religious leadership. The struggle against the Shah was seen to be a re-enactment of the struggle between Husain the grandson of the Prophet and Yazid in 680CE in the desert of Karbala. Michel Foucault travelled to Iran in 1978 and wrote enthusiastically about the revolution as a spiritual opposition that would reshape the self through a religious discipline. Other western authors – Maxime Rodinson and Simone de Beauvoir – were less sympathetic.

By late 2012 there was evidence that 'Islamism' was proving to be increasingly influential in terms of the growing presence of conservative interpretations of the Shari'a in Yemen, Tunisia and Egypt. The contemporary political question is simply: is the legal status of women, despite modernization and social reform, in decline? A recent collection of essays which have been edited by Maaike Voorhoeve (2012) suggests that the unintended consequences of revolution have been to constrain or indeed diminish women's rights. With the unification of the Yemen in 1990, women's rights have been eroded. After Southern

independence in 1967, the government pursued a robust policy of women's emancipation in the 'Corrective Move' of 1969. Women were not only encouraged to acquire education in order to join the labour force, but men were educated to treat women equally in everyday encounters. Following political unification, these reforms were largely forgotten and women were no longer actively involved in building society but were treated as part of the *harim*, the sacred private space. Consequently Islam emerged as the decisive factor in defining the place of women in the wider society. In Iran, women's rights have had an equally turbulent history. In the Revolution of 1979 both religious and secular groups mobilized Iranian women as the symbolic antidote to Western culture. The Veiling Act of 1983 made the *chador* a symbolic attack on the commodified women of the West and the secular values of the Pahlavi monarchy. But the struggle between religious and republican values was never fully settled. Mohammad Khatami's presidency witnessed a radical attempt to improve women's status as no longer simply wives and mothers but also citizens who were active in the civil sphere. In 1998 he created the Centre for Women's Participation (CWP). However the Council of Guardians finally rejected the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women because it was not regarded as compatible with Islamic principles. There has been a further erosion of women's rights with the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, and these reactionary tendencies are illustrated by the change in the title of the CWP to Centre for Women and Family Affairs. Obedient women with the family duties are treated as primarily agents of social stability not social change.

Radical efforts to transform women's status and to enhance their social rights are never easy or complete. Traditional patriarchy often finds ample support in legal notions about 'custom and habit'. The Arabic binary of *qiwamah/wilayah* signifying male authority is interpreted by traditional Muslim jurists as fundamental to the preservation of social order. Achieving justice in court proceedings is slow and expensive process for women seeking divorce, custody of children or maintenance. Reform projects to remedy the deep-seated institutional causes of court room delay (including the outdated administrative procedures, shortage of trained clerks and judges and a large backlog of cases) are rarely successful, partly because delay can be an effective strategy to avoid an unwelcome court decision. Despite the costs and the social difficulties, the demand for divorce is increasing in the Middle East as young couples face considerable challenges in societies undergoing rapid change where traditional assumptions about marriage no longer fit empirical circumstances. Systemic

unemployment means that men cannot easily fulfil their traditional roles in relation to women, and at the same time educated women no longer welcome traditional roles in the family. The core issue in these societies is the structural contradiction between women as passive wives and mothers, and women as active citizens.

Egypt offers an important historical lesson about the changing status of women in the public realm under a succession of liberal, nationalist and fundamentalist regimes. When Britain granted Egypt partial independence in 1922, the constitutional arrangements made no provision for women's political equality and women, who had been politically active, were expected simply to return to their domestic duties. Nevertheless, women came to play a significant part in the development of Egyptian nationalism. World War II had radicalised political consciousness in Egyptian society and in 1944 the Egyptian Feminist Party was formed with a political platform for social reform, birth control and abortion. Active in the rise of Egyptian nationalism through the Women's Committee for Popular Resistance, women supported the struggle against the British in the Suez crisis. They enjoyed support from the Islamic modernists who argued that the Qur'an gave women equal social and political rights, and the nationalist government of Gamal Abdel Nasser introduced a range of social reforms that enhanced women's status in post-colonial Egyptian society. While Nasser's 'state feminism' undermined the symbolic power of husbands and fathers, it made women dependent on the state giving rise to a form of state patriarchy. In more recent times, Anwar Sadat and Husni Mubarak achieved political continuity by forging alliances between fundamentalists, state officials and the middle class. In the 1980s many of the social advances of women were challenged by the politics of 'Islamism' that attempted to re-establish traditional roles for women. Among these conservative clerics, the 'politics of reversal' wanted to enforce the *hijab* as a potent symbol of this cultural (re)domestication of women. The status of Egyptian women is still threatened by the role of conservative clerics in the committee responsible for revising the constitution. In particular Mohamed Saad al-Azhari who is an ultra-orthodox cleric and follower of the Salafiyya movement wants to abolish the law that girls under the age of 18 years cannot get married and to remove a proposal that would ban the trafficking of women on the grounds that courts could prosecute parents who arranged marriages for under-age daughters. The irony is that these laws protecting women are known as 'Suzanne's laws' after the wife of the ousted President Hosni Mubarak. These secular laws gave women access to no-fault divorce avoiding long delays in the courts in divorce proceedings. Conservatives on the constitutional panel argue

that Suzanne's laws are in breach of Islamic law. In addition the draft chapter on rights and liberties makes no reference to international human rights norms.

Religion has played a major role in defining citizenship in the Middle East, especially its gendered nature. Religion is a necessary component of the patriarchal structures that underpin the power of monarchs over kingdoms, men within the family and tribe, and presidents over states. More importantly, citizenship as a legal entity has in the Middle East often been constituted through membership of a religious community and hence the distribution of rights and resources is organized on the basis of membership in religious sects. The result is that the nation is imagined as an assembly of sub-communities that are in turn defined by religion. Lebanon is the classic illustration in which there are some nineteen official religions that divide rather than unite the civil sphere. The laws relating to personal status are managed within each religious community. Political conflicts between and within the nation-state assume the form of religious conflicts, and establishing peaceful relations between different religious communities is a difficult and protracted process.

One further consequence is that civil society is not understood as an arena of secular dialogue, negotiation and compromise, but rather a sphere in which religious claims to truth cannot be subject to modification or questioning by debate and compromise. Where Islamism is the dominant religious the only contractual relations in the public domain are with God and hence the conventional political processes of debate, contest and compromise are regarded as inadmissible and undesirable. Religion in the public sphere does not lead necessarily to consensus through communicative

BUILDING CITIZENSHIP INSTITUTIONS: A TYPOLOGY

There has been much journalistic and some academic discussion of the opportunities for democracy in the region, but the prospects for the emergence of democratic and prosperous societies look uncertain if not bleak, at least in the short-term. In Egypt the loss of foreign investment and decline of tourism seriously affected the Egyptian economy which by 2012 was growing at only 2% and its hard currency reserves declined by up to 25%. If unemployment and poverty were causal features of the Egyptian uprising, then the prospects for any rapid transition to effective government and political democracy are not encouraging. Both Yemen and Syria look unstable where civilian casualties rising steeply. The unrest in the Gulf has been suppressed at least for the time

being by heavy-handed methods. Rebuilding the social and technical infrastructure of Libya will be costly and uncertain.

In this article, I argue that, while it may be relatively easy to start revolutionary activities, it is difficult to bring them to a successful conclusion. Unless and until the euphoria surrounding the fall of authoritarian regimes is translated into more permanent civil institutions, including the revival of their economies and in the case of Libya and Syria re-building much of their shattered infrastructure, then the aspirations of those who drove the Arab Spring will be quickly shattered. Then there may well be continuing social unrest and eventually a return to military government. By 'more permanent institutions', I mean building the basic components of an effective secular citizenship to overcome or counter-balance the divisive force of clan, tribe and religious identity. The rising conflict between Christian Copts and Muslims in Egypt, between Catholics and Sunni Muslims in Iraq, and between Sunni and Shi'ite through much of the region may be the harbingers of more general conflict in the region.

In general with the development of 'rentier states' in the resource-rich societies of the Middle East, there has been little development of civil society and in many cases (such as Libya, Syria and Yemen) the associational life that is necessary for citizenship has been largely destroyed. In Bahrain, 60% of government revenue comes from oil and gas, and therefore the ruling elite have significant resources to buy the loyalty of its supporters. Saudi Arabia recently allocated $130 billion to the population to maintain its loyalty, but by contrast resource poor countries such as Morocco and Syria have insufficient largesse to guarantee loyalty to the ruling family. Lack of confidence in Syria's economic future, has meant that, in the first four months of 2011, ten percent of deposits in the country's banking system were withdrawn. Although at the beginning of the crisis the government had approximately $17 billion in foreign reserves, these reserves have been depleted by some $70 million per week. Syria has indulged a variety of 'handouts' to pacify its political base, but such measures by increasing inflation only compound the economic problems in the long run. In Machiavellian terms, these regimes must either crush the opposition by force or buy time with the promise of social reforms. The Assad regime has tried both strategies, and the result is a cruel and destructive stalemate.

The creation of a modern form of secular citizenship will be a daunting and arduous but necessary political task in offering the necessary institutional framework within which democratic values and political aspirations can begin

to be secured and to flourish. Social citizenship, as we know from Aristotle to Max Weber, requires not just institutions but also a civic ethic, and without such values a sense of responsibility for the affairs of the society and commitment to common tasks cannot be sustained. The alternative will be loyalty to clan, sectional interests and clientelism (Kim, 2004).

Of course the 'anthropological' criticism of this idea of citizenship is that these western, secular political ideas have little relevance to the region and we must remain sensitive to local political cultures. This criticism is however unsatisfactory. The students on the streets of Cairo and Tripoli were calling for democracy and individual freedoms. Similar arguments against the relevance of western ideas – such as human rights – were once common in Asia. However, the demand for citizenship in Asia has been a lively issue since at least the end of the nineteenth century when radical intellectuals in Japan and China were busy reading Herbert Spencer and calling for reform (Turner, 2004; Turner, 2006). The demand for democracy and good government does not appear to be inherently specific to the West. In summary, the need for effective government that delivers security and economic growth is not peculiar to certain western societies.

Citizenship can be defined as an ensemble of practices and institutions that define public identities and which functions to redistribute resources and entitlements to the population. In other words, this sociological approach attempts to avoid a merely formal and legal definition of citizenship (as for example the right to vote and hold a passport), but we do not want to imply that these formal attributes are irrelevant (Turner, 1997). The modern literature on citizenship has sought to define citizenship in terms of the everyday actions of empowerment that engage and connect people with the community and with politics. Although one has to take into account the importance of these trends in citizenship studies (emphasising issues relating to identity, cultural legacies, everyday empowerment), it is important to stress the traditional foundations of citizenship as an ensemble of rights and duties. Historically citizenship has involved the creation of a general and enforceable taxation system as the basis of the finances of the state. Typically it requires some basis for public service such as conscription or the development of a professional army. Finally there is provision for individuals to form families and thereby through reproduction to reproduce society. In return for a variety of services (taxation, military or public service, service on juries, assuming the role of reproductive parents and so forth), citizens acquire 'contributory rights' – to welfare, education, and health services. As a consequence of their participation in the common good (or

commonwealth), citizens have a sense of empowerment, autonomy and dignity, but also a sense of connection and responsibility to towards shared institutions. This approach to citizenship draws attention to the problems of corruption in undermining taxation systems, the balance between claims to rights and the recognition of duties to the public, and finally the importance of gender equality if educational reform is to become effective. Effective social rights for women – especially education- have proved especially important for both social change and economic improvement.

We can identify different versions of citizenship. The classic British model of social citizenship emerged out of post-war reconstruction and Keynesian economics. The antecedents of this welfare state go back to Asquith and the early Liberal Party. However it can be argued that mobilization for war created the conditions for the mass mobilization of citizens and that the Beveridge Report, universal health, free education and so forth was the logical conclusion of mass warfare and Keynesian economic policies. There is an American liberal model in which earning an income was seen to be the defining characteristic of the autonomous and self-creating individual who found dignity in work rather than the indignity of slavery or the idleness of the aristocracy (Shklar, 1991). There was also a more authoritarian model of top-down insurance and security policies typically illustrated by Otto von Bismarck's Germany. Here the state sought to incorporate the working class through basic benefits to protect them from the harsh conditions of capitalism. In the modern world, this top-down model is characteristic of the 'compressed modernity' of South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan (Chang, 1999). These countries have had soft authoritarian states that developed local populations through investments in education to compete on world markets. While the growth of citizenship in Egypt, especially under Nasser, was a top-down affair, Egypt has not enjoyed the economic success of the Asian Tigers through a developmental state. In addition, it has not had the benefit of oil and gas revenues, and it has also struggled with economic deficits and financial crises since the time of British rule under Lord Cromer. While one can argue that the Asian economies had the external stimulation of the Vietnam War, Egypt's involvement in wars with Israel has had only negative consequences.

We can imagine hypothetically a fourth type of post-colonial citizenship in which the colonial state developed society by giving privileges to certain key strata typically an ethic minority to undertake its basic administrative and security needs. In general colonial states divided the population into fairly rigid racial categories to undertake different social functions. Indeed it can be argued

that the racial divisions of most colonial states were created by the state through its classification of the population into military, administrative, police and working categories. This colonial formation was the original 'plural society' in which ethnic or racial groups had exchange relations in the market but had little or no contact in civil society. The British colonial administration in this respect created a range of more or less separate communities with their own religions, customs and laws. Once British colonial rule was removed, it created conditions for considerable ethnic and religious conflict as we have seen in the Middle East and through much of Africa. Typically in the case of post-colonial societies, their juridico-political state boundaries have little relationship to actual ethnic, cultural and religious divisions within society. Modern Middle East societies, such as Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, have these characteristic internal divisions that have made the creation of national citizenship deeply problematic. One can think of the Alawite and Sunni divisions in Syria or the Sunni, Shi'ite and Kurdish divisions in Iraq, or similar fissures in Bahrain, or the historical division of Libya into three distinct ethnic or cultural communities, or finally the survival of complex tribal loyalties in Yemen.

To some extent the Middle East and North Africa has been shaped by the legacy of two waves of colonialism, namely the Ottoman period in which the millet system gave some degree of protection to minorities. This system is often regarded as an early form of group rights that encouraged harmonious relations between the dominant community and its minorities. In recent years, the modern Turkish state has seen itself, under the Justice and Development party, as reviving the legacy of Ottomanism to assert its influence in the region. The other influence has been the legacy of European colonialism, mainly British and French. European colonialism in many ways adapted Ottoman institutions to their own administrative purposes leaving in place a mosaic of communities (especially in the Yemen, Lebanon, Libya and what was greater Palestine). Building citizenship will be confronted by different problems in different parts of the region. Obviously in the Yemen deep tribal differences and what is now a civil war will raise huge problems of social reconstruction.

In the modern Middle East this colonial legacy has been rendered more complex with independence and the development of oil and gas as basic exports. Many societies in the region now suffer, not so much from a legacy of colonialism, but from the peculiar social and political consequences of dependence on oil. The result has been the creation of rentier states. Energy rich societies from Russia to Saudi Arabia are characterised by the resource curse in which rentier states become rich on the basis of energy extraction (typically oil and gas). Their

profits are merely a form of rent; the consequences are typically a failure to diversify the economy and in social terms there is no middle class to speak of (apart from the professional and technical support staff on temporary visas). After 1955 oil exploration and exports obviously improved Libya's finances, but wealth was concentrated in the hands of an elite. Instead of an indigenous working class emerging, Libya along with other oil-producing societies in the Middle East has played host to a large migrant work force of low-skilled workers. There was a short period of time when from the 1930s onwards Italian settlers developed small-scale industries including a Fiat motor-works and highways were built under Mussolini's regime. But at independence in 1951 Libya remained underdeveloped with relatively low literacy, no middle class and no colleges. The population of this region was relatively diverse including Berbers who were an important nomadic group. Libya has been fought over for centuries leaving a society that remained culturally and socially divided between regions that were distinctive, namely Tripolitania, Fezzan and Cyrenaica – to give them their traditional designations.

To state this argument boldly about citizenship and civil society, one of the truly great accounts of the rise of democracy in comparative and historical sociology came from Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966). We can both simplify and distort his argument for the sake of stating our case: no middle class, no democracy. The oil rich rentier states have blocked the development of or squeezed out the middle class, dividing society sharply into the dynastic families who own most of the wealth and foreign migrant labour that does all the work sending remittances home to China, Pakistan, Vietnam and the Philippines. There is a small cosmopolitan elite of advisers and support personnel who have no longer term interest in or commitment to societies in which they work. With no thriving middle class and a regime that is suspicious of any autonomous set of institutions or social groups, there is an under-developed or non-existent civil society. These social conditions do not provide a favourable environment for the growth of citizenship. This situation is all too well illustrated by the Gulf States and Libya which depend on a large army of (largely Asian) migrant workers.

The dependency of the West on these authoritarian countries and their dynasties in the Middle East is well known, but the situation is changing. The West is now more than ever reliant on oil and gas from authoritarian regimes as oil production in the North Sea and Alaska has declined. Saudi Arabia, Russia and the Gulf States are now the only nations able to maintain or increase oil exports. The West has become dependent on these family dynasties which

ironically in the case of Saudi Arabia are also exporting Wahhabi-style radical Islam, especially to Asia. While rising energy prices are keeping Vladimir Putin in power, alternative energy sources and hybrid automobiles are still some way in the distant future. However, the United States, as a result of the development of natural gas resources and new technologies to pump oil from the sea-bed, started to export oil in 2012. This development is part of the American strategy precisely to breakdown its dependency on external sources of energy.

To understand the problems that will confront the construction of a viable pattern of citizenship in the region we need to understand the causes of the current unrest. The media have concentrated on the role of modern communication (essentially mobile phones, Facebook and Twitter) in the orchestration of the current protest movements. However Lisa Anderson argues that the Arab uprisings of 1919 in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, which were inspired by the ideas of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech, were successfully transmitted around the world by telegraph. She concludes 'That year's events demonstrate that the global diffusion of information and expectations – so vividly on display in Tahrir Square this past winter – is not a result of the Internet and social media' (Anderson, 2011: 2).

Contrary to Alexander's emphasis on culture and performance, I support those arguments that note that revolutions have more to do with demography than with communication systems (Sowers, 2012). The percentage of young people (15-29 years) in the Arab populations ranges from 38% in Bahrain and Tunisia to more than 50% in Yemen. An increasing proportion of these young people have received university education (typically in western institutions) but their employment opportunities in the Middle East have not expanded. The average unemployment rate for the region is 23%. These social disparities are compounded by state corruption and by the display of wealth on the part of dynastic elites. The military and authoritarian regimes of the region have been characterised as modern forms of 'sultanism' and they have been revealed to be extremely brittle and vulnerable. It is arguable the case that the monarchies of Morocco, Jordan, Oman and the Persian Gulf may prove to be more flexible, whereas the violent conflict in Syria will make any democratic solution very difficult to secure (Goldstone, 2011). Constitutional reform in Morocco may stem the current unrest and deflect criticism away from the ruling family.

In thinking about the causes of these revolutions, the prospects for citizenship are not encouraging. The immediate aftermath of these protest movements, as we have already seen in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, may well involve economic

stagnation, if not decline. After the euphoria, there may well be a period of growing frustration with the post-revolutionary governments as we have already witnessed in Tunisia and Egypt. Building these economies will require patience, time and investment. Improving youth employment will be the key to creating a meaningful experience of citizenship and without economic growth young people will continue to be alienated from the political system. If Islamic movements such as the Brotherhood can provide welfare services and some employment for marginalised youth, we may see a drift towards more radical forms of Islam. In this respect, it will be important to consider comparisons between Egypt, Turkey and Iran.

Citizenship will also require recognition of women's rights and their involvement in the formal economy. Of course women have laboured for centuries in the domestic and informal sectors, but with women's involvement in education, their entry into the labour force is essential for the future growth of the economy. Women's status will require clear government commitment to gender equality and a legal framework to protect their rights. The Saudi regime and other conservative regimes in the region will continue to be opposed to women's public role. The recent controversy regarding the right of women to drive automobiles in the kingdom is a case in point. The future of the regime will also depend on whether the United States and its allies support attempts at social reform or whether they will continue to support conservative and authoritarian regimes (such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States) in order to secure their military interests and economic interests. Given the historic commitment to the security of Israel, it is unlikely that the United States and the European Union will depart too radically from their long-term interests in regional stability. In predicting the outcome of the current revolutions, any comparison with Iran will have to take this international context into account. The revolution against the Shah was a mass movement with a common ideology of radicalised Shi'ism. These historical events are important because the crises in the Middle East – from the Gulf War to Afghanistan –have left Iran as the main beneficiary of these political and military convulsions. Western observers for good reason hope that Turkey provides a better model of the transition to a secular state with a largely Muslim population which is currently enjoying an economic boom.

The pessimistic conclusion is that making revolutions is easy; constructing on effective social system on the basis of modern citizenship is the more difficult task. Citizenship involves more than simply organizing elections and in retrospect the limitation of the American strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan was

that free elections, a secret ballot, a wide franchise and the formation of political parties may be necessary for liberal democracy, but these institutions may not easily contribute to building a common citizenship that can transcend ethnic differences between Kurds and Arabs or religious differences between Christians and Muslims or between Shi'ites and Sunnis. While scholars have so far understandably concentrated on the causes of the Arab Spring, attending to the aftermath may be intellectually the more important and rewarding task.

ISLAM AS A PUBLIC RELIGION

Trying to understand the Arab Spring without an historical context is unlikely to produce reliable or interesting results. Indeed the lack of attention to the history of Egypt is probably the hallmark of recent sociological writing about the uprising. For example one might be tempted to see the Arab Spring as a clash between tradition and modernity, but it is reasonable to argue that Egypt entered modernity involuntarily with Napoleon Bonaparte's occupation of Egypt in 1798 with 31,000 troops with the ambition to dominate the Levant, the Ottoman Empire and the route to India (Kennedy, 1988: 124). Britain was thus drawn into Egyptian history via the exploits of the British navy and Nelson's famous victories at Aboukir. The modernization of Egypt has therefore been inextricably bound up with European colonialism and Karl Marx and Engel's account of British colonialism and India in which they argued that British railways, newspapers and land reform had unwittingly drawn India intro modernity, might easily be replicated in the case of Egypt (Marx and Engels, 1967). Bonparte's adventure in Egypt was in many respects the spark that set off a debate about the reform of Islam in the work for example of Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani. Although his aim to build a new Pan-Islamism was not achieved in his own life time, he did stimulate a new consciousness about the weakness of Islamic institutions in the face of European colonial expansion.

Another important development at the time was the eruption of Wahhabis. A radical fundamentalist movement to reform Islam, its founder was Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab who came from a family of *ulama* and *qadis* of Uyayna in the amirate of Wadi Hanifa. Wahhabism sought to eradicate all deviations and accretions from Islam especially Sufism whose saints and shrines constituted popular Islam. Wahhabism came to the attention of Muslims after their attack on the city of Karbala in 1802 which signalled the fact that all Muslims, apart from his own followers, were heretics. Wahhabism came to be the dominant orthodoxy of the Saudi family and spread throughout the Arab world. Its

influence is felt in contemporary politics through the Muslim Brethren and the Salafiyya movement (Mitchell, 1993).

The point of these observations is to suggest that any account of the modern history of Egypt cannot avoid taking notice of the fact that Egyptian modernization has been deeply bound up with the reform of Islam, and hence it is not possible to discuss contemporary Egyptian politics without taking Islam into account (Adams, 1933). Although Western observers might wish that the Arab Spring was the expression of a secular movement to bring about a democratic reform of Egypt, these political and social developments will necessarily be interwoven with Islam. Of course the development of modern Egyptian consciousness has not been exclusively the product of a reformed Islam (Wendell, 1972). Cairo and Alexandria have provided the context for an urban intelligentsia that has long debated Egyptian identity through the medium of newspapers, cinema and literature. Jacques Berque (1972) in his magisterial *Egypt. Imperialism and Revolution* traced the evolution of critical thinking through the theatre, poetry and novels from the First World War to the building of the Suez Canal under the notion of 'the quest for identity'.

The complex interaction between Islam and secular ideologies is nowhere better illustrated than in the rise of Arab nationalism. It is often assumed that Arab nationalism starts in a revolt against Ottoman rule – a revolt that is often associated with the romantic figure of T.E.Lawrence during the First World War. The assumption is that over some four centuries the Ottoman Empire created Arab animosity towards Turk as colonial overlords, but this perspective falsely reads modern Arab nationalism back into the past before either Turkish or Arab identity existed. The first stirring of Arab nationalism start ironically with young Lebanese who were mainly Christians in the 1870s who appealed to Arabs in terms of language and culture to oppose Ottoman rule in the Fertile Crescent. However a more important source of Arab nationalism came from the political works of two Syrian Arabs –Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi and Najib Azuri – in the late 1890s who began to differentiate pan-Islamism from Arab nationalism by envisaging a caliphate who would be a spiritual and not a political leader (Holt, 1966: 256-257). These nationalist ideas were eventually galvanized by the Young Turk movement and the creation of a secular Turkey after the demise of the caliphate in 1924. When the Young Turks and the Arab nationalists parted company, a variety of Arab secular nationalist associations flourished in Cairo and Paris. The maturity of Arab nationalism was forged by the legacy of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 which divided the region

between the French and the British and by the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that recognized the claims of Zionists for a homeland.

These nationalist movements that reshaped Egypt from the late nineteenth century to the rise of Nasser can be said to have been urban phenomena. During this period the economic and social situation of the rural population deteriorated. The modernization of Egypt from the time of Muhammad Ali as viceroy of Egypt (1805-1848) involved the creation of a state which brought into practice the corvee and military drafts that resulted in major peasant uprisings for example in 1820-1821when some 40,000 peasants rallied behind Shaykh Ahmad in the province of Qinah. Because women who played a dominant role in the domestic economy often suffered the most from state interventions, the intensification of cotton production in response to the American Civil War and rising food prices, they were often at the forefront of resistance. Indeed 'acceptance of their activity underscores the extent to which women were perceived as legitimate participants in the political, economic and social life of the public sphere' (Tucker, 1985: 162). While foreign correspondents often commented on the presence of women in Tahrir Square, their political activism was not in fact a new development.

CONCLUSION: THE RELIGIOUS AND THE POLITICAL

The history of Egypt from Bonaparte to the modern day is a history of Arab dawns. These uprisings have had both a secular and religious dimension. The Mahdi uprising of 1881 is probably famous in British history because of the Madhi's capture of Khartoum and the death of General Charles Gordon in 1885. The success of Mahdism in the 'arid crescent' contrasted with the capitulation of Mediterranean Islam or the Fertile Crescent from Muscat to Tangier. Madhism was driven by resentment of those 'who lived downstream, hatred of Europe which was enslaving Islam, the revolt of the specific against the levelling process of the modern world, and at the same time an original attempt at modernization without loss of identity'(Berque,1972: 140). It is difficult not to evoke the anthropological work of Ernest Gellner in this regard. In his *Saints of the Atlas* (1969) he argued that the social solidarity of the tribes contributed to their political success in the historical oscillation of elites between town and country, and that the Sufi saints and their brotherhoods played a central role in the politics of North Africa. In *Muslim Society* (Gellner, 1982) he was one of the few western academics to take religion seriously when sociologists were focused on a narrow and parochial debate about European secularization. In particular he

recognised the global significance of Islam and its relationship to modernity. The puritanical dimensions of reformed Islam meant that it could flourish in the context of modernization. In a recent biography of Gellner, John Hall (2011: 286) observed that 'Gellner's claim is that the puritanical option is dominant within Islam, thereby making Islam, alone among the world religions,'secularization-resistant'. In the twentieth century piety, both rural and urban, has been central to the life of the ordinary people. The Muslim Brethren have played a dominant part in the development of both piety and politics in modern Egypt. They were dissolved in 1948 but over time the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood has increased and the influence of the popular Sufi saints has declined. Contemporary Egypt and Sudan are historically removed from the dramatic events of Gordon's death in Khartoum, but it should come as no surprise that the Muslim Brotherhood are and will continue to play an important part in the aftermath of the Arab Spring – including its unintended consequences.

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